Dynamic Interaction
National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

Johan Hellström
To my wonderful family
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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of an introduction and four self-contained papers, designated I-IV, which extend previous research on national political parties and voters in Western Europe. More specifically, the issues addressed are parties’ positions and voters’ opinions on European integration and their dynamic interactions, i.e. the extent to which parties’ influence voters’ opinions, voters influence parties, and the conditions under which they influence each other. All four papers make contributions to both the content of the research field and methodology (statistical techniques) applied.

Paper I re-examines and evaluates several hypotheses regarding the way national political parties position themselves with respect to European integration. Based on analysis of panel data on references to Europe in the election manifestos of political parties in 16 West European countries between 1970 and 2003, I present evidence that their stances on European integration have been largely determined by their ideology, here measured by the locations of the parties within party families and their general orientation along the left/right ideological continuum. The results indicate that the influence of ideology has diminished over time and parties have adopted more favourable positions towards the European project, but it is too early to ignore the connection between left/right and pro/anti integration, since many marginal parties are still taking oppositional stances that are strongly related to their ideological commitments.

In Paper II, I discuss how configurational comparative methods (i.e. Qualitative Comparative Analysis, QCA) and statistical methods can be combined to provide tests for the sufficiency of any given set of combination of causal conditions. The potential utility of the mixed-method approach for analyzing political phenomena is demonstrated by applying it to cross-national data regarding party-based Euroscepticism in Western Europe. The findings show that oppositional stances to European integration are mainly restricted to non-governmental ideological fringe parties on both the left and right. Further, radical left parties with Eurosceptical positions are largely restricted to countries with social democratic (i.e. Nordic) welfare state regimes. The empirical example presented in this paper demonstrates that configurational methods can be successfully combined with related statistical methods.

Paper III examines and evaluates the link between electorates’ opinions and national political parties’ positions on European integration, i.e. the extent to which political parties lead and/or follow public opinion on this issue. Applying a method for causal modelling to panel data concerning political parties’ positions and voters’ opinions in 15 countries from 1973 to 2003, I find (contrary to previous investigations of this relationship) that there is little empirical support for an electoral connection or reciprocal causation between party positions and electorates’ opinion regarding European integration. Parties have an influence on voter opinions, but they are largely unresponsive to changes in voter opinion.

In Paper IV, I examine when parties do (and do not) influence voters’ opinions about EU policy issues. According to previous research, whether parties are able to persuade their constituents to adopt their standpoints depends on several conditions: characteristics and preferences of individual voters, intra-party factors, inter-party factors and several factors that affect the salience of EU issues at the domestic level. Applying hierarchical linear models to data concerning voters’ opinions and political parties’ positions in 14 West European countries, I present findings regarding the conditions under which parties are actually able to influence voters’ opinions concerning European integration.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, European integration, dynamic representation, panel data, party positions, political parties, public opinion, voters.
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Johan Hellström (Umeå, August 2009)
LIST OF PAPERS


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Europe began as an elitist project [in which it was believed] that all that was required was to convince the decision-makers. That phase of benign despotism is now over – Jacques Delors (Independent, 26 July 1993)

INTRODUCTION

One of the main principles of modern democratic government is that the political leadership of a society is selected by the citizens in competitive elections. The essence of representative democracy lies in the representation; the relationship between citizens, the represented, and the representing. However, in politics at all levels - local, regional, national and supranational level - direct democratic participation is (still) decidedly limited. Citizen participation is not limited to the election of representatives, yet it is through these elections that the main political exercise takes place today (Manin, 1997; Pitkin, 1967, 2004). Consequently, national democracies in Europe are mainly democracies in which society and citizens are primarily linked with the state through competing national parties, to which citizens delegate power and give mandates. Democratic theory also suggests that voters’ interests and preferences should be reflected in some way by the political actors that run for elections. Thus, “democratic representation means that citizens’ issue preferences should correspond to the positions or behavior of their representatives” (quote from Powell, 2004:274; Pitkin, 1967:209-210). However, the manner in which opinion congruence is accomplished and the extent to which representatives’ positions do (and should) correspond to that of the voters differs widely between scholars, from perspectives of both normative and positive democratic theory. At risk of over-simplification, mass-driven or ‘run-from-below’ representational models stress the connection between the policy preferences and interests of citizens and the policy positions and actions of representatives (Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996:4-5; Pitkin, 1967: Ch. 10). These models usually describe parties as being responsive to voters’ demands and view preferences of citizens as more or less an exogenous force of representational democracy (e.g. Downs, 1957; Tullock, 1967). So, studies based on this perspective usually consider how public opinion affects elite attitudes or policy, and not how elite attitudes affect public opinion. Consequently, in political research there is a long tradition of studies mainly dedicated to study how political elites adjust their positions and policies in response to changes in public opinion (Erikson, Mackuen, & Stimson, 2002; Kuklinski & Segura, 1995; McAllister, 1991; Miller & Stokes, 1963; Stimson, 1991; Stimson, Mackuen, & Erikson, 1995). At the same time, elite-driven or ‘run-from-above’ models argue that public opinion is largely manipulated by party elites or (with some variations on the theme), that representatives cannot have a positive mandate from their voters, instead voters
merely react “after the fact” to the initiatives of the party elites (e.g. Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996:5; Schattschneider, 1975; Schumpeter, 1950; Thomassen, 1991). According to these models opinion formation comes mainly from above.2

Analysis of, and theory regarding, the impact of public opinion on elites’ attitudes and policymaking has produced strongly mixed views. Some analysts find a strong impact of public opinion on public policy, while others reject the idea that the public has consistent attitudes at all, or strongly doubt that the public’s opinions exercise much influence over the elites’ attitudes (c.f. Manza & Cook, 2002). Thus, it is not clear a priori whose preferences have decisive effects on the formation and dynamics of attitudes among parties and voters on political issues. Consequently, it is easy to find examples of cases in which parties lead rather than follow, follow rather than lead, or lead while at the same time trying to stay connected to perceived changes among their electorates (cf. Zaller, 1992). Thus, the possible pattern of linkages between mass-opinion and parties varies from no mass-elite linkages, through reciprocal influence linkages to one-way linkages in either direction.

In considerations of mass-opinion and party-elite linkages regarding the issue of European integration, previous authors have made substantially differing assumptions regarding the pattern of linkage; most have argued for a one-way influence linkage (e.g. Brinegar, Jolly, & Kitschelt, 2004; Franklin, March, & McLauren, 1994; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Steenbergen & Jones, 2002; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1991) but others have argued for a reciprocal influence linkage (e.g. Carrubba, 2001; Ray, 2003a; Schmitt & Thomassen, 2000; Steenbergen, Edwards, & de Vries, 2007; B. Wessels, 1995).

This thesis contributes to this discussion by analysing the ‘dynamic interactions’ between national political parties’ and their voters on the “European issue”, i.e. the issue of European integration.3 More specifically, I investigate the possible patterns of influence in the linkages between political parties’ positions and voter opinions and I pose two thematic questions. Firstly, do political parties adjust their positions on the issue of European integration in response to changes in public opinion? Secondly, do political parties have an influence on voter opinions? As outlined below, I have condensed the overall theme and these two overarching questions into four concrete and empirical research questions, each of which has been investigated in a separate paper.

While few scholars would argue that the issue of European interaction is driven solely by public opinion, even fewer would argue that public opinion is irrelevant to the process of integration. Hence, the extent to which party issue positions and public opinions on integration (dynamically) interact with each other is essentially an empirical issue.

When I address these questions, I consider both how we can partly explain the stability and dynamics of citizens’ and national political parties’ attitudes to European integration. By stability of attitudes I refer to positions between parties and mass-opinions that remain more or less constant over time and the dynamic element of changes in attitudes over time. These issues are argued to be dynamic for various reasons. For national political parties, it is argued that this is partly a result of responses to the changing character of the EU, since political parties are assumed to alter their positions over time as a reaction to these
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changes. In addition, parties are also argued to be receptive to changes in mass opinion, since rational party leaderships keep a close eye on their constituents to avoid deviating too far from them. For voters' positions, changes are argued to be partly understood as elite-driven, since different societal elites, including party elites, present differing positions (usually through the mass media) in attempts to influence public opinion.

As mentioned above, the thesis is based on four independent papers, all of which explore specific aspects of this theme. I will present these papers in more detail at the end of this introduction, but I will briefly summarise and discuss how they relate to the general topic here. The first two papers deal specifically with political parties, mainly investigating how their types – in terms of party family (cf. Kitschelt, 1994; Mair & Mudde, 1998; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986), ideological roots or “niche” character (cf. Meguid, 2005) - shapes their positions on European integration. The voter connection is merely implicit in these two papers since the main aim is to determine how factors other than mass-opinion can help to explain the stability and dynamics of partisan positioning towards Europe. To assume that merely mass opinions are relevant for party positions would clearly be erroneous. Therefore, these two papers provide descriptions and explanations for the dynamics, or lack thereof, of party positions. The presented results indicate that political parties’ stances on European integration are to a large extent determined by ideology and position within the party system. Political parties have been assimilating the issue of European integration within existing structures or ideological frames, with mainstream parties taking up (moderately) pro-EU positions, or avoiding competition on the issue completely, with strong opposition to Europe restricted to peripheral parties or niche parties at the left and right (i.e. former communist parties, green-left parties and radical right parties). Opposition to the EU in this respect is mainly ideological and/or strategic, and usually limited to smaller, non-governmental parties. Over time, however, the importance of ideology has diminished, as most parties have adopted more favourable positions towards the European project in due course.

