

EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability?
How European integration affects parties' electoral fortunes

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Since politics has its origin in strife, political strategy deals with the exploitation, use, and suppression of conflict.

-Elmer E. Schattschneider, 1960, pp. 65

Abstract

This paper develops and tests arguments about how political parties' electoral fortunes in national elections are influenced by voters' preferences regarding the European Union (EU). To date, there is increasing evidence demonstrating the impact of EU issues on vote choice in national elections - a process referred to as *EU issue voting*. Notwithstanding, little is known about which parties actually gain or lose as a result of EU issue voting. Using a two-stage estimation procedure and employing national election survey data from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom from 1992 to 2002, I first estimate an individual-level model of vote choice modeling the impact of EU preferences for individual parties. This first stage of the analysis reveals that the extent of EU issue voting varies greatly among political parties. In the second stage, I utilize party characteristics to account for this cross-party variation by using an estimated dependent variable model. I demonstrate that the variation in EU issue voting is largely a function of the degree to which the EU issue is salient to political parties, the level of extremism in terms of EU positioning as well as opposition status. These findings corroborate a growing body of work that demonstrates an increasing electoral connection between European and national politics. Moreover, they strengthen our understanding of how European integration affects national electoral politics.

1. Introduction*

If Jean Monnet dozed off at a meeting of the European Coal and Steel Community in the early 1950s and awoke in present-day Europe, what would his reaction be? His first reaction would likely be one of pride. Not only are over 480 million Europeans citizens of Europe, the number of European Union (EU) institutions has grown considerably and so have their competencies stretching from employment to foreign policy. Notwithstanding, his second reaction may be one of surprise or even disappointment. Monnet and other early architects of the European integration process expected citizens to rally around Europe as the unification process contributed greatly to peace, welfare and stability. Until the late 1980s, the integration process was indeed accompanied by a diffuse feeling of approval on the part of the European citizenry, characterized as the *permissive consensus* (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970). Current developments, however, cast a shadow on Monnet's initial hope of building a Union among people rather than states. Today, we are witnessing a growing discontent regarding Europe. Although there have been downturns in support for European integration in the past, it is clear that Europeans have grown considerably more weary of the integration process than they once were (Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007). The outcomes of the recent referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands illustrate this new sentiment. At present, scholars generally agree that the age of *permissive consensus* has given way to a *constraining dissensus* (Hooghe and Marks, 2008). Not only do European citizens actively monitor the course of integration, and where necessary, voice their fears and objections (Steenbergen, et al., 2007), Euroskeptical sentiment is also increasingly being exploited by political entrepreneurs in EU referenda and national elections (Taggart, 1998; De Vries, 2007). In other words, Europe has become a *contested* issue.

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Indeed, recent analyses reveal that European integration has a significant effect on electoral outcomes in some EU member states (Evans 1998, 2002; Gabel, 2000; Tillman 2004, De Vries, 2007). Voters' EU preferences *do* influence vote choice in national elections, a process referred to as *EU issue voting* (De Vries, 2007). But which political parties thrive as a result of EU issue voting? On the basis of the 'sleeping giant' hypothesis developed by Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004), one may expect political entrepreneurs on the fringes of the political system to reap the electoral fruits of EU issue voting. The authors argue that although the electorate's ability to constrain the integration process through national elections may be limited at present, due to the restricted choice regarding the EU issue on offer by political parties, it will only be 'a matter of time before political entrepreneurs seize the opportunity to differentiate themselves from other parties in EU terms' (Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004: 47). Indeed, the literature on party positioning regarding European integration highlights the fact that the EU issue constitutes a strategic opportunity for far left and right parties to distinguish themselves from the predominantly pro-EU mainstream and thereby possibly enhance their vote share (Taggart, 1998; Marks and Wilson, 2002; Crum 2007). Parties on the far left or right are undeniably the most pronounced Euroskeptics of all party families (Hooghe, et al., 2002). Not only does Euroskepticism present a prospect for vote maximization, but it is also linked to the overall ideological positioning and/or anti-establishment stance of these parties (Taggart, 1998; Sitter, 2002; Ray, 2007). This, accompanied by the fact that public opinion is on average more Euroskeptic than mainstream elites (Hooghe, 2003), and perhaps increasingly so, makes opposition to European integration a means by which extremist parties can enhance their electoral appeal. Euroskepticism maximizes the consistency with their ideological platform, while simultaneously minimizing their distance from the median voter position (see Hinich and Munger, 1993).

This paper addresses the important issue of the differential impact of EU issue voting on political parties' electoral fortunes at the national ballot box. It does so by means of a two-stage

estimation procedure. Recent work has demonstrated the advantages of this procedure when dealing with the multi-level nature of data (Huber, et al., 2005; Duch and Stevenson, 2005, 2007; Kedar, 2005). The empirical analysis employs national election survey data from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom from 1992 to 2002. In the first stage, I estimate an individual-level model of vote choice modeling the impact of EU preferences for individual parties. In the second stage, I utilize party characteristics (left/right extremism, EU extremism, EU issue salience to party and opposition status) to account for cross-party variation by using an estimated dependent variable model (for further elaboration on this approach, see Lewis and Linzer, 2005).

Interestingly, the empirical analysis shows that left/right extremism is *not* the decisive factor in understanding variation in EU issue voting: extreme left or right parties are not more or less affected by EU issue voting than mainstream parties. Instead EU issue voting is directly connected to a party's *intrinsic* position on European integration: parties for whom European integration is salient and parties with an extreme position on European integration (either pro or anti) are much more susceptible to EU issue voting. In addition, opposition parties are more likely to be subject to EU issue voting. These findings have important implications for our understanding of how European integration affects national electoral and party politics. Moreover, they corroborate a growing body of work that demonstrates an increasing 'electoral connection' between European and national politics (Carrubba, 2001).

