Abstract
Over the last two decades a large literature has developed examining the determinants of public support for the European Union. While these studies have focused on developing explanations of support for the EU, only a few studies have looked below this general level of support and examined attitudes regarding specific EU institutions. In the current study, we analyze the determinants of individual-level support for the European Parliament. Utilizing research in American public opinion, we argue that individuals rely on cognitive cues, especially when the object of support (i.e. EP) is complex or of low salience. We also hypothesize that information has a moderating effect, with more informed individuals using these cues more effectively. The results of ordered logit confirm both the use of supranational cues and the moderating effect of information.

Introduction
The political space in the European Union has come to be defined as a multilevel governance system. A citizen of Barcelona, for example, faces the municipal government, the regional Catalanian government, the national government of Spain and the supranational
European Union. In ideal conditions, an individual would be knowledgeable enough to evaluate the institutions of government at each of these levels, but the vast majority of citizens are obviously not be able to fulfill this Herculean task of information gathering and evaluation. So, how do European citizens make sense of politics and reach informed judgments about these different levels of government?

One explanation has been offered by the students of American public opinion research who utilize the cognitive heuristics approach from psychology (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982). According to this research, ordinary citizens can make good political judgments in the absence of information with the help of cues (e.g., Brady and Sniderman, 1985; Carmines and Kuklinski, 1990; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubins, 1998; Mondak, 1994; Mutz, 1998; Popkin, 1991; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock, 1991). Recently, public opinion research on the EU has made use of elite (Hooghe and Marks, 2005), as well as domestic and international cues (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca 2000) to explain support for integration. We build on these efforts in order to explain why and how citizens make use of cues in the multilevel governance system of the EU. Particularly, we focus on individual support for the EP, an institution that is central to the legitimacy of the EU, yet far removed from the concerns and control of EU citizens.

Understanding support for the EP is important for three reasons. First, the EP is the only supranational institution that directly represents citizens’ interests and its relation to the other EU institutions and the public is at the heart of concerns regarding a “democracy deficit.” Second, the EP provides an interesting case for understanding how citizen attitudes about a supranational institution are formed within the contours of a multilevel governance system as well as the domestic political space. And third, the EP is considered a low salience institution about which
information is largely lacking. As such, it provides a challenging but informative case for investigating how citizens use cues from the larger supranational context to inform their attitudes about an EU institution. The puzzle that is at the core of our efforts, therefore, is to try to explain how citizens, with little knowledge of EU institutions, will respond when asked to evaluate the EP. The explanation we offer is based on the claim that individuals will rely on heuristics or cues to respond to such a query, and the cue on which they will rely is their evaluation of the EU. Our results show that individuals use supranational cues when evaluating a supranational institution and those who are more informed about the multilevel governance system of the EU appear to be more efficient at this evaluative task.

Our study proceeds as follows. The next section begins by reviewing previous empirical studies of public support for European integration and the burgeoning cues approach in EU public opinion research. We combine this research with the “cognitive heuristics” approach from American politics to develop a model of support for the EP. The third section presents the data and research design, and the empirical analyses are discussed in the fourth section. In the fifth section we conclude by discussing the role of cues and the moderating effect of information in terms of contemporary issues facing the EU such as the democracy deficit and the recent, failed Constitution.

**Explaining Public Support for the EP**

There is a voluminous literature focusing on the determinants of public support for European integration. These studies, generally relying on the Eurobarometer surveys, have focused on developing explanations of individual-level support for the EU or, more generally, the process of integration. Although we do not provide a detailed discussion, research on the
Individual level determinants of EU support can be categorized into three broad approaches. The utilitarian approach focuses on the winners and losers in the process of economic integration. Those individuals who have the education, skills and income to take advantage of the increased mobility offered by continued liberalization will be more likely to support integration and the EU than those who do not possess these attributes (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel, 1998). The identity approach, on the other hand, argues that territorial identities, national attachments and perceived cultural threats will make individuals less likely to support for European integration (Taggart, 1998; De Master and Le Roy, 2000; Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). Recently, a third stream of research elaborates on political cues drawn from domestic institutions (Anderson, 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000; Rohrschneider, 2002) or political parties (Hooghe and Marks, 2005) to explain individual attitudes toward the EU.