The third paper moves on to study dynamic interactions between voters and parties directly. Hence, this paper examines possible patterns of influence linkages between mass-opinion and parties. I find that political parties are to some extent able to influence public opinion, but parties do not seem to have responded to shifts in voter opinions by modifying their positions accordingly. If voters do have an influence on parties’ stances on European integration their influence is most likely minor. Thus, I conclude that the mass-elite linkage of influence on the issue of European integration in this respect is unidirectional, being generally elite-driven.

Finally, the fourth paper investigates circumstances in which parties’ positions may influence voter opinion. Whether voters will adjust their views by aligning them with those of their preferred party is conditional upon the characteristics of the individual voter, party, and party system. That is, political parties can influence public opinion, but only under certain circumstances, thus support for or opposition to European integration is understood to be partly mediated by political parties. Parties are able to persuade their constituents to adopt certain
positions on the issue only when party elites are openly debating integration and promoting competing policy positions on the scope of integration, because voters receive more information about the parties’ positions at such times than at others. I also show that the influence of parties is unevenly distributed among the public, and most persuasive among those who are politically interested and attentive to political matters.

Consequently, the studies show that the influence linkages between national political parties and voters on the issue of European integration can be most validly described by elite-driven or ‘run-from-the-top’ models of representation. However, the observed unresponsiveness of political parties to electorates’ opinions found in the studies is argued not to be particularly surprising, for several reasons. Firstly, in cases when a party is in accordance with its supporters on an issue, there is no pressure for it to change its position, since it is gaining from the status quo. Secondly, voters are known to have little knowledge about the EU generally, so it is not surprising that constituents’ opinions appear to be ‘cued’ by political parties, since parties to some extent fulfil an important role by communicating the content of the political decision-making process and thus help uninformed voters to form opinions. This is because complex issues require substantial cognitive ability as well as a considerable time commitment on the part of the voter to form an opinion. Thus, it is rational for voters to rely on elite cues or ‘cognitive shortcuts’ to form opinions or grant elites discretion with respect to policy-making on these issues. Further, the public opinion to which party elites try to respond is not the public opinion reflected in the polls at the time of making decisions, but rather the opinion that a rival party may appeal to in the next election. For this reason, if parties have relatively similar positions on the issue, or if the issue is of little interest for the public at the time of an election, i.e. it is a low salience issue, parties will have little incentive to follow the electorates’ opinions and can adopt positions that are more or less independent of the voters.4

This introductory section next presents the research questions, outlines the scope of the thesis and discusses definitions of some central concepts. To help meet these aims, and to set the scene for what is to follow, European integration is also introduced as a contested issue. This is followed by a presentation and discussion of the (most important) data used in the studies. The third part then presents trends in party positions and voter opinions and discusses whether European integration is a salient issue among voters and parties. After that, I give a short summary of previous research and theoretical approaches used to explore, and explain, variations of attitudes among parties and voters, and the relationship between them. A brief methodological discussion is then presented, which provides complementary information on some methodological issues concerning the four attached papers. Finally, I provide a summary of the papers and discuss the main findings and conclusions.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE SCOPE OF THE THESIS

This thesis does not explore uncharted grounds, neither attempt to address research issues that have not yet been studied by other scholars, nor formulate research questions that no-one has raised before. Instead, I try to make a contribution within an established research field that has aroused the interest of scholars for more than five decades, critically examining previously novel studies and the conclusions they make, replicating results and confirming or presenting alternative possible descriptions of the relationships considered. Or, as Gabel, Hix and Schneider (2002:482) argue:

“In political science and elsewhere, many people have recognized recently that we need to invest more time in what is the normal standard in the natural sciences – cumulation. By this we mean that we are able to establish empirically tested theory only if a large enough group of people works on the same problem and cumulates knowledge through the repeated and competitive testing of its key propositions. Although the critical rationalism advocated by Karl Popper has some flaws, its one key insight still seems valid: we can accept a certain hypothesis only if it survives critical theoretical challenges and empirical replications”.

Consequently, this dissertation is placed in a broad and growing body of literature that is concerned with how the European integration process, and the delegation of policy competences from domestic to European level, is supported by citizens and national political parties. My contribution is to explore how we can best describe and explain some aspect of how two kinds of national actors – citizens and national parties – position themselves with regards to the European integration process and to what extent and under which conditions parties’ positions and voters’ opinions influence each other. That is, I investigate the possible influence linkages between political parties’ positions and voter opinions.

It is not possible to address all aspects of such a wide-ranging topic. Therefore, this dissertation is based on four appended, self-contained papers, in which I make specific contributions to this topic, prompted by an identified need to improve, confirm or refute claims that have been made in previous research. In relation to previous studies on the topic, the appended papers rely on (sometimes) different datasets, empirical models, and generally, more appropriate and sophisticated methodology than that generally applied in previous pertinent studies. The research questions that are addressed in the four papers are the following:

I. What factors determine how political parties position themselves on European integration, and specifically to what extent do political parties’ ideologies influence their stances on European integration?
II. Does opposition to European integration follow a government-opposition dynamics, i.e. is this conditional on whether political parties are in government or opposition; and among far-left parties is it conditional on the type of welfare state regime in operation, i.e. are Eurosceptic far-left parties restricted to countries with social democratic welfare state regimes?

III. What are the patterns of influence linkages between national political parties and voters – are political parties leading or following voters’ opinions, or perhaps both? In other words, to what extent do political parties lead and follow the electorates’ opinions on European integration?

IV. When do parties’ stances matter, and not matter, for the voters’ opinions on European integration? That is, under what conditions are political parties able to persuade their constituents to adopt their standpoints?

Setting the scene: National political parties, voters and European integration

Why are these concrete research questions important in the context of European integration? The reason is that since its birth as the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Union (EU) has been a source of public controversy and scholarly debate. The EU has increased in importance over time, and been transformed into a multilevel polity in which European issues have become increasingly important not only for national governments, but also for citizens and political parties. Both among political parties and voters, positions range from euphoric support for European integration to strong and deep-seated scepticism. This observation applies both within and across countries in Europe, but national political parties’ responses to Europe differ in different countries. Some party systems have parties that promote and oppose European integration, while others lack Eurosceptical parties (but not necessarily Eurosceptic voters). In addition, standard measures of support for European integration indicate that there is a representational gap between parties and voters; party elites are more in favour of integration than voters (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Mattila & Raunio, 2006).

As mentioned above, representative democracy in Europe is synonymous with party-based democracy. Consequently, national political parties play an important role in many democratic models of EU politics. They “govern EU member states, contest European elections and organize into party groups in the European Parliament” (Gabel, et al., 2002:485). In particular, national political parties play a central role in the selection of key members of European institutions, most importantly the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. In addition, political parties have indirect influence in the selection of Commissioners. In referenda on European issues they mobilise the voters, communicate and help voters to form preferences, and structure the competition over the issue. They may also affect whether (and if so how) European issues influence national elections. Most importantly, political parties are the key actors in modern democracy, as well as in the process of European integration, determining how ‘Europe’ manifests as a political issue within the member
states, and thus they play an important role in linking the European Union to the citizens of Europe. However, not only political parties, but also citizens' attitudes or public opinion on European integration have become increasingly important over time.

For a long time, transnational European co-operation was almost entirely an elite activity, in which citizens' opinions were of minor importance. European integration was treated as a matter of foreign policy, based on a broad pro-European elite consensus, and public inputs were characterised by a “permissive consensus”, since there was a lack of public salience over European policy issues. That is, elites assumed that the publics of the member states accepted the integration process without concern (Lindberg & Sheingold, 1970). Many scholars therefore viewed public opinion as being almost irrelevant to the integration process (e.g. Haas, 1968; Lindberg & Sheingold, 1970). Since the EU was initiated by agreements between nation states (i.e. the Treaty of Paris and the two Treaties of Rome) research on European integration was dominated by the International Relation (IR) discipline. The scholarly debate also reflected this, in that academics were initially mostly concerned with explaining phenomena that triggered and gave momentum to the integration process, rather than issues of (representative) democracy. Thus, from the late 1950s to the early 1990s, scholarly EU research was dominated by the rivalry between 'neo-functionalism' theory (e.g. Haas, 1968), and 'intergovernmentalism' (e.g. Moravcsik, 1993), and integration was conceived as an elite-driven process in which public opinion (and to some extent national political parties) was considered to be largely irrelevant. An elite perspective of European integration was reasonable so long as EU decision-making did not become a public concern. However, since the Maastricht treaty of 1992, it is often argued that the EU has become more salient to the public, and that the strictly elite-driven process has come to an end (Carrubba, 2001; Steenbergen, et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996:7-8). For instance, recent research shows that not only is it perceived among the voters as a more important issue, public opinion on European integration has also become quite well structured (Franklin & Wlezien, 1997; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004). For instance, the French and Dutch referenda of 2005 on the treaty revision concerning the European Constitution, and the Irish rejection in 2008 of the reformed treaty (i.e. the Treaty of Lisbon) demonstrated that public opinion can have a direct constraining effect on the European integration process. In addition, recent research indicates that public opinion is not only important in EU referenda but also in national elections (de Vries, 2007b; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004). The "permissive consensus" that characterised European integration in its early stages has been "greatly weakened" (Schmitter, 2003:83) and could now more accurately be described as a "constraining dissensus" in which citizens and political parties more actively monitor the course of integration and recurrently voice their fears and objections.

Consequently, the incentives facing party elites have changed. When European issues are salient for the voters, party elites and "governments, i.e., party leaders in positions of government authority, anticipate the effect of their decisions on public opinion - or face the consequences in elections and
referenda” (Hooghe & Marks, 2009:248). Therefore, as the EU becomes more salient, the interaction between the electorates and political parties is becoming increasingly important for the future of the integration process. Moreover, if the emerging European political order (regardless of the political system it will become) is to qualify as democratic in any meaningful sense, parliaments and political parties (at the European or national level) will have to play a central role as representative institutions and agents (cf. Katz & Wessels, 1999).