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I briefly discuss the concept of EU issue voting. Next, I present expectations regarding which political parties are likely to be affected by EU issue voting. In a third step, I discuss the data, the operationalizations and the method guiding the empirical analysis. The fourth section considers the results from the empirical analyses. Finally, the conclusion highlights the implications of these findings.

2. Conceptualizing EU issue voting

Whereas we know a lot about how national politics influences voting for the European Parliament (EP) (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Van der Brug and Eijk, 2007), we know much less about the way in which European integration intersects with national electoral politics (Börzel and Risse, 2003, 2007; Tillman 2004). This lack of understanding is unfortunate, as national elections constitute important channels through which citizens can communicate their interests regarding the EU. For example, government officials elected through national elections participate in the EU Council of Ministers. Additionally, elected leaders of government directly represent the interests of the member states and their citizens in the European Council (Gabel, 2000; Mair, 2005, 2007). European integration can intersect with national voting behaviour in three different ways. To begin, EP elections potentially serve as markers for national elections; that is to say, the performance of parties in EP elections is presumed to predict how well these parties may perform in (subsequent) national elections. Although EP elections constitute ‘second-order elections’ (Reif and Schmitt 1980) – i.e. they are dominated by national concerns and often mirror the popularity and performance of national governments (Niedermayer, 1984; Bogdanor, 1989) – studies have shown that the results of European elections have altered voting behavior in subsequent national elections (see for example Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Van der Eijk, et al., 1996; Marsh, 1998). Two such examples are the EP electoral successes of the Front National (National Front-FN) in France and of Bündnis’90/Die Grünen (Greens-Bd90/G) in Germany, which were of crucial importance to their electoral gains nationally.

An additional way in which European integration can affect national elections is through the impact of European economic integration on economic voting in national elections. Research in this field focuses on whether participation in the European Monetary Union (EMU) and specifically the introduction of the single currency changes the impact of macroeconomic

conditions on national vote choice (Palmer and Whitten, 1999; Scheve, 1999; Bohrer and Tan, 2000, Mulas-Granados, 2004). In the case of France and Britain, for example, Scheve (1999) shows that EMU had diverse distributional impacts for different groups within the French and British electorate, which in turn influenced their national voting behavior. Moreover, Palmer and Whitten (1999) argue that the single currency may increase the variability in national economic performance, and, thus, Euro membership increases the relevance of changes in macroeconomic conditions to electoral fortunes of incumbent parties (see also Bohrer and Tan, 2000 for a similar argumentation).

Notwithstanding the importance of both mechanisms, there is an even more straightforward effect of European integration on national elections, namely *EU issue voting*. EU issue voting is the process in which positions regarding European integration influence vote choice in national elections (De Vries, 2007). In other words, support or opposition towards European integration may directly co-determine vote choice in national elections. EU issue voting is receiving increasing scholarly attention (Evans, 1998, 1999, 2001, Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004; Van Holsteyn and De Ridder, 2005; De Vries, 2007). Although empirical evidence shows that the electorate's ability to constrain the integration process through national elections is limited in some countries due to low EU issue salience compared to traditional issues like the "welfare state" or "social justice" and due to restrictive choices on offer by political parties regarding the EU issue, researchers have found that in some countries, namely Denmark and the United Kingdom, EU issue voting is an important factor in national electoral politics (Evans, 1999, 2001; De Vries, 2007). In these countries, attitudes toward European integration are an important source in determining voters' national vote choice both in absolute terms as well as relative to the influence of other typically more central concerns facing voters, such as left/right ideology. Consequently, this line of research demonstrates that EU issue voting has a direct effect on national vote choice

independently from other concerns facing voters, such as left/right ideology or new politics issues like immigration or the environment.

3. EU issue voting and the electoral fortunes of political parties

This paper takes up the EU issue voting perspective. It analyses the extent to which the choice for a political party in a national election is influenced by citizens' attitudes towards European integration. Specifically, it explores which parties benefit or lose as a result of EU issue voting. I draw from the literature on party strategy and party positioning on European integration to formulate hypotheses on four party characteristics that may account for variation in EU issue voting across parties: *left/right extremism*, *EU extremism*, *EU issue salience* and *opposition status*.

The first hypothesis relates to left/right extremism.

H1 (*Left/right extremism hypothesis*): The more extreme a party's position in terms of left/right ideology, the higher the extent of EU issue voting for that party.

Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) argue that EU issue voting is likely to benefit parties on the fringes of the electoral spectrum, as left-wing or right-wing extremist parties are most likely to rally Euroskeptic sentiment in national elections. Why would we expect this to be the case? Due to their extreme position in terms of left/right ideology, radical left or right parties have an incentive to play up new issues and thereby enable themselves to reap electoral gains. This idea is in line with Riker's view that political parties mobilize on new issues 'to find some alternative [issue] that beats the current winner' (Riker 1982: 209). The EU issue provides an excellent opportunity for these parties for two reasons. First, public opinion is increasingly fickle and skeptical (Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007; De Vries and van Kersbergen, 2007), and, second,

“Euroenthusiasm” still constitutes the norm within the mainstream of Western European party systems. The ideological mainstream, i.e. Conservative, Social and Christian Democratic parties, are generally supportive of the integration process, as they have often been part of governing coalitions throughout Western Europe and therefore were largely responsible for the course of integration (Marks, et al., 2002; Crum, 2007). The radical left and right, in contrast, have been at the forefront of mobilisation of Euroskeptic views in national elections (Taggart, 1998; Hooghe, et al., 2002; Sitter, 2002).