Most research on cues in the EU public opinion literature relates to party cues and is derived from the research in American politics (e.g. Zaller, 1992). The proponents of this approach argue that individuals will take cues from the positions of the domestic political parties which they support to inform their attitudes about integration (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). It is also argued that party cues will have a more prominent effect on attitude formation when divergent opinions emerge among the elites (Ray, 2003).

While research on party cues as it relates to European integration is growing (see the special issue of *Electoral Studies*, March 2007), only a few studies consider the national and supranational context as sources of attitudinal cues. Anderson (1998), for example, argues that since mass publics are largely uninformed about European integration and more informed about domestic politics, individuals are likely to use national proxies (i.e. cues), such as support for a democratic system, the national government or establishment parties, to inform their opinions.
about the EU. His results provide evidence for the impact of system support and party cues (but not for government support) on attitudes toward integration. Sanchez-Cuenca (2000: 6) considers both national and supranational cues and argues that “the better the opinion citizens have of the European institutions, the stronger their support for integration. And the better their opinion of their national institutions, the less support for integration.” Criticizing Anderson for not controlling for the perceptions of supranational institutions as attitudinal cues, Sanchez-Cuenca finds that the estimated coefficients for domestic cues are reversed when support for integration is modeled as a function of both domestic and supranational cues. Finally, Rohrschneider (2002) finds that domestic cues, in the form of individuals’ perceptions of the quality of national institutions do not affect support for integration directly, but rather they mediate the effect of a perceived representation deficit on support for an EU-wide government and the EU regime.

None of these studies, however, specifically investigate support for supranational institutions. With the exception of Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) all rely on domestic cues to explain support for European integration. In the current study, we use the cues approach, but given that our object of study is different – support for the EP rather than support for the EU – we focus not on national level cues, but on cues the respondents draw from their attitudes toward European integration. We argue that within the multilevel governance structure of the EU, individuals will use their opinion about a hierarchically higher-level object of support (i.e. European integration), to inform their attitudes about a lower-level object, namely the EP. Therefore an individual’s support for the European Union should be positively related to his/her support for the European Parliament.

The EP is part of a complex supranational institutional structure and information about it is relatively scarce. In addition, as mentioned previously, the awareness of this institution
remains quite low.\textsuperscript{5} Therefore, at first sight, one could expect that only those with little or no information would rely on these shortcuts. However, even those individuals who are relatively well informed are being asked to make judgments about a very complicated institution within a multilevel governance system. This demands very sophisticated cognitive processing on the part of an individual, and much of the psychology literature tells us that under such circumstances all individuals will rely on heuristics and cues (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982; Nisbett and Ross, 1980). While a stream of American public opinion literature utilized this “cognitive heuristics” approach and theorized that citizens can make good judgments in the absence of information with the help of cues (Brady and Sniderman, 1985; Carmines and Kuklinski, 1990; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubins, 1998; Mondak, 1994; Mutz, 1998; Popkin, 1991; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock, 1991), controversy emerged within this literature regarding how much weight will be given to heuristics and how they will be employed. For example, Sniderman et al. (1991) associate the use of heuristics mainly with less-informed citizens; whereas Popkin (1991) finds the use of heuristics essential for the competence of all citizens.

Despite this divergence, the use of heuristics – either by everyone in a complicated environment or by those lacking information – eventually converges on the necessity of simplifying the decision making process to make sensible or effective judgments. Therefore, in either case, individuals will find it useful and practical to rely on cues to increase the effectiveness of decision-making. We argue that whether one is poorly informed or well informed, most individuals when faced with a complicated situation will use cognitive shortcuts.

If everybody is likely to use cues, then the question becomes: who can more effectively use them and what does effectiveness in this case mean? It is argued that cues allow uninformed citizens to make “better” political judgments as if they were fully informed (Lau and Redlawsk,
2001). Some scholars take the sensible use of information as an indicator of a good decision. Mondak (1993) finds that citizens respond more favorably to a policy supported by the president when his approval ratings are high. The sensible use here is that, if one approves of the president, then s/he should also approve of the policy.\footnote{What is an effective decision then? Given the complexity of the real world, we argue an effective decision is a reasonable decision when made by those who are well-informed. For the case of the uninformed, it would be a decision made as if they were well-informed. Considering the complicated environment of the EU’s political system, being well-informed should create an advantage to individuals by making the efficient use of cues possible (i.e., simplifying the decision-making process by enabling the sensible use of heuristics). Individuals lacking knowledge may not always be able to use those same cues effectively. Therefore, similarly to Lau and Redlawsk (2001), we expect that those who are more sophisticated, in our case who are well-informed, will be more effective in their use of cues to reach reasonable decisions.