Setting the scene: What falls outside and what falls inside the scope of the study?

In this dissertation I limit my scope to studying parties and voters in Western Europe, more specifically the EU membership countries of 1995 (plus Norway). Rather than divide Western Europe by country, I study voters’ opinions and parties’ positions on European integration cross-nationally.

This thesis is incomplete in that I focus on opinion formation of parties and voters regardless of whether these parties are in government or not. Thus, when addressing opinion responsiveness of parties I study all parties and not merely government parties. Consequently, I do not take the argument further in studying dynamic policy representation, i.e. how voters’ opinions affect public policy. In addition, I do not examine how elites frame issues (e.g. Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman, 2004) or the potential effects of framing on the dynamics of public opinion (Hennessy, St. Charles, Webber, & Druckman, 2009).

To study attitudes, opinions and positions on European integration one needs to define what is meant in this thesis by the concept of European integration in relation to attitudes of voters and parties. Bartolini asserts that issues arising from integration, or ‘European issues’ can

“simply be defined in terms of ‘pro’ or ‘against’, of positive or negative general orientation towards the EU. Next to these general orientations there are more specific constitutive issues that pertain to ‘membership’ (the geographical and functional boundaries of the EU), ‘competences’ (what should be done at the EU level as opposed to other levels of government), and ‘decision-making rules’ (how collective decisions should be taken). Finally, European issues can also be identified as isomorphic issues that correspond to similarly structured national issues (economic interventionism versus neoliberalism, welfare, citizenship rights, immigration policy, law and order issues, etc.)” (2005:310).

In short, by attitudes to European integration or European issues “we may mean a general and a specific orientation to the EU, specific constitutive issues concerning the nature of the polity, and even more specific isomorphic issues defining the nature of politics” (Bartolini, 2005:310). In this thesis I refer to attitudes to European integration as a general orientation to the EU, and the process of delegating policy competences from domestic to supranational level.
Consequently, attitudes to specific policy issues related to European integration are beyond the scope of this thesis.

As in other studies that seek to provide generalised descriptions and explanations, this inevitably involves relying on several assumptions and some important simplifications, since a study that attempted to address seriously every single plausible source of influence on either party positions or public opinion and every proposed conceptual nuance of what constitutes a party, would provide little more than descriptive accounts of the relationships considered. Therefore, following the conventional approaches in the research field, political parties are seen as more or less unitary actors.\textsuperscript{11} This is obviously a gross simplification since parties are not unitary organisations, but rather consist of fragmentised groups and organisational features, which do not necessarily have identical interests, concerns and goals (e.g. Katz, 2002). Nonetheless, this simplification serves a key analytical purpose, since the thesis (and appended studies) focus on the specific linkages between the top of the hierarchy in the party (i.e. the party elite’s or the party’s official stance on an issue) and its party supporters. This is not an arbitrary choice since it is the party representatives, who are members of parliaments and governments, that try to implement policies and they are the main communicators of the parties’ policy stances to the public.

Why study national political parties (and domestic politics) and not European parliamentary parties? In assessments of the role of political parties, as representative agents between the electorates and the European institutions, much research has been devoted to the potential transformation of party politics at the EU-level - with more power devolved to the European parliament (EP) to assert itself in relation to the Commission and, especially the Council of Ministers, accompanied by the possible emergence of functioning supranational Euro-parties and a single European electorate (e.g. Hix, 1999; Lodge, 1996; W. Wessels & Diedrichs, 1999).

However, given the ‘second order’ nature of European elections, which to a large extent are fought over national rather than European issues (Marsh, 1998; Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt, 2005; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996),\textsuperscript{12} and due to the limited development of a European transnational public sphere of communication linking citizens and polities (Machill, Beiler, & Fischer, 2006; Schlesinger, 1999), other scholars argue for the continuing relevance of national political parties, and claim that at least for the near future important changes in party contestation over Europe will be found within, and generated by, national party politics (Hooghe & Marks, 1999; Mair, 2000). In addition, it is currently more logical for voters wanting to influence and voice their support or opposition to the integration process to do so via national political parties and in national elections (Gabel, 2000; Mair, 2007). This is because the other representational link between the voters and their representatives, namely the delegation of power from voters to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), is a less efficient channel of representation for the voters since the EP has a more limited role in shaping the course and direction of European integration at present (Mair, 2007:7-9). In theory, the EP is a representative body that should allow voters to influence the policies and composition of the
EU through elections of the EP. In practice, however, the EP is constrained in fully performing this function. This is because the EP can only partially hold the Commission to account, and the composition of the European Council and Council of Ministers is unaffected by the composition of the EP. Most importantly, it is in the national arena and in national elections that voters can provide a mandate and hold their national representatives to account, who then shape the course of integration in the Council of Ministers and the European Council. In addition, nationally elected members of parliament can have some influence on, or at least comment on, EU legislation, although their power varies greatly among the EU member states (Bergman, 2000; Raunio, 1999).

Hence, domestic politics is important, at least because national political parties competing in national elections are important channels through which voters can express their concerns about European integration. Political parties can also play an important role in communicating, informing and shaping public opinion. In this respect, parties can act as links between the people and the EU, bringing the electorates’ views into the European arena while also explaining the role of the EU to their voters.

Nonetheless, if national political parties are to fulfil this role some prerequisites should be fulfilled, specifically European integration needs to be a sufficiently important issue among both the electorate and the parties themselves, and parties need to officially promote their positions to their electorates. These issues, and the salience of European integration in national political arenas, are further addressed in the “European integration as a national conflict issue” section, in which the main trends in support for the EU among the voters are briefly examined. It also considers whether integration issues are sufficiently important or salient in the mind of the public to influence the extent of partisan conflict, and whether there is any voter-party congruence, that is whether (and if so to what extent) parties’ positions correspond to their voters’ opinions on European integration. However, before investigating these issues (and presenting descriptive statistics on parties and voters) I will next present the data I use to measure parties’ and voters’ attitudes to European integration.

**DATA**

*It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.* - Arthur Conan Doyle

Systematic studies of the issues addressed in this thesis require comparable cross-national data on the positions taken by political parties and opinions of the voters, and changes in their positions and opinions over time. The data used in this thesis originate from various sources. Here, I will discuss the most important measures used in the papers and thesis, namely those that quantify the positions of political parties and opinions of the electorates.
Measuring party positions

There are essentially three approaches that can be used to determine the policy positions of political parties (four if one counts elite studies, which have been quite uncommon to date), based on analyses of (i) contents of party manifestos, (ii) expert survey judgments, and (iii) mass opinion surveys. For analyses of patterns over long (decades) timeframes relevant, available, independent cross-national data have been compiled via the first and second of these approaches.

I will not enter into an extensive discussion here of the pros and cons of party manifesto data compared to expert data, but rather mention some of the benefits and shortcomings of the two methods of extracting policy positions of political parties (for a more comprehensive review see Keman, 2007; Marks, Hooghe, Steenbergen, & Bakker, 2007; Ray, 2007b; Volkens, 2007).

The first source of data discussed here is the dataset compiled by the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (henceforth MRG/CMP), which is the most comprehensive dataset available, covering almost every election during the period 1945-2003, derived from thematic content analysis of programmes, manifestos and platforms of political parties (Budge, Klingemann, Volkens, Bara, & Tanenbaum, 2001; Klingemann, Volkens, Bara, Budge, & McDonald, 2007). The method used to extract the policy positions of political parties recorded in this dataset was to code each quasi-sentence in the examined party program as belonging to one of 56 categories, issues or themes. Each issue represents a pre-determined policy area and was estimated by a thematic content analysis, by measuring the frequency that the issues (i.e. quasi-sentences) appeared in each election program. Of a total of 56 categories in the MRG/CMP dataset, two deal with European integration; one indicates positive references (per108) to European integration and one indicates negative (per110) references.

This approach of measuring party positions has several weaknesses. For instance, it has been criticized for the coding errors that may be generated, as described by Volkens (2001). There could be intra-coder or inter-coder unreliabilities in the MRG/CMP coding procedure (i.e. coding unreliability due to different coders), but as yet no tests of whether or not differences between two texts are significant have been published, so whether or not this constitutes a significant problem is not certain. Another weakness of the MRG/CMP approach arises from the fact that manifestos are strategic documents. They tell us what parties have to say (and want the voter to hear) rather than party positions as such. Controversial questions could be glossed over, while uncontroversial ones may be over-emphasized. For example, (more) education will be stressed, since parties are hardly likely to win elections by promising to close down schools. The MRG/CMP approach to this problem is found in the logic behind the ‘saliency theory’ of political campaigns. According to salience theory (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996) parties compete by strategically emphasising selected issues, in order to raise the electorate’s attention to certain issues that make the party look good. Salience theory suggests that parties ‘own’ specific issues, in the sense that voters associate certain parties with specific
issues, thus they emphasise these issues while de-emphasising issues that are associated with competing parties. Consequently, party competition is not about promoting opposing views on the same issues. Thus, saliency theory implies that what is important in the manifestos is the actual frequency of statements on an issue (i.e. salience), rather than the actual support for or opposition to the same (i.e. direction). Nevertheless, the MRG/CMP coding is not non-positional in policy terms, because many of the categories are value statements or pro/con categories, for instance a party’s references to European integration. So, when using the MRG/CMP dataset, one has to assume that there is a strong relationship between the coded party position and party emphasis (salience) of an issue, but also its orientation towards that issue.