Note that H1 does not necessarily imply that the incentives for extremist parties to mobilize anti-EU sentiment are merely strategic in nature. While it seems plausible that strategic calculation informs party change on European integration, especially for marginal parties, parties may also change their positioning because they have ideological reasons to oppose European integration. Do radical right parties, for example, oppose European integration strategically to drive a wedge in the existing party system, or does their disdain arise because European integration is the embodiment of a whole range of threats to the national community (Hooghe, et al., 2002)? Euroskepticism may simultaneously constitute a conscious strategy by political entrepreneurs *as well as* be rooted in partisan ideology; indeed, these processes are most likely mutually enforcing (see Kopecky and Mudde, 2002 for a similar argumentation).

H2 (*EU extremity hypothesis*): The more extreme a party’s stance in terms of EU positioning, the higher the extent of EU issue voting for that party.

The second factor explaining variation in EU issue voting across parties is extremity in EU positioning. The idea here is that parties taking a clear position regarding Europe, i.e. parties that are clearly Euroskeptic or Euroenthusiast, are expected to experience higher levels of EU issue voting than parties with middling positions on Europe. This expectation draws from the work of Rabinowitz and MacDonald (1989) on directional voting. Building on Stokes (1963), Rabinowitz

and MacDonald (1989) argue that issue positioning of voters consists of two elements: *direction* and *intensity*. The intensity refers to the strength of the opinion, ranging from strong preferences on the end-points of the scale to weak feelings on the neutral mid-point of the scale. The direction of the opinion has three positions: favorable, unfavorable and neutral. The directional component determines whether a voter likes or dislikes the party. In general, voters tend to like parties that are on the same side of an issue as they are. The intensity component indicates the extent to which the issue evokes an attitudinal response and how salient the issue is for a voter's judgment. More extreme positions indicate that the issue evokes stronger feelings and is of greater importance to voters' party evaluations. Thus, according to the directional model, voters do not utilize a continuum of policy positions when evaluating parties but instead focus on a party's agreement or disagreement with their personal policy preference (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989: 94).

Note that the directional idea does not imply that radical parties propagating the most extremist positions are expected to gain electorally. Although it is assumed that supporting intense issue positions is beneficial to a party, the directional model imposes a theoretical limitation to plausible issue stands, referred to as the 'region of acceptability' (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989: 108; MacDonald, et al., 1991: 1111). The idea here is that a party's issue position must be reasonable in the eyes of (most) voters: 'A candidate must convince voters of his or her reasonableness. Voters are wary of candidates who seem radical and project harshness or stridency.' (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989: 108) For our purposes, this penalty may be less relevant, as both Euroskepticism – defined as opposition towards the EU, its institutions or policies and/or the process of European integration (for an overview of definitions of Euroskepticism, see Ray, 2007) – as well as its antithesis Euroenthusiasm are reasonable positions upheld by both mainstream and peripheral parties throughout the EU (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Marks, et al., 2002). Thus, I expect that parties with clear (i.e. extreme)

preferences on the EU issue are more likely to arouse support from voters than parties with a moderate or neutral position regarding European integration (H2).

A third line of argumentation draws on saliency theory and the theory of issue ownership to argue that the extent to which a party views the EU issue as important for its electoral appeal affects its susceptibility to EU issue voting:

H3 (*Saliency hypothesis*): The higher the EU issue saliency for a party, the higher the extent of EU issue voting for that party.

Saliency theory of party competition (Budge and Farlie, 1983) and the theory of issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996) inform us that political parties build their electoral appeal around issues for which they have (or could have) the support of their constituents and/or a majority of voters. Parties make certain core issues of primary importance to their electoral campaign in order to reap electoral gains. Although issue ownership has long been regarded as fairly static, recent studies show that policy reputations are relatively flexible and, hence, open to strategic manipulation (Bélanger, 2003; Meguid, 2005; Tavits, 2008). To the extent that this is true, one would expect political parties to heighten the importance of relatively new issues, such as European integration, if they expect to be able to alter mass alignments in their favor (see also Carmines and Stimson, 1989). Parties that play up an issue seek to persuade voters to base their voting decision on that particular issue (H3).

H4 (*Opposition party hypothesis*): The extent of EU issue voting is expected to be higher among parties in opposition.

A fourth and final line of argumentation in the literature is that opposition status increases the extent to which a party is affected by EU issue voting. Because European

integration is a project driven largely by governments and government parties, criticism of EU policies tends to be the privilege of opposition parties (Sitter, 2002). Indeed, analyses show that mainstream opposition parties seem to increasingly play the anti-EU card (Sitter, 2001, 2002; Ray, 2007). The British Conservatives in recent years clearly exemplify this strategy (Evans, 1998).

Governing parties often downplay the salience of European integration because they wish to avoid fighting elections on the issue, in part because it may bring about intra-party dissent (Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Edwards, 2007; Netjes and Binnema, 2007). Moreover, it is not easy for government parties to adopt a skeptical position on Europe given that they usually have been deeply involved in shaping the integration process in the past. Hence, outspoken opposition may lack credibility. Of course, it is possible for government parties to oppose European integration, but they run the risk of isolation and consequently ineffectiveness at the EU level. As a result, government parties find themselves confronted with a steep trade-off between Euroskepticism and government effectiveness.