To reiterate, we expect that EU support will predict support for the EP as individuals use supranational cues from a higher-level object to inform their attitudes about a lower-level object. However, an individual’s level of information will moderate that relationship with better informed individuals being able to make more effective use of this heuristic. If an individual supports European integration, a sensible decision would be to support a component of that object, in this case, the EP. If information is scarce, however, individuals will be less frequently on the target in reaching a sensible decision and as such they may be more likely to support the EP even if they do not support EU (or vice versa). Therefore, we expect that the magnitude of the relationship between support for the EP and support for the EU will be stronger for those
who have higher levels of information about the political system of the EU compared to those with lower levels information.

**Data and Research Design**

There are four standard Eurobarometer surveys (37.0 (1992), 43.1 (1995), 52.0 (1999), 53.0 (2000)) that include both our dependent and independent variables. Since three of these surveys do not include Austria, Finland and Sweden, we exclude these countries from our analysis. In addition, since more recent Eurobarometers do not include the item measuring support for EP, we keep only 12 members in our sample, but we treat East and West Germany as separate samples.

Our dependent variable, *Support for the EP*, is an item that has been asked in various Eurobarometers since 1983. The respondents were asked the following question for evaluating the preferred role of the EP.

> Would you personally prefer that the European Parliament played a more important or a less important part than it does now?
> 1. Less important
> 2. About the same
> 3. More important

We believe that this item captures support for the EP, because respondents who are supportive of the EP are more likely to prefer a more important role whereas those who are less supportive are more likely to prefer a less important role for this institution. As such, this item requires the respondent to state a preference regarding the future development of the EP, and thus captures a more general idea of support for the institution.
Our main independent variable is support for the EU, and here we choose the most widely-used survey question to measure this concept. It is known as the “membership question” and is asked as follows:

Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the European Union (Community, common market) is….?
1. A bad thing
2. Neither good nor bad
3. A good thing

Our second independent variable is a question asking respondents whether they are informed about the EU, its institutions and policies.

All things considered, how well informed do you feel you are about the European Union (Community), its policies, and its institutions?
1. not at all
2. not very well
3. quite well
4. very well

We believe that this question measures both respondents’ general knowledge of the EU and their specific knowledge about institutions like the European Parliament. The validity of this variable may be questioned, since individuals may either exaggerate or underestimate their actual level of information. To validate our measure, we use a factual knowledge question that appeared in Eurobarometer 52.0 (1999) and asks the respondents to name the commission president and the commissioner of the respondent’s own country. From these two items we created dummy variables as the basis for an index of objective knowledge ranging from 0 to 2. Respondents answering both questions correctly are at the high end of this index while respondents with no correct responses received a zero and finally a single correct response was assigned a one. A cross-tabulation shows that among those who report that they are “not at all informed” 78 percent knew neither of the names while only 7 percent knew both the names of the Commission President and their commissioner. In contrast, among those who report to be
“very well informed” 62 percent got both names correct while only 19 percent were unable to identify both individuals. Based on these results, we feel comfortable in using the self-reported information item which is available in four Eurobarometer surveys.

We constructed a dummy variable from the “information question” which takes a value of one when a respondent is at the high end of the information scale (quite well or very well informed) and a value of zero when s/he is at the low end (not at all informed and not very well informed). Since our theory argues that the most important determinant of EP support is EU support and that the effect of this determinant is mediated by the level of information, we also created an interaction term with the information dummy and EU support to model the effect of EU support on EP support, conditional on the level of information.