Further, since party manifestos are strategic documents for signalling major policy shifts to the electorate, there may be short-term fluctuations in the dataset. Moreover, occasionally parties competing for votes have a tendency to over-emphasise the European issue in certain elections, when international or domestic events temporarily increase the salience of issues relating to European integration. In addition, a problem in using this thematic category as a measurement of European integration is that some parties do not mention European integration in their manifestos. This can be due to various factors: low salience of the issue within a country, internal divisions within some parties or in some cases because some parties have not developed any position on the issue at the time. This does not cause any major problem in this thesis, however, because absence of any clear policy position on European integration will be interpreted as a position per se.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, the validity and reliability of the MRG/CMP data should be adequate for the studies this thesis is based upon. The main advantages of the MRG/CMP approach are the reliability and comparability of the data provided. The election manifestos are issued by the actors that are studied, and actors that are part of the same political system. There is also evidence that the manifesto data provide reasonable proxies for the actual positions of parties (Volkens, 2007), which correspond fairly well with those obtained from expert surveys of party positions (Marks, et al., 2007; Ray, 2003b:983; 2007b). For instance, simple correlation analysis of manifesto data pertaining to European integration with data in the Chapel Hill expert surveys on party positions, yielded moderately to strong correlations, with Pearson’s correlation coefficients ($r$) of 0.62, 0.70, 0.65, 0.71, 0.66 and 0.61, for the years 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999 and 2002, respectively.

The other source of data on party positions used in the studies originates from the Chapel Hill expert surveys (Hooghe, et al., 2008; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007), in which local experts were asked to quantify the level of support for European integration etc., among national political parties. The first expert survey was conducted and administered by Leonard Ray in 1996, and later updated by Marco Steenbergen and Gary Marks in 1999, and by Liesbet Hooghe among others in 2002. Since these measurements correspond fairly well with MRG/CMP data, a relevant question is how reliable are the Chapel Hill expert data as measurements of party positions? Expert surveys are not without their shortcomings, as summarised by Budge (2000) who raises
several pertinent questions. What “party” do experts make their judgements on: the party leadership, party activists, its voters or all three combined? What criteria do experts use to rank parties? Do they rate intentions, preferences or behaviour? What time period or time point is the judgment of policy positions based on?24 Some survey questions (e.g. those regarding party leadership positions in general and on specific issues) include clear references to components of the party – e.g. the party leadership, party activists or its voters – the experts are expected to evaluate, but others do not (e.g. those regarding issue salience). The stated criteria in the questionnaires for ranking parties are not without shortcomings either. For some questions, such as those on levels of intra-party dissent, a strict and understandable criterion is given, but for other questions, such as those related to party ideology, the criteria that should be applied when placing parties within certain ranges are very vague, and little guidance regarding what a particular placement represents is provided. However, the most serious criticism of Budge (2000) in relation to the Chapel Hill expert survey data concerns what experts are expected to rate concerning the party – its intentions, preferences or behaviour – since this it is not clear in the questionnaires. This could cause problems with inter-rater reliability, since different experts may judge parties on different grounds.25 The last potential complication, i.e. the time period or time point that the judgment of policy positions should be based on, should probably not be a problem in general, since the years the survey questions refer to are distinctly stated.

Despite these problems, as shown by Steenbergen and Marks (2007), the reliability of the Chapel Hill expert surveys should be considered more than adequate since the data correspond well (i.e. have good convergent validity) with other alternative measures of party positions on European integration.

Given these shortcomings of the data on political parties, one could argue for the use of more reliable data, but these are the best sets of cross-national data measured over time currently available, and they are far better than the anecdotal evidence that has been widely applied in various previous studies.

Measuring voter opinions

This thesis relies on two different alternative measurements of citizen’s attitudes on European integration: mass survey respondent’s attitudes, in which the unit of analysis is the voter; and the electorate, in which the unit of analysis is public opinion i.e. the aggregate of individual attitudes.26 Both mass opinions and individual attitudes were measured using the publically available (Standard) Eurobarometers, public opinion surveys that have been conducted twice annually in all member states of the EU since 1973. These are the most well known and widely used surveys for empirically oriented research on public opinions on European integration, mainly because they are the most comprehensive surveys of citizen opinions in Europe and they have included general attitudes towards the EU since their inception. The Eurobarometer surveys are funded by the European Commission, but are conducted by independent polling agencies in each of the EU member states, who interview representative samples of the population in the respective member states aged 15
years and older. All interviews have been face-to-face in people’s homes and in the “appropriate” national language.27

The major strengths of the Eurobarometers lies in their comparability over time across standard trend variables, most of which have been included since the first few surveys. Data on the responses to these questions are combined in a cumulative data set, the Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File (1970–2002), which allows (cross-sectional) time-series analysis (Schmitt, Scholz, Leim, & Moschner, 2005).

Unfortunately, there are rather few core trend variables measuring attitudes to the EU in the Eurobarometer surveys. The pertinent questions that have been asked repeatedly over time concern attitudes to the respondent’s own country’s membership, to the unification of Europe, and desired speed and perceived speed of the European integration process. However, the only question that has been asked over the whole study period with no gaps (i.e. was asked regularly every year) concerns the respondent’s own country’s membership of the EU, more specifically: “Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the European Union is ‘a good thing,’ ‘neither good nor bad,’ or ‘a bad thing’?”. Responses to this survey item are used here as proxies for public support for European integration, and should provide adequate measurements for the purposes of the studies underlying this thesis. Previous research has shown that responses to this question tend to be highly correlated with other questions concerning attitudes to the EU, and also usually reflect respondents’ support for integration generally and support for various specific EU policy issues (cf. Anderson, 1998; Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Gabel & Palmer, 1995).

A further potential shortcomings of the Eurobarometer surveys are the relatively low sample sizes (nationally representative samples of about 1000 respondents), and high rates of non-responses or refusals (ranging from ca. 25 to 85 percent).28 Hitherto, there has been no systematic investigation of the effects of these shortcomings on the reliability of the survey responses. However, since this is of great importance for the results presented in this thesis, I need to ascertain if the Eurobarometers contain large measurement errors. A simple test of this is to compare the results of the Eurobarometers with those of surveys that draw on larger samples and have higher interview completion rates. One such survey is the Party Preference Survey (PSU) conducted by Statistics Sweden, which draws on a sample of about 9000 Swedish citizens and usually has a survey response rate exceeding 80 percent of the target population. Although this survey mainly investigates party preferences, public’s attitudes towards the EU have been included since 1992. If Eurobarometer and PSU surveys give similar results, and capture the same trends over time, this should indicate that the Eurobarometers are probably adequate for my purposes. However, comparing these surveys is not entirely straightforward, since the two surveys ask the respondents slightly different questions. The Eurobarometers ask “Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the European Union is ‘a good thing,’ ‘neither good nor bad,’ or ‘a bad thing’?” (with “don’t know” an acceptable answerer), while Statistics Sweden phrase the question “Are you mainly for or against the Swedish EU membership or do you not have a firm opinion?”29 The question from Statistics Sweden is more positional than the
equivalent question in the Eurobarometers, because it does not really offer a middle-position. Therefore, to make the two surveys more equivalent we need to include only positive and negative opinions towards EU membership and exclude the “don’t know” responses in the Eurobarometer dataset since these are treated as missing in the data from Statistics Sweden. The results from this comparison show there is good correspondence between the results from the two surveys, regarding both the level of and changes in opinion on EU membership (Figure 1), which gives some indications that the Eurobarometers should provide reliable measurements of EU support. On the other hand, since it is problematic to draw any firm evidence of the reliability of the Eurobarometers from comparisons with only one other independent survey, a more wide-ranging systematic investigation should preferably be applied. However, this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Therefore, I have to make the assumption that the Eurobarometers provide adequate measurements of public opinions.

![Figure 1. Trends in public opinion regarding EU membership in Sweden, 1996-2002.](image)

A final note concerns the coverage of the different datasets. Concerning data on parties, the Chapel Hill party dataset includes the membership countries of 1995, excluding Luxembourg, while the MRG/CMP manifesto dataset includes all countries included in the analyses presented in this thesis. However, the Eurobarometers have only occasionally included respondents in Norway. Therefore, the number of countries included in the studies and descriptive analysis presented below varies (from 14 to 16).
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AS A NATIONAL CONFLICT ISSUE

Once you open that Pandora’s box, you’ll find it full of Trojan horses - Ernest Bevin, British Foreign secretary

With the development of the EU from an institution based on negotiations between sovereign states, to a more supranational institution with its own agenda setting power, EU issues have entered the domain of domestic (party) politics. A relevant question is whether the issue of European integration is like any other political issue, such as education, foreign aid etc. I would answer yes and no. Yes, because in a way all policy issues have their own unique characteristics and few political issues can be readily directly compared to one another, since they are differently connected to partisan lines and have differing importance and meaning in the minds of the parties and public. No, partly because the issue is unique in being both a domestic and foreign policy issue, but more importantly in being a polity of its own. Thus, European issues incorporate not only the issue of supranational governance and the delegation of policy competences from domestic to European level, but also the content, as well as character, of policy-making in the EU. Certainly, it is not a “valence” issue (Stokes, 1963), that is an issue with symbols and political rhetoric, but without any diverging positions. Political parties and a large proportion of the voters do have conflicting views on whether European integration, as it has developed over the years, is desirable and what, if anything, it ought to accomplish. Nonetheless, the questions of dynamic interactions and influence linkages between political parties’ positions and voter opinions, i.e. parties’ responsiveness to public opinion and their ability to adopt positions so as to influence opinion, should be contingent on how the issue is played out in the national political arenas. It is not clear whether European issues are sufficiently salient, among a sufficient proportion of the voters, to create sufficient incentive for the parties to show responsiveness. Further, in some countries (e.g. Sweden, Norway and the UK) it has been a divisive issue not only across, but also within parties, creating uncertainty on whether promoting and emphasising European issues will be advantageous or not (Hix, 1999; Johansson & Raunio, 2001). Thus, I examine below whether or not the issue is salient in the national political arenas, by briefly investigating the main trends in support for the EU among the voters and parties and if integration issues are sufficiently important or salient in the mind of the public to affect the extent of partisan conflict, the extent of partisan conflict and issue salience regarding Europe, and whether there is any voter-party congruence, that is, whether (and if so to what extent) parties’ positions correspond to their voters’ opinions on European integration. This descriptive analysis also provides an idea of the magnitude of stability and dynamics in the attitudes of parties and voters. If either voters or parties do not change their position over time, one can rule out the possibility that they affect
each other at all and conclude that there are no elite-mass linkages on the issue of European integration.