In contrast, opposition parties have an interest in restructuring contestation and stressing the integration issue, as such a reorientation may bring about new voters. Moreover, an increase of the polarization on European integration by opposition parties may force government parties to take a clear-cut stance on the issue, which could destabilize the government coalition. Consequently, I expect that opposition parties are more likely to be affected by EU issue voting than government parties (H4).

4. Data, operationalizations and methods

How do these four hypotheses shed light on variation among parties in their susceptibility to EU issue voting? To determine this, I need to develop a measure of the extent of EU issue voting for a party. This is a complicated procedure because one cannot observe it directly. Instead, we must

estimate a measure from the data for the two variables that make up the relationship: a voter's party choice and a voter's EU preference.

In order to explore and explain variation in EU issue voting across parties, I use a two-stage estimation procedure (Duch and Stevenson, 2005, 2007; Kedar, 2005; Lewis and Linzer, 2005). I first estimate individual-level multinomial logistic regression analyses to model the impact of voters' EU preferences on vote choice for a particular party. In the second stage, I use an estimated dependent variable model, whereby I use party characteristics to account for cross-party variation in EU issue voting. All estimations were conducted in STATA version 10. The data are national election survey data from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for the period 1992-2002.¹ Question wordings for the variables used in the empirical analysis are very similar across surveys. Moreover, the data provide an excellent basis for explaining EU issue voting across parties, since there is considerable variation across our four party characteristics: left/right extremism, EU extremism, EU issue salience and opposition status.

¹ The following datasets were used in the empirical analysis:

Denmark: 1. Valgundersøgelsen 1994, primary investigators: Jørgen Goul Andersen and Ole Borre, DDA-2210, Odense, Danish Data Archive, 2002; 2. Valgundersøgelsen 1998, primary investigators: Jørgen Goul Andersen, Johannes Andersen, Ole Borre and Hans Jørgen Nielsen, DDA-4189, Odense, Danish Data Archive, 1999; 3. Valgundersøgelsen 2001, primary investigators: Jørgen Goul Andersen, Ole Borre, Hans Jørgen Nielsen, Johannes Andersen, Søren Risbjerg, Thomsen and Jørgen Elklit, DDA-12516, Odense, Danish Data Archive, 2003.

Germany: 1. Politische Einstellungen, politische Partizipation und Wählerverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland 1998, primary investigators: Oscar W. Gabriel, Jürgen W. Falter and Hans Rattinger, ZA-3066, Zentral Archiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 1998; 2. Politische Einstellungen, politische Partizipation und Wählerverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland 2002, primary investigators: Oscar W. Gabriel, Jürgen W. Falter and Hans Rattinger, ZA-3861, Zentral Archiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 2002.

The Netherlands: 1. Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek, 1994, primary investigators: Kees Aarts, Hans Anker, Joop van Holsteyn, Erik Oppenheim, Paul Pennings, Karin Wittebrood, P1209, Steinmetz Archief, 1995; 2. Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek, 1998, primary investigators: Kees Aarts, Henk Van der Kolk and Jacques Thomassen, P1415, Steinmetz Archief, 1999; 3. Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek 2002, primary investigators: Galen A. Irwin, Joop J.M. Van Holsteyn and Josje M. Den Ridder, P1628, Steinmetz Archief, 2004.

The United Kingdom: 1. British General Election Study 1992, primary investigators: Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell, John K. Curtice, Jack A. Brand and James C. Mitchell, SN 2981, UK Data Archive, 1993; 2. British General Election Study 1997, primary investigators: Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell, John K. Curtice and Pippa Norris, SN 3887, UK Data Archive, 1999; 3. British General Election Study 2001, primary investigators: Howard Clark, David Sanders, Marianne Stewart and Paul F. Whiteley, SN 4619, UK Data Archive, 2003.

Let us begin by explaining in some detail the multiple stages of the model. In a first step, I conduct several individual-level multinomial logistic regression analyses to model the impact of voters' EU preferences on vote choice, while controlling for other factors. The dependent variable is vote choice for a particular party in a given election. Table A.1 in the Appendix provides a list of parties that were included in every election. The main independent variable is a voter's EU preference, which is gleaned from several surveys in which voters were asked to place themselves on an EU scale. These different scales were standardized to a 0-1 scale, whereby 0 indicates low EU support and 1 indicates high EU support. To assess the importance of the EU issue in relation to other central concerns, I also include non-EU related policy variables and socio-economic controls. I begin by adding a respondents' self-placement on a left/right ideological scale. This scale was recoded to a 0-1 scale, where 0 indicates a left and 1 indicates a right placement. With the exception of the British data, I also include two variables tapping the "new politics" dimension of political competition: immigration and environment. Although this new politics dimension may include diverse issues, such as political participation, gender, abortion or lifestyle issues, immigration and environmental policy are usually considered key elements of new politics (Dalton, 1996). As with the variables presented above, the different scales were recoded to 0-1 scales, where 0 indicates fewer immigrants/less green policy and 1 indicates more immigrants/more green policy. Finally, I add several socio-economic control variables, namely gender, income and education, to the model. In the Dutch and German cases, I also incorporate religiosity. These socio-economic controls tap into the impact of cleavage structures on voting behavior.