Finally, we include a set of variables used in previous studies to explain support for both integration as well as institutions. These include the level of participation in political discussion, exclusive European identity, satisfaction with national democracy, ideology, education, age, gender, occupation, and dummy variables to account for all country and year effects. The level of participation in political discussion is an item asking the respondents how often (never, occasionally, frequently) they discuss political matters with friends. Exclusive European identity is a dummy variable created from an item tapping the respondents’ feelings about their identity. This variable takes a value of one if a person feels exclusively European and zero otherwise. Satisfaction with national democracy is one of the national cues individuals may take and it captures the degree of satisfaction with the way democracy works in a respondent’s country along a four-point scale. From an item asking the respondents to place themselves on a ten point ideology scale ranging from 1 (left) to 10 (right), we have created two dummy variables. The first variable, extreme left, is coded as 1 if a respondent chooses 1 or 2 on this scale and 0
otherwise. The second variable, *extreme right*, is coded one when the respondents locate
themselves at the extreme right of the scale (9 and 10). The remainder of the categories forms the
reference group. The final specification is:

\[
\text{EPSupport} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{EUSupport}) + \beta_2(\text{Information}) + \beta_3(\text{Information} \times \text{EUSupport}) + \beta_4(\text{Extreme Left}) + \beta_5(\text{Extreme Right}) + \beta_6(\text{Exclusive European Identity}) + \beta_7(\text{Political Discussion}) + \beta_8(\text{Education}) + \beta_9(\text{Age}) + \beta_{10}(\text{Gender}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Satisfaction with Democracy}) + \beta_n(\text{Occupation Dummies}) + \beta_{12}(\text{Country Dummies}) + \beta_{13}(\text{Year Dummies})
\]

To test our hypotheses we use ordered logit because our dependent variable can be
thought of as having ranked categories (less important, same, more important).

**Results**

The results from the ordered logit estimation are presented in Table 1. Supporting our
core hypothesis, EU support has a positive sign, and it is statistically significant when controlling
for the level of information an individual may have about the EU as well as for the other
variables. The odds ratios provide an intuitive understanding of the impact of each explanatory
variable within a logit estimation. Assuming a poorly informed individual (level of information
= 0), those who believe that their country’s membership in EU is a good thing are 3.3 times more
likely to support the EP compared to those who have a negative opinion of the EU. This result
provides evidence supporting our core hypothesis that the level of EU support is positively
associated with EP support and that individuals use supranational cues to inform their attitudes
about EP.

Table 1 here

The information dummy is not statistically significant implying that knowledge itself is
not a significant predictor of support for the European Parliament. The significant interaction
term, however, confirms that information does have a moderating effect on an individual’s
support for the EP. The more informed a person, the stronger the relationship between her support for the EU and her support for the EP. For example, a simple calculation using the estimated equation yields that the impact of a one unit change in EU support on the underlying propensity for EP Support will be .51 when the level of information is low (0) and .63 when the level of information is high (1). In terms of odds ratios this implies that when a well-informed individual shifts from a negative assessment of the EU to a positive one, the odds of supporting the EP increase 3.8 times \(e^{0.63\times2}\). While the link between EU support and EP support is positive, this relationship is stronger when individuals are more knowledgeable. As such, this result lends support to the moderating effect of information on the effective use of a supranational cue.

To provide a substantive interpretation of these results and to test our hypotheses regarding the effective use of short-cuts at different information levels we calculated the predicted probabilities. Figure 1 shows the predicted probabilities at different values of support for the EU for informed and uninformed individuals with other variables held constant (we assume the individual for whom these probabilities are estimated is a female laborer living in Belgium, the median country in terms of EU support, in 1999).

Figure 1 Here

We present the predicted probabilities for only two outcomes for demonstration purposes. The positively-sloped lines show the predicted probabilities for the outcome, “More Important EP Role”, while the negatively-sloped lines demonstrate the likelihood of choosing a “Less Important Role” for EP at different levels of EU support for informed (dashed line) and uninformed (solid line) individuals. As an individual’s level of support for EU increases, the likelihood of preferring a less important role for EP decreases and the likelihood of preferring a
more important role increases. This finding confirms our first hypothesis regarding the use of supranational cues. In both cases, the magnitude of the effect of EU support on EP support increases with the level of information. For example, an informed individual is more likely to desire a more important role for EP compared to an information-poor individual, as shown by the positively-sloped dashed line falling above the solid line in Figure 1. For the other outcome, an informed individual is less likely to prefer a less important role for EP compared to an individual with lower levels of information as support for EU increases. Similarly, an informed individual is more likely to desire a more important role for EP compared to an information-poor individual (the positive solid line moves above the dashed line for this outcome). These results confirm our second hypothesis stating that better informed individuals make use of shortcuts more sensibly, but this may be more so when their support for EU, in this case their supranational cue, is higher.\textsuperscript{14}