**Dynamics of public support for European integration**

The public has been generally in favour of the integration process, as shown in figure 2, but the cross-national variations are quite distinct, as shown in figure 3. In figure 2, frequencies of undecided respondents are also shown. One could expect that as the EU becomes more politicised over time the proportions of voters with no particular preferences regarding the EU should decline, but as shown in the figure they have remained fairly constant (at around 10 percent) over the whole time period. Figure 3 also shows that the most Euro-positive citizens are found in the EU’s founding members countries (i.e. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) along with Portugal and Spain, and more recently Greece and Denmark. The other six countries (Ireland, the UK, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway) stand out in that occasionally more of their people were against than supported the EU, or opinion was much divided. In all countries there have been substantial changes in opinions over time.

![Figure 2. Main trends in public support for European integration, 1970-2003. Source: Eurobarometer Trend File (Schmitt, et al., 2005).](image-url)
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

Belgium

France

Germany

Italy

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Denmark

Ireland

UK

Greece

Portugal

Spain

Year

Good

Bad

Neither
Public issue salience

Are European integration issues sufficiently important or salient in the mind of public? The importance of the opinion of the electorate for their representatives is obviously dependent on whether voters consider European integration to be an important issue in national elections. If parties have little or nothing to lose from deviating from the voters’ positions on European integration, since voters regard other issues as being far more important for their vote choice, parties may adopt positions that are more or less independent from the voters. However, several studies have indicated that voter opinions on the EU influence voting behaviour in national elections (cf. de Vries, 2007b; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004). In addition to these studies, another indication of whether the issue is salient among the voters is to examine the frequently asked questions from national election surveys about what respondents believe to be the most important issues. According to these surveys it is clear that it is mainly domestic political issues that the voters regard as most important and issues directly related to European integration are in most cases secondary. For instance, in the Danish election of 2001, Portuguese elections of 2002 and 2005, and the Spanish election of 2004, less then 1 percent of the voters considered European integration to be the most important issue. At the other end of the spectrum, in Norway, Sweden and Finland about 7-9 percent of the voters thought of it as the most important issue (CSES, 2003, 2007). Although it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from these data, they demonstrate that European integration is not a major concern for most voters. However, this does not rule
out the possibility that European integration may still be an important issue, as a secondary issue, for a large part of the electorate.\textsuperscript{33}

**Dynamics of party support for European integration**

As indicated by both manifesto and expert survey data, parties have generally changed their positions, on average towards more positive stances, over time. These changes are demonstrated in figure 4, which shows the mean party position towards Europe, where 1 denotes a strong pro-European position and 0 a strong anti-European position. To account for the considerable differences in sizes of parties, both measurements have been weighted according to each party’s electoral vote share.\textsuperscript{34} Although the general trend is that parties have become more positive towards integration, some parties’ positions have remained quite constant over the time-period studied (not shown here).

\textbf{Figure 4.} Mean party positions on European integration, 1970-2003. Source: Chapel Hill expert survey data set (Hooghe, et al., 2008; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007); CMP/MRG party manifesto data (Budge, et al., 2001; Klingemann, et al., 2007).

As aggregated measurements, such as those above, can mask a lack of changes in individual countries (and among individual parties), there is also a need to examine within-country changes in party positioning towards European integration. One way of investigating such changes over time, in and across the individual countries, is to calculate the mean positions within countries, as shown in figure 5. This figure shows the party positions as indicated by party manifesto data. For each party in each election year, the frequencies of positive statements and negative statements made in their manifestos regarding European integration were recorded. The differences between the relative frequencies of positive and negative statements provide an index, high values of which indicate
that the party in the election year concerned had a more positive stance towards European integration than parties with lower values. This index has a theoretical range between -100 and +100, where -100 would indicate that the electoral manifesto under consideration contains only negative references to European integration and does not mention any other issue (which obviously never occurs in reality, since all parties’ electoral manifestos also contain references to various other policy issues as well). Consequently, in practice this measures ranges between -15 and +15 (for Greece) in the figure. To give a rough indication of how similar parties’ positions are within each country, and thus the presence of diverging positions, I also calculated 95-percent confidence intervals around the means. As can be seen in the figure, there have been considerable differences in positions both within and between countries. Like the cross-national differences in public opinion (as shown in figure 3), countries with predominantly Euro-positive citizens also have more Euro-positive parties on average. Parties are particularly positive to integration in Germany, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Greece and Portugal, in that order. Political parties are less enthusiastic about integration in Ireland, Austria, the UK and the Nordic countries. Among the countries, Spain, and more recently Portugal, stand out in not having especially diverging party positions (as indicated by the narrow confidence intervals).
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

(Figure 5 continues)

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Ireland

Denmark

Great Britain

Greece

Portugal

Spain
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

(Figure 5 continues)

![Graph showing mean party positions on European integration by country, 1970-2003.](image)

**Figure 5.** Mean party positions on European integration by country, 1970-2003. **Note:** Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals around the means. **Source:** CMP/MRG party manifesto data (Budge, et al., 2001; Klingemann, et al., 2007).

**Party issue salience**

To what extent is European integration salient to parties? This is important for several reasons. First, it relates directly to the topic of contestation. If all parties within a given party system choose to ignore or downplay an issue, there will be no debate and thus no contestation on that issue (Steenbergen & Scott, 2004). Second, salience among parties is crucial for representation in the EU, and a key determinant of whether parties are likely to perform their roles in informing electorates, shaping opinion and structuring competition over the issue. At the level of the electorate, a large proportion of whom have structured views on integration, a contestation potential clearly exists (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004). It is crucial that parties raise policy debates on the content and direction of EU policies in the national arenas (including European Parliament elections) and some scholars argue that this (or the lack thereof) constitutes the core of the alleged “democratic deficit” in the political system of the EU (e.g. Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996). When and how political parties choose to raise debates about integration is not a question that will be directly further examined in this thesis. Nonetheless, the salience of EU issues at the country level, or if parties are publicly choosing to contest on these issue, is related to internal divisions over the European question, which may cause the parties to avoid this issue (Ray, 2003b; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996). This is because cohesion-seeking parties have a strong incentive to avoid emphasising the issue if it is divisive for them (e.g. Steenbergen & Scott, 2004; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996).
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

To demonstrate the issue importance for the parties, I distinguish between salience within the political parties and party manifesto salience of European integration (i.e. the extent to which it is mentioned by political parties in election campaigns). The first measure of salience tells us if the issue is important for parties. The second indicates whether parties actually raise these questions in the electoral arena and hence provides a proxy of the extent to which parties are publicly debating the issue. Figure 6 shows the mean issue salience within parties over time according to the Chapel Hill expert survey data set, where 1 indicates that European integration is very important and 0 that it is of little importance for the parties. In addition, it shows the average intra-party dissent over European integration within these parties, where 1 denotes that parties are extremely divided on the issue and 0 denotes complete unity over the leadership position. Both measures are weighted by the size of the party (i.e. electoral vote share).

![Graph showing party salience and intra-party dissent on European integration, 1984-2002.](image)

*Figure 6. Mean party salience and intra-party dissent on European integration, 1984-2002.*

*Source: Chapel Hill expert survey data set (Hooghe, et al., 2008; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007).*

The figure shows that, overall, both the salience and dissent within the parties increased after the ratification of the Maastricht treaty (in 1992), decreased somewhat after implementation of the Amsterdam treaty (in 1999), and increased again before the implementation of the Nice treaty (in 2003). From this descriptive analysis, it is clear that both the importance of the issue and the internal dissent over the leadership positions have increased over time.
From a descriptive analysis of parties’ references to European integration in election manifestos, we can see that parties do mention issues relating to European integration, and that the salience of the issue of European integration has increased over time (Table 1). The second column of the table shows the total number of election programmes that have been issued during the given time periods. The third column indicates the proportions of party manifestos that referred either positively or negatively (or both) to European integration. The fourth and fifth columns show the numbers of positive and negative references in them, respectively, and the sixth and seventh columns show the percentages of positive and negative references compared to the total.\textsuperscript{36} Over the entire period, there were more positive than negative statements towards European integration in the parties’ manifestos. However, the proportion of negative statements has increased over time, as the impact of European integration on national political systems has deepened. An interesting feature is that as late as the early 2000s there were election manifestos in which the EU was not mentioned, possibly because of internal divisions over European questions, which may have caused the parties to avoid the issue.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Party manifesto saliency of European integration, 1970-2003.}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & No. of elections programs & Ref. (%) by parties & Positive ref. & Neg. ref. & Positive ref. (%) & Neg. ref. (%) \\
\hline
1970-79 & 307 & 62.2 & 162 & 53 & 75.3 & 24.7 \\
1980-89 & 323 & 72.8 & 199 & 90 & 68.9 & 31.1 \\
1990-99 & 299 & 88.6 & 238 & 140 & 63.0 & 37.0 \\
2000-03 & 118 & 94.1 & 104 & 62 & 62.7 & 37.3 \\
\hline
Total/ Mean & 1047 & 76.6 & 703 & 345 & 67.1 & 32.9 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Turning to the average parties’ references to European integration in election manifestos, figure 7 shows the general trend of the salience of the issue in party manifestos, weighted by the size of the party (vote share).\textsuperscript{38} From the ratification of the Single European Act in 1986, European integration has become an increasingly politicised issue, most parties since then have chosen to mention their positions on European integration and EU policies (cf. Hooghe & Marks, 2009). There were also increases in references to Europe in the years preceding the Maastricht and Nice Treaties. These findings demonstrate that parties’ references to Europe are closely related to developments of the EU and current events (i.e. Treaty revisions and enlargement processes) within the EU.
Figure 7. Average salience of European integration in party manifestos, 1970-2003. 
*Source:* CMP/MRG party manifestos data (Budge, et al., 2001; Klingemann, et al., 2007).