In a second stage, I utilize the estimates from the first stage to account for the cross-party variation in EU issue voting. To ensure substantively meaningful comparability across cases I transform the first stage coefficients into predicted/expected values (see also Duch and Stevenson, 2005, 2007). In this case, the first stage provides a predicted change in vote for a particular party due to a change in the distribution of EU preferences across voters. In the second

stage, I construct the estimated dependent variable, i.e. the EU issue voting measure for a particular party, as the change in vote probability when a voter moves from fully supporting to strongly opposing European integration, while holding all other control variables at their respective means. This is done using *CLARIFY*, which employs Monte Carlo simulations to convert raw statistical results into more intuitive quantities without changing the statistical assumptions (King, et al., 2000).²

Since the dependent variable in the second stage of the analysis is based on estimates, the analysis should account for the uncertainty of these estimates. Lewis and Linzer (2005) put forward a weighting procedure that produces appropriate standard errors for the second stage but also show that using White's heteroskedastic consistent standard errors is almost always as good. Hence, I use the latter strategy. Additionally, since the extent of EU issue voting is determined using several election surveys from the same country, one might expect the level of EU issue voting for the same party to be correlated across different elections. To control for this, I grouped the data by party and calculated standard errors that allow for possible correlations between parties while assuming no correlation. Consequently, the resulting standard errors allow for unspecified forms of heteroskedasticity for the same party across the different surveys.

I regress these predicted changes in vote probability against several party characteristics gleaned from the Ray (1996), Marks/Steenbergen (1999) and Hooghe et al. (2003) Expert Surveys on party positioning towards European integration. Left/right ideological extremism is measured by squaring the distance between a party's left/right position and that of the median party in the system. Similarly, EU extremism is measured by squaring the distance between a party's EU position and that of the median party. EU issue salience is measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (no importance) to 5 (high importance).³ Finally, I measure the opposition

² *CLARIFY* 2.1 is a STATA application that can be downloaded from Gary King's website: <http://gking.harvard.edu/clarify/>.

³ The EU issue salience for political parties in the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey was measured on a 4-point rather than on a 5-point scale as was common in the previous rounds of the survey. In order to make to guarantee comparability across the surveys, the 2002 item was recoded to a 5-point scale.

status of a party using a dummy variable indicating if the party was in opposition during the year prior to the election. This measure was determined using Siaroff (2000) and official government websites. Table 1 below summarizes the indicators used to operationalize the dependent and independent variables employed in the first and second stage of the empirical analysis.

--- Table 1 about here ---

5. Empirical analysis

Does the extent of EU issue voting vary across different parties? If so, who benefits? The answer to the first question is *yes*. Table 2 below provides a summary of the multinomial logistic regression analyses. It presents the multinomial logistic estimates of the impact of a voter's EU preference on vote choice for the different parties in a given election. Each such coefficient is one of a full model of vote choice estimated. Full model specification is available in tables WA.1 through WA.11 in the supplemental web appendix.

The reference category is the largest rightwing centrist party in the party system: the Danish Liberals (Venstre-V), the German Christian Democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christlich-Soziale Union-CDU/CSU), the Dutch Christian Democrats (Christen-Democratisch Appèl-CDA) and the British Conservatives (CON). By choosing the large and centrist party in the party system as the reference category, the multinomial logistic regression results provide a conservative test of EU issue voting across parties as it is harder for coefficients to reach statistical significance than when a more extremist party would have been used.

So, to what extent do British, Danish, Dutch and German citizens choose among different parties on the basis of their support for EU membership? To interpret the results presented in

table 2 we need to remember that the coefficients are log odds⁴ of voting for the party mentioned in the table in relation to the reference category. A positive coefficient indicates an increased likelihood of voting for a party other than the reference category. For example, in the Danish 2001 election, the log odds of voting Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet-S) rather than Liberals decrease by .54 for 1-unit increase in the scores on the European integration scale, i.e. when a voter is more pro-integration the probability of voting Social Democrats decreases by a factor of .54 in comparison to voting for the Liberals. Furthermore, the table shows that the effect of EU attitudes on the odds of voting for a party other than the main rightwing centrist party in a party system varies greatly per individual party. On average, for British and Danish parties voters' EU attitudes are a more important factor in determining the likelihood of a voter to vote for other parties than the British Conservatives or Danish Liberals than is the case for the Dutch and German results. This finding is in line with previous work suggesting that EU issue voting is extensive in Denmark and the United Kingdom but weak in Dutch and German elections due to the lack of partisan conflict on Europe and the relatively low salience of the EU issue in these countries (De Vries, 2007). Nonetheless, in the 1994 and 1998 Dutch elections, the likelihood of voting for the small Christian party, the Reformed Political Alliance (Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond-GPV), the Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij-SP) rather than the Dutch Christian Democrats was clearly influenced by voters' EU preferences. In Germany, the likelihood of voting for the Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands-SPD) or the former Communists (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus-PDS) during the 1998 German elections and the Liberals (Freie Demokratische Partei-FDP) in 2002 rather than the Christian Democrats was affected by voters' EU preferences.

--- Table 2 about here ---

⁴ A log odds is the logarithm of the odds in favor of or against a given event. In this case, it is the factor by which we multiply the odds of voting for party rather than for the reference category for each one-unit increase in the independent variable. It is important to note that log odds are not identical to probabilities; rather they signify the log-likelihoods of voting for one party rather than another (Menard 1995:49ff.).

In order to compare these coefficients across the cases, I transform the first stage coefficients into changes in predicted/expected values. To do so, I calculate the change in vote probability when the a voter moves from strongly opposing European integration to fully supporting it, while holding all other variables at their respective means⁵. This allows for a straightforward comparison of the extent to which a party's vote probability is influenced by EU issue voting across parties and elections. Figure 1 below shows the extent of EU issue voting across parties in a given election. Positive values indicate an increase in the expected vote probability of a party as a result of an increasingly Euroskeptic voter, while negative values indicate a decrease in the expected vote probability.