To further investigate this relationship and following the advice of Brambor, Clark and Golder (2005), we also calculated the marginal effect of EU support on EP support at two levels of information as well as using the marginal standards errors for multiplicative interaction terms.\textsuperscript{15} Figure 2 presents the marginal effect of EU support on EP support. Specifically, we plot the \textit{change} in the predicted probability of choosing each of the three outcomes of EP support (less important, same, more important) due to a move from no support to most support for EU (i.e., from “a bad thing” to “a good thing”) at high and low levels of information.\textsuperscript{16} There are three sets of lines, each representing one of three outcomes of EP support and the dotted lines above and below each solid line represent the 95\% confidence intervals. When calculating these probabilities, variables are held constant and again we assume the individual for whom these probabilities are estimated is a female laborer living in Belgium (the median country in terms of
EU support) in 1999. Finally, we vary the level on information in our calculations. The percent change in predicted probabilities shows that as EU support increases from minimum to maximum, the probability of preferring a more (less) important role for the EP also increases (decreases). The attitudes of those staying indifferent in their support for the EP cover the middle ground between those who are supportive and non-supportive of EP. As such we find very strong evidence supporting our first hypothesis that individuals use more general supranational cues to inform their attitudes about specific objects again at the supranational level.

Figure 2 Here

The second part of our argument is that information plays a moderating role on the effect of the supranational cue, namely EU support, on EP support. The results from our estimation reveal that the impact of EU support on EP support gets larger with the level of information an individual possesses. In Figure 2 we see that at high levels of information an individual is less likely to choose a less important role for the EP. For example, when the level of information is low and when EU support is increased from minimum to maximum, an individual’s likelihood of supporting the EP drops by 8% as opposed to the case where the level of information is high (a drop of 9%). If an individual has a non-favorable attitude toward the EP, this negative attitude gets stronger as we move to higher levels of information. The differences are more visible for the “more important” outcome. When support for EU increases by two points, a more informed individual is more likely to prefer a more important role for EP as opposed to an individual with lower levels of information. In this case, the change in the probability of supporting EP increases from 9% when information is scarce to 11% when information is abundant. In accordance with the finding stated previously, Figure 2 confirms that the mediating effect of information is more pronounced at the positive end of cue (i.e. high support for EU). In Figure 2, the confidence
intervals do not cut through the zero point for any of the three outcomes, lending further support to our hypothesis regarding the moderating effect of information regarding the relationship between EU support and EP support. These results, although modest in magnitude, clearly show that information has a moderating effect on the EU support-EP Support link. Skepticism about the EP intensifies or support for EP gets stronger when the marginal effect of information is considered. This finding provides evidence that more information informs better decisions and that individuals’ use of supranational cues is more efficient when knowledge is more rather than less.

The results in table 1 provide interesting findings related to national cues, ideology and utilitarian indicators as well. An individual who is satisfied with the way democracy works in her country is 3% more likely to prefer a more important role for EP. This result is consistent with previous research using national cues (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000), but the substantive effect is much smaller than for supranational cues. Extreme left and extreme right have opposite signs and both variables are statistically significant. An individual with an extreme left ideology is 16% more likely and an individual with an extreme right ideology is 12% less likely to support the EP relative to those locating themselves at the center of left-right ideological continuum. Exclusive European identity and political discussion are statistically significant in the expected direction. An individual who feels herself exclusively European is 77% and someone who participates in political discussion is 21% more likely to support the EP. The results also demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of education are more supportive of the EP where an additional year spent in school increases the odds of support for EP by two percent. Women are less supportive than men, and support increases with age, yet the substantive effect is very small (odds ratio=1.00). These results are generally in line with the
findings of previous research. However, we found only partial support for the utilitarian hypothesis as only one occupation dummy, executive, has a positive and significant relationship with support for the EP.