Table 1 and figure 7 show the general trends of electoral salience, but do not provide any information regarding cross-national variations. Studying how the overall references to European integration are manifested at the national level over time is showed in figure 8. The lines show the means of all parties’ references (both positive and negative) to European integration within each country, weighted by their electoral strength (i.e. percentage of votes gained by each party). As can be clearly seen in the figure, there have been large cross-country variations in both average levels and trends in references to the EU in parties’ electoral manifestos. To mention some examples, in the recent member countries that joined in 1995 – Austria, Finland and Sweden, as well as Norway – European integration was hardly mentioned in the election campaigns (at least not in the party manifestos) until the 1990s. However, this was for various reasons. In Austria, the membership question (and later the goal to join the European Monetary Union) raised the issue to the agenda in the parliamentary elections of 1990, 1994 and 1995, with both the Green party and the Freedom party (FPÖ) opposing accession to the EU. References to European integration peaked (in the period examined) in the parliamentary election of 1999, mainly due to the FPÖ’s opposition to the enlargement of the European Union to include neighbouring (East European) countries and the pro-EU responses from the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) (e.g. Fallend, 2002). The issue of European integration had very low saliency in Finland up to the end of the Cold War, in accordance with the ‘Paasikivi-Kekkonen line’ of compliance towards the Soviet Union. The electoral salience increased up to the accession in 1995, with
socialists and agrarians opposing EU membership, but it has been declining since then (e.g. Raunio & Tiilikainen, 2003). In Sweden, political parties also began to address the issue of European integration as a response to forthcoming membership, initiated by a policy change by the Social Democratic government in 1990. It became an important issue in the 1994 election, with a referendum on EU membership only two month after the election (e.g. Gilljam & Holmberg, 1996). Finally, in Norway, European integration was an issue of contestation in the European Communities membership referendum in 1972 and the following election in 1973, but it was not until 1989 that the question of Norwegian membership to the EU was again on the agenda and it became the most important question in the parliamentary election of 1993 (e.g. Aardal & Valen, 1995).

It is evident that in the countries that became members in 1995, and Norway, it has been mainly the membership question that has made European integration appear on the political agendas of the parties. Similar observations can be made regarding trends in the older member states, but they have been connected to the development of the EU (i.e. Treaty revisions and enlargement processes).
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

(Figure 8 continues)

Year

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Ireland

Denmark

Great Britain

Greece

Portugal

Spain

Party manifesto salience (%)
Overall, this descriptive analysis indicates that European integration is salient for both voters and parties and, not surprisingly, over time has become more politicised especially in the post-Maastricht period. Nonetheless, in the electoral arena it is a secondary issue. Parties frequently mention integration in their electoral manifestos, but to a large extent only when current events such as enlargement processes and treaty revisions within the EU raise the issue to the agenda.

**Issue congruence**

Finally, one theme of this thesis – the extent to which political parties lead and/or follow electorate opinion on European integration (research question III, p. 6) – could be initially explored by examining the level of voter-party congruence (i.e. whether and to what extent parties’ positions correspond to their voters’ opinions on European integration), since all models of representational democracy incorporate some form or degree of constituent-representative congruence (see Mansbridge, 2003). Plots of aggregated electorate opinions and party positions for each country over the period considered allow us to observe national variations, and whether (and if so to what extent) parties’ positions towards European integration correspond to their voters’ opinions. Aggregated voter and party opinions over time in each country included in the study are outlined in Figure 9, which gives rough indications of two main aspects regarding the relationships between party policy positions and voter
Parties are generally more supportive of European integration than the electorate, but changes in the two variables tend to follow similar trends over time (cf. Hooghe, 2003; B. Wessels, 1995). Using this aggregated measure of support for the EU, we can see that the cross-national differences have become quite small among party elites, but remain more varied among the European voters.

Figure 9. Party positions and voter opinions on European integration over time. Source: Chapel Hill expert survey (Hooghe, et al., 2008; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007) and Eurobarometer data (Schmitt, et al., 2005).
Within each country there are also variations with regards to political parties' responsiveness to voters' opinions. At any given time, if a party's supporters or potential voters adopt either more negative or positive stands on European integration, the party will be under pressure to mobilize stronger support for or against the EU, and to adopt positions more in accordance with their supporters if the issue is sufficiently salient for the voters (B. Wessels, 1995). So, parties that fully represent the preferences or attitudes of their voters are under no pressure at all in this respect.

In most countries during the period studied, voters tended to prefer less integrationist policies than their representatives, but in a few cases it was the other way around (where each case represents one party in a given year). Parties and voters had the same aggregated opinion (within a 5 percent interval) in 52 of 589 cases, parties were more integrationist than their potential voters in 408 cases and voters were more positive than the corresponding parties in 129 cases. These differences are presented in more detail in table 2.

Table 2. Differences between parties' positions and party supporters' opinion on European integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Similar attitudes (%)</th>
<th>Voters more positive (%)</th>
<th>Parties more positive (%)</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2.8 (2)</td>
<td>9.7 (7)</td>
<td>87.5 (63)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>13.6 (8)</td>
<td>23.7 (14)</td>
<td>62.7 (37)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6.8 (3)</td>
<td>25.0 (11)</td>
<td>68.2 (30)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>7.4 (2)</td>
<td>22.2 (6)</td>
<td>70.4 (19)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9.6 (5)</td>
<td>3.8 (2)</td>
<td>86.5 (45)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9.4 (5)</td>
<td>24.5 (13)</td>
<td>66.0 (35)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>13.3 (4)</td>
<td>40.0 (12)</td>
<td>46.7 (14)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6.9 (5)</td>
<td>25.0 (18)</td>
<td>68.1 (49)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>19.3 (11)</td>
<td>57.9 (33)</td>
<td>22.8 (13)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2.7 (19)</td>
<td>97.3 (36)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>9.5 (2)</td>
<td>28.6 (6)</td>
<td>61.9 (13)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100 (15)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>11.1 (3)</td>
<td>7.4 (2)</td>
<td>81.5 (22)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8.7 (2)</td>
<td>17.4 (4)</td>
<td>73.9 (17)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8.8 (52)</td>
<td>21.9 (129)</td>
<td>69.3 (408)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1) Number of cases in parenthesis. 2) Observations from 1992 onwards. 3) Observations from 1995 onwards. Source: Chapel Hill expert survey (Hooghe, et al., 2008; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007) and Eurobarometer data (Schmitt, et al., 2005).

Three countries in particular stand out in this analysis: the Netherlands, where voters were more integrationist than their parties; and the United Kingdom and Austria, where voters were less integrationist than the corresponding parties. In about 9 percent of the cases, voters and parties had similar preferences or attitudes towards European integration. The descriptive analysis above gives us a
picture of the degree of opinion congruence between parties and voters, but tells us little about how changes in party positions and voter opinions affect each other, which is examined in Paper III.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

…the question is not whether elites lead or follow, but how much and which elites lead rather than follow mass opinion, and under what circumstances they do so – John R. Zaller (1992:273)

While research on determinants of stability and dynamics of party policy positions and voter opinions is a virtual cottage industry, European integration has also received its fair share of scholarly attention. For instance, public opinion on European integration alone constitutes a vast research field, and a quick search of the ISI Web of Science database indicates that well over 100 papers have been written on the topic in just the last decade (cf. Ray, 2007a). Below I summarize previous research and comment on the theoretical approaches applied in studies on how national parties and voters position themselves with regards to the European integration process and the extent to which, and under what conditions, parties' positions and voters’ opinions influence each other.

Public opinion

Studies of public opinion on European integration show that although the public in general are rather ill-informed and uninterested in EU-politics, many voters have firm attitudes towards integration (e.g. Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Gabel & Anderson, 2002; Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004). Key goals in studies on public opinion and the EU have thus generally included attempts to explain variations in opinions between and within countries. Nonetheless, since public opinion per se is not the direct focus of this thesis, here I will only give a short summary of this research field (the relationship between voter opinions and party positions is described in more detail below). Briefly, previous studies have usually been based on one of three different, sometimes competing and sometimes complementary, theories to explain civic attitudes to the EU, namely utilitarian, affective and cognitive explanations (for a more extensive summary of different theoretical approaches used to explain attitudes related to integration, see Ray, 2007a).  

The utilitarian or political-economic explanations are based on rational choice premises and the assumption of rational individuals (possessing more or less complete information). These individuals are capable of assessing the economic impact of European integration on their own lives, or on the group they belong to, and their attitude is based on the benefits and disadvantages of integration (i.e. calculus of economic costs and benefits). The EU can be regarded as an economic regime that has consequences for the allocation of welfare based on
individuals’ assets of human capital and the particular institutional welfare regime these individuals are living in. Since Europeanisation could be seen as a regional form of globalisation, market liberalisation will benefit individuals with high levels of income, education, and occupational skills, i.e. it is advantageous for those with high, and penalizes those with low, human capital. This is because market liberalisation increases mobility in the labour market and creates higher uncertainty for workers’ positions within the system. Market liberalisation also increases pressure on welfare systems to accommodate the demands of the citizens for welfare provisions at the national level, since taxation of capital becomes more difficult and the need to further tax immobile capital, i.e. work, consumption, etc. increases (e.g. Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Brinegar & Jolly, 2005; Brinegar, et al., 2004; Gabel, 1998a; Schöpf, 1997). Thus, attitudes to integration, according to this perspective, are contingent on human capital, occupational skills and the type of welfare state regime.