--- Figure 1 about here ---

Note that these are maximum effects which may not always be entirely realistic. Notwithstanding, these maximum effects do give a good sense of the variation in EU issue voting across parties in the data. Moreover, the data do indicate that a substantial number of respondents place themselves at the end-points of the EU scale.

The Danish Social Democrats and Liberals experienced the highest change in vote probability as a result of a voter's EU preference moving from its minimum to its maximum levels. In the United Kingdom, the Labour Party (LAB) and the Conservatives in 2001 were most strongly affected by EU issue voting. On the whole, the extent of EU issue voting for British, Danish, Dutch and German parties between 1992 and 2002 varies between 0 and 42 percent.

Why are certain parties more susceptible to EU issue voting, while others are less so? Hypotheses H1 through H4 point to four factors, which I now test in an OLS regression using the

⁵ I also performed the analysis while holding the control variables that are dummies at their respective medians. Note that this did not substantially change the results.

absolute changes in expected vote probabilities as the dependent variable. Table 3 below presents the results.

--- Table 3 about here ---

The results strongly support the theoretical conjectures formalized in hypotheses H2, H3 and H4. The findings show that variation in the effect of EU issue voting across parties is largely a function of the degree to which the EU issue is salient to a respective party, extremity in terms of EU positioning as well as opposition status. Overall, these factors explain almost half, i.e. 46 percent, of the variance in EU issue voting across parties. The strongest predictor of EU issue voting is the extent to which a party renders the EU issue salient. A one-unit increase in EU issue salience results in a .08-point increase in EU issue voting – a shift of 8.0 percentage points in EU issue voting. The EU salience finding is in keeping with both saliency theory of party competition (Budge and Farlie, 1983) and the theory of issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996). Parties seem to be able to strategically raise the salience of the European integration issue in order to boost EU issue voting.

Extremity in terms of EU positioning also increases the extent of EU issue voting. A one-unit increase in EU extremity leads to a .03-point increase in EU issue voting – a shift of 3.0 percentage points in EU issue voting. So, in line with a directional view on issue voting, parties that take either a clear Euroskeptical or Euroenthusiast stance may benefit from EU issue voting. While vote choice for parties that have a middling position regarding European integration within the party system are least influenced by a voter's EU preference. Finally, the expected value of EU issue voting is .04-point higher for opposition parties than for government parties. This finding indicates that EU issue voting is part of a government-opposition dynamic. Opposition parties are influenced to a larger extent by EU issue voting than are government parties.

The results in table 3 do not support the hypothesis that the more extreme a party's position in terms of left/right ideology, the higher the extent of EU issue voting for that party (H1). The coefficient for left/right extremism is in the expected direction but is not significant. Apparently, the fact that a party is on the far left or far right does not significantly influence the extent to which that party is affected by EU issue voting. How can we make sense of this surprising finding? One plausible explanation is that although far left and right parties frequently oppose Europe and mobilize public sentiment against it (De Vries and Edwards, 2008), the EU issue rarely constitutes their main electoral appeal (Taggart, 1998; Mair, 2000). These parties are likely to be 'parties whose identity is tied up with particular issues (e.g., ecology, immigration) and for whom the EU is a secondary concern' (Taggart, 1998: 384). The Dutch List Pim Fortuyn (Lijst Pim Fortuyn-LPF) is exemplary in this respect. Although the LPF party platform was clearly Euroskeptic, public safety and immigration policy were the key concerns in their 2002 electoral campaign and clearly overshadowed the EU issue (Pennings and Keman, 2003; Van Holsteyn, et al., 2003; Kleinnijenhuis, et al., 2003). Hence, far left and right parties often have other "powerful strings on their bows". Since European integration is clearly not paramount to national political parties, parties on the fringes will more likely devote their attention to their key "own" issues, such as immigration or their critique of neo-liberal policy (see also Taggart, 1998; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Netjes and Binnema, 2007).

Overall, the findings show that once we control for other party characteristics, the location of a party on the left-right spectrum does not matter for EU issue voting. Instead EU issue voting is directly connected to a party's *intrinsic* position on European integration: parties for whom European integration is salient and parties with an extreme position on European integration (either pro or anti) are much more susceptible to EU issue voting. In addition, opposition parties are more likely to be subject to EU issue voting. So, these findings refine previous research which has shown the important role of political entrepreneurs on the fringes of the political spectrum in facilitating EU issue voting (De Vries, 2007). The sheer fact that a party

is on the far left or far right does not automatically increase the extent to which that party is affected by EU issue voting. Rather, the degree to which a party is affected by EU issue voting largely depends on the extremity of the EU stance a party takes (i.e. is the party clearly Euroskeptic or Euroenthusiastic), if it sits in opposition and the degree to which a party views the EU issue as important for its electoral appeal. Although, EU issue voting is not necessarily being driven by extremist parties, these parties have generally devoted the most energy to the EU issue and have thus reaped the greatest rewards so far.

6. Concluding remarks

Which parties are affected by EU issue voting and why? This paper has taken an important step in understanding the way in which the process of European integration within national political arenas potentially alters mass-elite linkages at the time of election. Two main conclusions emerge from the analyses. First, there is considerable variation in the extent to which political parties are influenced by EU issue voting. Secondly, this variation in EU issue voting is largely a function of the degree to which the EU issue is salient to a respective party, the level of EU extremism and opposition status. While the literature on EU issue voting and party positioning regarding European integration thus far put forward the idea that political entrepreneurs on the fringes of the political system are expected to prosper as a result of EU issue voting, the results reported here show that extremism in terms of left/right ideology is *not* the decisive factor in understanding the variation in EU issue voting across parties. The findings indicate that the more salient the EU issue is to a party, the larger the impact of EU issue voting. Also, the more extreme a party is in terms of its EU positioning, the higher the extent of EU issue voting. Finally, EU issue voting constitutes a government-opposition dynamic, as opposition parties benefit from EU issue voting significantly more than government parties. Thus, EU issue voting

seems directly related to a party's intrinsic position regarding European integration, i.e. the salience and extremity of that position, as well as its opposition status.