To summarize: Individuals make use of more general supranational cues to inform their decisions about specific EU institutions. In addition, information makes a difference for effective use of this cue. Our analysis provides evidence of the effective use of heuristics and it points to the difference between how informed and uninformed individuals make decisions about a less salient and remote institution. While individuals with low levels of knowledge may be able to use cues to simplify the decision making process, they may not be using these cues as effectively as well informed individuals.

Conclusion

The European Parliament is a low salience institution about which most citizens know very little. In addition, it is a very complex institution, and so even those citizens who are relatively knowledgeable about the EU are likely to have trouble making informed judgments about the EP. Under these conditions, how do individuals decide when asked to provide a judgment regarding their support for the EP? Our findings demonstrate that individuals use cues from the supranational level to form their opinions about a specific EU institution. This is our main contribution to the burgeoning literature on domestic and supranational cues in the EU politics (Anderson 1998, Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). In addition, one’s level of information does moderate the relationship between EU support and EP support, and this allows us to contribute to an issue in the decision-making literature regarding the effective use of heuristics (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). We find that those individuals possessing high levels of information are more likely to use the heuristic effectively than those with low information. The high EU support –
high EP support link will be stronger among individuals with high levels of information than among those with low levels. However, we also note that the magnitude of this moderating effect is modest.

This finding is important for better understanding the reasons behind the rejection of EU constitution in the Netherlands and France. The results of a Flash Eurobarometer poll conducted in the Netherlands in June of 2005 show that individuals used their overall support for the EU to inform their attitudes about the EU Constitution. When asked about their choice of vote, 31% of the Dutch stated that their opinion regarding the EU was the key factor for their choice of vote in the referendum compared to 21% who used cues from the economic and social situation in the nation and to only 18% who directly utilized their attitudes about the constitution. Of those who voted ‘Yes’ in the referendum, 44% relied on their opinion about EU and only 15% used their opinion about the EU constitution and another 11% utilized the social and economic situation. Furthermore, of those who voted ‘No’ in the referendum, 23% relied on their opinion about the EU in their vote decision, 28% relied on social and economic conditions, and 21% utilized their opinion about the constitution as the key factor in their decision. Information also played a critical role in the vote choice and vote decision. Fifty-one percent of those who did not vote in the referendum stated that the lack of information was the main reason for abstaining. These figures combined with our results clearly show that the overall perception of the EU is used as a cue to inform attitudes about a lower level object like the EP or the constitution. Also, in the Netherlands, information had a significant impact on the decision to vote (51% abstained) and the choice of vote (41% voted ‘No’ due to lack of information) in the June referendum. Our results are in line with these survey results since individuals do make use of cues and that information plays an important role in their decisions. Our analysis moves one step further by
confirming that those who are better informed use the cues more efficiently. This is an important finding that should be considered by the EU commission and the national leaders in promoting new initiatives.

Finally, our analysis has important implications for the debate about a democracy deficit. The current institutions of the EU do not approach the ideals of democracy and are unlikely in the near future to become more representative of citizens’ interests. Despite increases in the powers of the EP, it remains a low salience institution about which citizens are relatively uninformed. If citizens are likely to make less effective judgments when possessing less information, then this deficit becomes more serious, because it is not only the institutional structure that diverges from the ideals of democracy, but also the role of the “demos” which is supposed to be judging the performance of these structures. If, as we argue, increased information leads to more effective decisions, a more informed citizenry can only help reduce the democracy deficit and increase the legitimacy of the EU.

1 According to the results of the Eurobarometer conducted in the Spring of 2001 (EB 54.1), 42% of the respondents mentioned that they did not hear about the EP in the papers, radio and the TV while another 8% responded as “don’t know.”

2 Only a few studies have looked below this general level of support and examined attitudes regarding specific EU institutions like the European Court of Justice (Caldeira and Gibson, 1995), the European Parliament (Gabel, 2003),
for the president of the commission (Gelleny and Anderson, 2000), and for EMU and Euro (Kaltenhaler and Anderson, 2001).