Affective explanations are based on the social psychology underlying group affiliations, especially national identity, which are regarded as key drivers of individual and collective support for integration. The EU is seen as not just an international regime for promoting free trade and intergovernmental cooperation, but also as a policy-making organization that poses threats to both autonomous decision-making at the national level and values of national autonomy and identity. In other words, the EU constitutes a competing political community in relation to nation states. Support for or against European integration and the European institutions are therefore understood to be dependent on both the individual’s national and European identity; a perception of strong national identity is accompanied by Eurosceptic attitudes and vice versa (e.g. Carey, 2002; Kritzinger, 2003).

Finally, scholars have also used explanations that originate from cognitive and social psychological theory to assess how individuals relate their predispositions with existing ideologies and communication with the political elite (i.e. political cues) to form opinions on issues that are beyond direct experience and personal knowledge (e.g. Carrubba, 2001; Ray, 2003b; Schmitt & Thomassen, 2000; Steenbergen, et al., 2007; B. Wessels, 1995). There is generally a weak relationship between citizens’ ideological orientations and attitudes to the EU (Gabel & Anderson, 2002; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004). Rather, it has been suggested that this relationship is dependent on the national political context, in particular how different national political parties relate to the issue. Thus, extensive research has argued that party labels or cues provided by political elites can help voters not only to understand the issue positions of political actors, but also to structure their own opinions on political issues. Cues presented by political elites can therefore provide citizens with “cognitive short-cuts” to help them understand what is in their interests, or persuade them to adjust or adopt views accordingly. According to this view political parties make policy issues 'user-friendly' to the voters by positioning themselves on the issue and offering information to like-minded voters, who generally know which party best represents their individual interests and predispositions (Lupia, McCubbings, & Popkin, 2000; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998; Zaller, 1992). On the other hand, Dalton (1984, 2002) argues that increasing numbers of citizens today possess
the level of knowledge, political skill and resources to become “self-sufficient in politics”. With more educated citizens and increased access to mass media, the cost of obtaining political information has decreased substantially. So, instead of responding to elites or other societal groups, such voters should be able to deal with complex political issues and make their own decisions. Therefore, “the functional need for partisan cues to guide voting behavior, evaluate political issues, and mobilize political involvement is declining for a growing sector of society” (Dalton 1984:265).

However, even if the citizens’ ability to deal with intricate political issues has increased, this has to be balanced by the increasing complexity of politics itself, in that European citizens are “deciding on town councilors as well as the future of European integration” (Dalton & Wattenberg, 1993:193). Therefore, whether voters have to rely on cues or not is usually not the question, as Popkin (1991:218) writes, “[t]he use of information shortcuts is ... an inescapable fact of life, and will occur no matter how educated we are, how much information we have, and how much thinking we do”. Consequently, even though not all people are equally receptive to different kind of cues, the process of using cognitive shortcuts remains intact. Nonetheless, for cues from party elites to have influence, they must of course be available, which may not always be the case. Although in some countries positions on European issues clearly follow partisan lines, they are less ideologically ordered in some other countries. Where the positions of parties on an issue are well known, or when an issue follows clearly understood ideological lines, one may expect opinions to match relatively predictable patterns. In such situations, opinion formation may be driven by partisan or ideological cues, if these have been perceived by political debates. If there is little debate or little diversity of available party cues (usually due to a pro-European elite consensus) one could expect parties to play a minor role in the formation of mass opinions.

As this thesis focuses on the last mentioned theoretical approach this is further discussed below, in the section “The relationship between voter opinions and party positions”.

**Party positions**

Do parties have structured positions on European integration and, if so, how can we explain variations in positions between and within countries?

Theories of party competition can provide a general starting point for evaluating the potential factors influencing partisan responses to European integration. Parties, or more precisely party leaderships, have different goals, those usually identified as the most important being: acquiring and holding government office (office-seeking), maximising their share of the popular vote (vote-seeking), implementing policy preferences (policy-seeking) and maintaining party unity and surviving as effectively working organisations (Downs, 1957; Müller & Strøm, 1999; Sjöblom, 1968; Strøm, 1990). In political positioning on EU policies, these goals may sometimes be combined and simultaneously advanced, but not in other cases. For instance, if the issue is divisive for the party, while at the same time a certain position could increase its
likelihood of gaining electoral votes or being part of a coalition government, the party leadership could still avoid promoting a particular position to keep the party together.

Previous research on the nature of party contestation over Europe has usually exploited theories that are closely connected to rational choice theory (and to a lesser extent historical institutionalism), in which parties are seen as rational actors pursuing the abovementioned goals. Several factors have been suggested to influence party alignments over Europe, including the following. Firstly, party ideology, i.e. that political parties assimilate the issue of European integration in relation to traditional dimensions of conflict, and particularly the left/right dimension (or cleavage) (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 1999; Hooghe, Marks, & Wilson, 2002; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002; Marks & Wilson, 2000; Marks, Wilson, & Ray, 2002). Secondly, strategic positioning within the party system, notably opposition coming from the periphery as a challenge to the core of the political system (e.g. Hix, 1999; Hix & Lord, 1997; Mair, 2000; Sitter, 2001; Taggart, 1998). Thirdly, strategic responses to the opinions of the electorate (e.g. Carrubba, 2001; Gabel, 2000) and fourthly the historical national context from which parties originate from, or exclusively national factors. These issues have received considerable attention in previous research and are further examined in Paper II.

Party responses to Europe are not the same across different countries. Some party systems have parties that promote and oppose European integration, while others lack Eurosceptical parties. Overall, opposition to Europe often leads to similar stances among fringe parties at the far left and far right, whereas, centrist (including centre-left and centre-right) parties tend to avoid contestation and advocate a generally pro-integrationist line (Hix, 1999; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002; Taggart, 1998). In other words, party positions cross-cut left/right divisions, so that mainstream centre parties tend to be (moderately) pro-integrationist, with Euro-scepticism restricted to the extreme left and right. More precisely, parties’ positions on European integration are related to the left/right ideological space in a non-linear, single-peaked, bell-shaped curve – the well-known inverted U-pattern. From a historical institutional perspective some scholars have suggested that this is because political parties position themselves on issues such as European integration within the boundaries of existing ideologies which constitute their core identities and provide them with blueprints for societal change (Hooghe & Marks, 1999; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002; Marks & Wilson, 2000). Thus, in contrast to spatial models, political parties are not seen as “empty vessels into which issue positions are poured in response to electoral or constituency pressures; rather, they are organizations with historically rooted orientations that guide their response to new issues”. Therefore, party responses to Europe are seen as “a product of the ideologies of party leaders and the constraints of party organization, constituency ties, and reputation” (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:164). The EU is seen as a principally centrist market-liberal project, although market-flanking policies such as environmental and employment policies have been taken up at the European level since the Maastricht treaty, simply because it is a creation of mainstream parties that have dominated the national governments and parliaments, as well
as the European institutions, i.e. the European Parliament and European Commission. Therefore, peripheral parties at left and right are opposing European integration on ideological grounds since they reject the ideology and policy outcomes of the EU project (cf. Hooghe, et al., 2002). The extreme left opposes integration because the EU is seen as an elitist, undemocratic project that enforces neoliberal policies, whereas the extreme right opposes integration since it weakens national autonomy and national identity (Marks, 2004).

Although ideological commitments can be important, opposition to the EU may also arise from an extension of the domestic opposition from peripheral parties taking Eurosceptical positions in attempts to relocate party competition to include the integration dimension (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002; Taggart, 1998). Since mainstream parties prefer to contest left/right issues and try to avoid contestation over European integration by adopting a generally pro-integration stance, thereby maintaining the status quo (Hix, 1999; Marks, et al., 2002; Taggart, 1998), this provides an opportunity for opposition and mobilisation from the extreme left and right, and also from the “new politics” dimension by green and populist parties. Parties that are prone to gain from emphasising oppositional positions on the issue will try to “shake up” the party system by attacking European integration as an extension of domestic opposition.

Another factor that allegedly influences parties’ positions is public opinion (e.g. Carrubba, 2001; Marks, et al., 2002). Theoretically, according to spatial models of party competition parties are assumed to have a strong incentive to take their constituents into account when formulating their stances on European integration, since it should increase the likelihood of maximising their share of the popular vote (Downs, 1957). Under the assumption that a sufficient proportion of voters have quite stable, and transparent, attitudes that affect their vote choice, rational political parties are likely to adopt positions on EU policies close to those of the electorate.