Naturally, this study has limitations. A comprehensive understanding of how EU issue voting varies across parties should also account for cross-national variation. This would enable us to bring in the strategic context in which parties operate. For example, do party system characteristics matter when it comes to EU issue voting? Moreover, it may also prove worthwhile to compare these findings regarding EU issue voting to issue voting in other areas, such as immigration or the environment. These topics will have to be addressed in future research.

Despite limitations, the results presented here expand our understanding of how European integration affects national electoral politics. The study adds to the body of work that demonstrates an increasing 'electoral connection' between European and national politics (Carrubba, 2001). That is to say, by influencing national vote choice EU preferences create differential impacts on parties' electoral fortunes. The analysis highlights that parties can strategically use the EU issue to their electoral benefit. For example, by "naming or shaming" or by increasing the importance of EU issues in their electoral campaigns, parties may reap the electoral benefits of EU issue voting.

7. References

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8. Tables and Figures

Table 1: Dependent and independent variable(-s) description

First Stage: Individual Level Analysis	
Dependent variable: Vote choice	Vote choice for a particular party in a given election.
Independent variables: EU position	A respondent's self- placement on a five-point European integration scale where 1 stands for exit out of the EU and 5 stands for the fastest possible build-up of the EU (recoded to 0-1).
Left/right position	A respondent's self- placement on a five-point left/right ideological scale where 1 indicates left and 5 indicates right (recoded to 0-1).
Immigration position	A respondent's self- placement on a five-point immigration scale where 1 indicates restrict immigration and 5 indicates welcome more immigrants) (recoded to 0-1).
Environment position	A respondent's self- placement on a five-point environment scale where 1 indicates not very green policy and indicates 5 green policy (recoded to 0-1).
Gender	Respondent's gender (1=female, 0=male).
Religiosity	Respondent's church attendance (1=high, low=0). Not included in the Danish and British election surveys.
Income	Respondent's household income (1=high, 0=low).
Education	Respondent's level of education (1=high, low).
Second Stage: Party Level Analysis	
Dependent variable: Extent of EU issue voting for each party	Estimated dependent variable based on the first stage individual-level multinomial logistics regression coefficients measuring the impact of a respondent's EU position on a respondent's vote choice. Extent of EU issue voting signifies the absolute change in vote probability for a give party when a voter moves from fully supporting to strongly opposing European integration, while holding all other control variables at their respective means. This measure ranges from 0 to 42.
Independent variables: EU issue salience	EU issue salience is measured as on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (no importance) to 5 (high importance). Salience measure is obtained from Chapel Hill Expert data on party positioning regarding European integration (recoded to 0-1).

Table 1 continued

EU extremism	EU extremism is measured by squaring the distance between a party's EU position and that of the median party. A party's and the median party's EU position were measured using Chapel Hill Expert data on party positioning regarding European integration (recoded to 0-1).
Left/right extremism	Left/right ideological extremism is measured by squaring the distance between a party's left/right position and that of the median party. A party's and the median party's left/right positions were also measured using Chapel Hill Expert data on party positioning regarding European integration (recoded to 0-1).
Opposition party	Dummy variable indicating if the party was in opposition during the year prior to the election. Information obtained from Siaroff (2000) and official government websites.

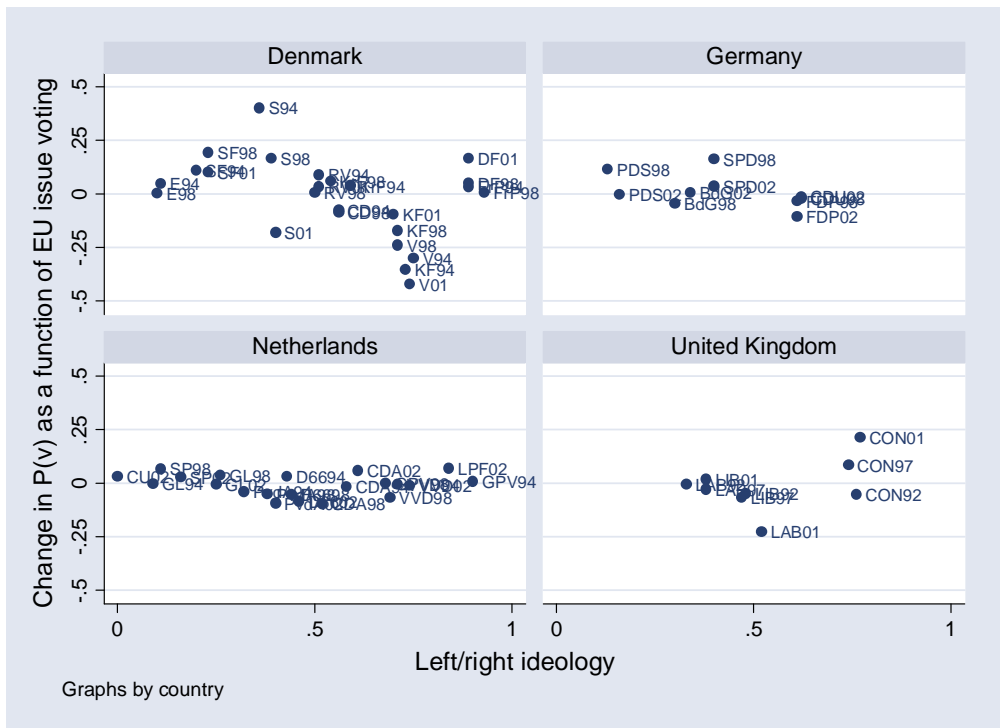
Table 2: The effect of EU preferences on vote choice