3 There are two important studies investigating support for specific EU institutions. Caldeira and Gibson (1995) evaluate support for the European Court of Justice, and Gabel (2003) investigates support for the European Parliament. In attempting to explain support for an EU institution, both Caldeira and Gibson and Gabel use some of the same variables that have been used in studies explaining support for the EU. In addition to variables relating directly to the ECJ (e.g., awareness of the court and support for the rule of law), Caldeira and Gibson also include such variables as ideological self-identification, level of education, gender, class identification and union membership. Alternatively, Gabel’s model of EP support includes education, ideology, support for democracy, identity, age and gender. Although both studies include an indicator of EU support, and find that it is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of both ECJ and EP support, neither study develops a supranational cues explanation.

4 Past studies have conceptualized hierarchically ordered objects of support (e.g. community, regime, authorities) within the national (Easton, 1965), supranational context (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) and foreign policy context (Hurwitz and Peffly, 1987). According to Lindberg and Scheingold, political community refers to the more general properties and the scope of the EU whereas regime is about the institutions and powers of the supranational authority. This distinction as well as the Eastonian classification is relevant for our understanding of citizen support for the EP. EU institutions and policies can be considered as lower level objects of support and individual attitudes toward these objects should be influenced by – cued by – higher level objects, in this case attitudes toward the EU.

5 In the survey data we use (to be explained shortly) only 2.9% of the respondents (1,444/49,966) feel very well informed about the European Union, its policies and its institutions. Alternatively, 20.2% (10,066/49,966) feel not at all informed. The bottom two responses on this scale (“not at all informed” and “not well informed”) sum to 68.9%, indicating a widespread lack of knowledge about the EU, its policies and institutions.

6 Pointing to the effective use of heuristics, Bartels (1996) questions the difficulty of demonstrating whether citizens really act as if they were informed and can make reasonable judgments, contrary to the assumption that the use of heuristics leads to effective decisions. As Bartels demonstrates, heuristics can sometimes create bias and it is not necessarily the case that the use of heuristics will always be sensible (see also Kuklinski and Quirk, 2000, 2001).
Across our four Eurobarometers, the proportion of “don’t know” responses does not vary much and never exceeds 4%. Therefore, we exclude these responses from our analysis.

As further evidence, the correlation coefficient between the objective knowledge scale and the self-reported information variable we use is .37, which is statistically significant and relatively high for survey data.

The Eurobarometer did not employ the same scale for the “information question” in all of our surveys. After EB 52.1 (1999) the information question has been asked with ten-categories ranging between low to high information. We combined the categories of the ten-point scale to harmonize it to the four categories used in earlier surveys. Then we created a dummy variable to differentiate between high and low levels of information. We used the empirical patterns observed from both the four-point and ten-point questions to choose the cut-points. The “don’t know” responses excluded.

Coefficients in bold represents the vector of coefficients for the dummy variables specified in parentheses.

Although the parallel regression assumption did not hold, this assumption is violated in most cases. We ran the analysis using multinomial logit and the results do not change. We prefer ordered logit for ease of interpretation.

Year 2000 and the UK are the reference groups. Year 1995 is dropped due to collinearity. All year and country dummies are statistically significant.

The odds ratio for a one-unit change in EU support is 1.66. We double that value since we are moving from a negative opinion to a positive opinion, a two-unit change.

Not depicted in this graph are the predicted probabilities for the second outcome, namely preferring the Same role for EP. The probabilities for this outcome fall between the two plotted outcomes and the lines for informed versus non informed have a slope close to zero. These results may indicate that the mediating role of information is less significant for the outcomes that represent a neutral position.

We used Brambor et al.’s (2005) approach provided at their website (http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mrg217/interaction.html) to calculate the predicted probabilities for supporting the EP. The stata8 code and our dataset are available upon request.

We also calculated the same quantities for a scenario where EU support increased by one unit. The lines look identical but the confidence intervals include the zero point for the outcome “Same” at lower levels of information.
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Table 1: Results of Ordered Logit Estimation
Dependent Variable: Support for EP (less important – same – more important)

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<th></th>
<th>coefficient</th>
<th>odds ratio</th>
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Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities of EP Support at Different Levels of Information and EU Support

- A Bad Thing: Neither Good Nor Bad
- A Good Thing

Predicted Probabilities for EP Support

- More Informed
- Less Informed

More Important Role for the EP
Less Important Role for the EP

EU Support
Figure 2: Marginal Effect of EU Support on three outcomes of EP Support (Less important, same, More Important)