Denmark									
	DF	FrP	KF	KrF	RV	CD	SD	SF	E
1994	-	-.86*	-.06	-.70*	-.85*	-.01	-1.03*	-1.96*	-2.07*
		(.24)	(.20)	(.33)	(.28)	(.21)	(.23)	(.33)	(.41)
1998	-.83*	-.66*	-.04	-.74*	-.42*	-.06	-.54*	-1.03*	-1.22*
	(.14)	(.29)	(.12)	(.19)	(.17)	(.19)	(.12)	(.15)	(.23)
2001	-.79*	-.46	-.00	-.72*	-.08	-.80*	-.54*	-.87*	-.98*
	(.10)	(.57)	(.11)	(.21)	(.15)	(.30)	(.10)	(.14)	(.24)
Germany									
	FDP	SPD	Bd90/G	PDS					
1998	.01	-.19*	.09	-.39*					
	(.11)	(.06)	(.11)	(.09)					
2002	.28*	-.07	-.02	.04					
	(.12)	(.08)	(.14)	(.19)					
Netherlands									
	LPF	VVD	GPV/CU	D66	PvdA	GL	SP		
1994	-	-.01	-.49*	-.03	.01	-.21	-.10		
		(.07)	(.20)	(.08)	(.08)	(.13)	(.20)		
1998	-	-.05	-.51	-.04	-.15	-.20	-.40*		
		(.08)	(.34)	(.10)	(.08)	(.11)	(.13)		
2002	-.11	.03	-.22	.11	.09	.04	-.01		
	(.08)	(.08)	(.13)	(.11)	(.08)	(.11)	(.16)		
United Kingdom									
	LIB		LAB						
1992	.29*		.47*						
	(.08)		(.08)						
1997	.42		.33						
	(.30)		(.24)						
2001	.24		.43*						
	(.14)		(.14)						

Notes: Cell entries present multinomial logistic regression estimate of the impact of a voter's EU preference on vote choice. Each such coefficient is one of a full model of vote choice estimated. Full model specification is available in a web appendix.

The reference categories for the respective countries are the Danish Liberals (Venstre-V), the German Christian Democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christlich-Soziale Union-CDU/CSU), the Dutch Christian Democrats (Christen-Democratisch Appèl-CDA) and the British Conservatives (CON). Note that two small Dutch Christian parties merged prior to the 2002 election into the Christian Union (Christen Unie-CU). In the 1994 and 1998 elections the coefficients reflect vote choice for the Reformed Political Alliance (Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond-GPV), one of the CU founding members, whereas the coefficient for 2002 is based on vote choice for the CU.

*significant at $p < .05$ (two-tailed). Standard errors in parentheses.



Notes: The values on the y-axis denote the change in the expected vote probability $P(v)$ for a party as a function of an increasing Euroskeptic voter (i.e. when a voter's EU preference move from their maximum to their minimum level). Positive values indicate an increase in the expected vote probability of a party as a result of an increasing Euroskeptic electorate, while negative values indicate a decrease in the expected vote probability. The individual parties are labelled by an acronym followed by the election year. For full details on the parties included in each country and election, the reader is referred to table A.1 in the appendix.

Figure 1: Extent of EU issue voting across political parties

Table 3: Explaining variation in extent of EU issue voting

<i>Parameters</i>	Estimates
Left/Right Extremism	.02 (.02)
EU Extremism	.03* (.01)
EU Issue Salience	.08* (.02)
Opposition Party	.04* (.02)
Constant	.08* (.02)
R ²	.46
N	65

Notes: Cell entries are OLS estimates with robust standard errors clustered on party.

*significant at $p < .05$ (one-tailed). Standard errors are in parentheses.

9. Appendix

Table A.1: Party list

Country	Original Name	English Name	Acronym
Denmark	Fremskridtspartiet	Progress Party	FP
	Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People's Party	DF
	Venstre	Liberals	V
	Konservative Folkeparti	Conservative People's Party	KF
	Kristeligt Folkeparti	Christian People's Party	KrF
	Radikale Venstre	Danish Social Liberal Party	RV
	Socialdemokratiet	Social Democratic Party	S
	Centrum-Demokraterne	Center Democrats	CD
	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialist People's Party	SF
	Enhedslisten	Unity List	E
Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christlich-Soziale Union	Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union	CDU/CSU
	Freie Demokratische Partei	Free Democratic Party	FDP
	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social Democratic Party	SDP
	Bündnis '90/Die Grünen	Alliance '90/Greens	Bd90/G
	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Party of German Socialism	PDS
Netherlands	Lijst Pim Fortuyn	List Pim Fortuyn	LPF
	Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond / Christen Unie	Reformed Political Alliance / Christian Union	GPV/CU
	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	VVD
	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal	CDA
	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party	PvdA
	Democraten 66	Democrats 66	D66
	Groen Links	Green Left	GL
	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party	SP
United Kingdom		Conservative Party	CON
		Liberal Democrats	LIB
		Labour Party	LAB