Finally, the last explanation used to explain variations in party positions on Europe emphasises the importance of distinct national responses to Europe. The EU brings together a diverse group of countries with distinct national histories, identities and institutions. It is argued that since political parties are essentially national and local phenomena, their identities are created by national and local discourse, history and culture. The national context in which they are set is potentially essential to their existence and identities (Featherstone, 1988; Gaffney, 1996). The historical experience of an individual country is therefore hypothesised to be essential for determining its political parties’ attitudes towards European integration. The view that positions regarding European integration are largely national phenomena is also found in the international relations literature, where national preferences, including those of parties, are said to be determined domestically (e.g. Moravcsik, 1998; Pollack, 2001).
The relationship between voter opinions and party positions

One aim of this thesis is to study the direction of the (party) elite-mass influence (see research question III, at p. 6). It is generally difficult to resolve the direction of causality, but it is still possible to make reasonable judgements in particular cases. The postulate that representatives are responsive to public sentiment on various policy issues in order to gain votes seems reasonable, since parties and candidates that wish to gain or maintain their mandates cannot deviate far from their constituents (Downs, 1957). However, at the same time it seems reasonable to assume that politicians “engage in representative behaviour because they wish to lead, to have influence on the direction of public opinion” (Stimson, 1991:9). Thus, party elites with the ambition to influence public are argued to take positions as to influence public opinion. Consequently, a fully satisfactory description of elite opinion leadership is not one that sees a public mechanically responding to elite initiatives, although positive responses by the public to various initiatives proposed by the elites are generally expected. At the same time, as Zaller’s argues,: “…elites – always having some ideas that they are autonomously their own, always potentially split among themselves along partisan lines and manoeuvring for partisan advantage, and always looking over their shoulder to see what the public is thinking and might think in the future – attempt to lead and follow at the same time” (Zaller, 1992:273). That is, parties will have several aspects to consider when developing and maintaining stances and positions on policy issues, one of which (but not necessarily the most important) is strategic positioning towards the electorate. In previous research, nonetheless, scholars have sometimes argued: that parties adapt their positions to those of their constituencies; that public opinion is shaped by political elites; or that the electorate and parties influence each other simultaneously. In other terms, the mass-elite linkage may be either uni- or bi-directional, i.e. party elites may adapt their positions to their electorates and/or political parties may cue the mass public. Theoretically, as mentioned above according to spatial models, under the assumption that a sufficient proportion of voters have quite stable, and transparent, attitudes that affect their vote choice, rational political parties are prone to adopt positions on EU policies that are close to those of the electorate. Further, since the EU is becoming a more salient issue among the voters (e.g. Franklin & Wlezien, 1997; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996), strategic positioning could become more important and thus create incentives for parties to try to anticipate and adopt positions that are reasonably similar to their potential voters’ positions. In contrast, an “elite-driven” perspective views opinion formation as being largely shaped and determined by political elites. According to this perspective, the opinions of party electorates are generally related to the positions taken by parties since individual voters’ rely on cues presented by political elites. Therefore, electorate opinion on European integration is understood to be partly mediated by political parties, as supporters assimilate their opinions with those of the party (e.g. Brinegar, et al., 2004; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Steenbergen & Jones, 2002). Nonetheless, this influence is largely indirect, mediated via the media coverage of political issues.
Dynamic Interactions: National Political Parties, Voters and European Integration

(cf. Zaller, 1992), and more directly by the party organisations and its members. The continuing decline of membership (and collateral) of party organisations (e.g. Dalton, 2004; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000) has weakened the ability of party elites to communicate with the electorate, since the party members (even the inactive ones) are “communicators of their party’s messages within their immediate social environment” (Poguntke, 2004:4). Nonetheless, as argued by Dahlberg (2009), regardless of the organisational decline of parties, they are to a large extent usually able to get their messages through to their voters.

With respect to mass-opinion and party-elite influence linkages regarding the issue of European integration, previous studies have made substantially differing assumptions regarding the pattern of linkage. Most studies have argued for a one-way influence linkage (e.g. Brinegar, et al., 2004; Franklin, et al., 1994; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Steenbergen & Jones, 2002; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1991). However, several authors have recently argued that causality runs in both directions, i.e. that voters are not completely manipulated by parties and candidates, but rather that public opinion both shapes and is shaped by political elites, or that both of the abovementioned relationships are operational at the same time (Carrubba, 2001; Ray, 2003b; Schmitt & Thomassen, 2000; Steenbergen, et al., 2007; B. Wessels, 1995).

Regarding parties’ ability to influence public opinion on European integration, it has been suggested that this is conditional on various characteristics of the individual voter, party, and party system. This is discussed in the next section.

A conditional relationship?

As mentioned above, parties have been shown to influence public opinion on European integration in several empirical studies, but it has been suggested that this influence is a conditional one (Gabel & Scheve, 2007a, 2007b; Ray, 2003b; Steenbergen, et al., 2007). Among individuals, it is argued that not all voters are equally receptive to elite cues; those who have more interest in and pay more attention to political matters are expected to be better able to receive messages from their respective political parties (partly because they pay better attention to political matters in the media). In contrast, the least informed and interested are less likely to receive information about shifts in party elite opinion or too indifferent and uninterested for the information to matter (e.g. Gabel, 1998a:93-95; Gabel & Scheve, 2007a; Zaller, 1990, 1992). The internal behaviour of parties is also said to influence their successes in formulating, sustaining and communicating official positions on integration to their constituencies. In particular, if the issue is divisive for a party, they are likely to provide only weak and ambiguous cues, since a cohesion-seeking party leadership has a strong incentive not to emphasise the issue, or dissidents within the party may be voicing opposing positions. In addition, if the issue is of little significance for a party it is less likely to address the question of European integration and signal its position to the voters. It is also important for parties to differentiate their positions on the issue, rather than downplaying the issue by avoiding public promotion of policy positions on EU policies, because when
party elites have similar positions, voters will have difficulties in distinguishing where elites stand on the issue. To summarise, these last-mentioned conditions influence whether parties positions are clear and divergent – and thus if information is available regarding party positioning and whether parties compete on this issue – which in turn will affect the effectiveness of endorsement cues by political parties.

Below I discuss some methodological issues concerning the four attached papers. This discussion should be seen as a complement to the methodological discussion in the respective papers and corresponding (online) appendixes.

**METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**


In comparative research, scholars often face the ‘many variables, small N problem’ (e.g. Lijphart, 1971:686), that is, there are often too few cases to allow the testing of all potentially relevant variables and possible confounders. In statistical jargon, we face a ‘degree of freedom’ problem. In the comparative political science two diverging approaches to tackle this problem have emerged. First, statistical techniques that uses ‘pooled’ observations over time and space, to create a panel of data. Secondly, a qualitative approach, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), which allows analyses of a larger number of cases than is usually possible in traditional comparative case study analyses (Ragin, 1987, 2000).

Three out of four studies underlying this thesis make use of panels of data on the opinions, attitudes and positions of political parties and voters in up to 16 West European democracies. More, specifically I use pooled panel (or time-series-cross-sectional) designs as a way to transform small-N into large-N datasets. The major advantages of this approach are that pooled sections increase the sample size and thus address the “small-N” problem of simple time-series and cross-sectional analysis, specifically when the ratio between the number of potential explanatory variables (required to model the relationships between dependent and independent variables) and the degrees of freedom is too small to gain sufficient statistical power for meaningful analysis. It is also useful in attempts to capture simultaneous variation in dimensions of time and space, and for dealing with some types of measurement errors due to omitted variables, e.g. when estimating fixed effects or within-group variations (e.g. Baltagi, 1995:3-6). Though the pooled panel has many advantages over cross-sectional data, it is also associated with some problems that we need to pay attention to.

The problems created by a cross-sectional time-series dataset are, in practice, almost the same as those affecting ordinary least squares regression (OLS): heteroscedastic errors, serially correlated errors (within and across groups) and
missing data or unevenly structured data (which generate unbalanced panels and may result in sample-bias).

Standard OLS requires the fulfillment of certain assumptions to acquire unbiased and efficient estimates: the model must be linear in parameters, there must be no severe measurement errors, and the independent variables must not be too collinear (although some collinearity is acceptable). In addition, the residuals must be normally distributed, have constant variance (i.e. homoscedasticity), with an expected value of zero, and be independent from one another (i.e. there must be negligible serial or spatial correlation). If these assumptions are fulfilled then consistent and efficient estimations can be obtained using OLS.

When applied to pooled data, the standard OLS assumptions about the error process are often violated (e.g. Beck & Katz, 1995:636), because OLS models treat observations as independent of each other, and thus ignore the pooled structure of data. We may expect the pooled panel to have errors that are correlated between panels or groups (e.g. for unit i at time t, with unit j at time t). This is usually a problem when we have units that are similar to each other, such as similar political parties, e.g. smaller left parties (or states with shared social and political structures and cultures). Another possible type of error is “panel heteroscedasticity”, that is, the variance of the error process may differ from unit to unit, possibly (in this context) because the issue of European integration arouses different degrees of attention and differs in salience in different countries (which may cause changes in variance with the magnitude of the dependent variable). A third common type of error is associated with temporal dependence. For example, if the dependent variable is time-dependent; that is to say, if a party is sceptical towards European integration at time t -1, it may influence how the party positions itself towards European integration at time t (i.e. first order serial-correlation may be present).

When we have non-spherical errors, i.e. when we violate these assumptions, OLS may produce incorrect standard errors and not be efficient.

Therefore, when using pooled panel data in my studies I applied several diagnostic tests (both formalised tests and manual graphical inspections of residuals) to find out if the assumptions were satisfied, and if not compensate by using an appropriate alternative estimation technique. Here, I will not provide a lengthy discussion of the various tests conducted, but rather discuss some important principles regarding how to treat time-dependence in the response variable(s) and some issues concerning modelling choices in the appended papers.

How one regards serial correlation or time-dependence in this context – as a nuisance or an essential part of the model – is an important consideration, strongly affecting the way one should proceed with the analysis (Beck, 2007; Beck & Katz, 1996). If time-dependence in the dependent variable is considered to be of little intrinsic interest (and hence a nuisance), then one may or may not include a lagged dependent variable in the model, or use other estimation techniques that eliminate any residual serial correlation. In Paper I the time-dependency of parties’ positions on European integration is important and provides important information on the processes considered, but is not the main focus of the paper and is thus considered to be mostly a nuisance that impedes
estimation. Consequently, the model estimated deals with dynamics by estimating Prais-Winston regressions (i.e. linear regression with Prais-Winston transformation of the residuals). I modelled a common autoregressive parameter, rho (\(\rho\)) for the residuals, since Beck and Katz (1995) showed, by a series of Monte Carlo simulations, that the assumption of a common serial correlation process leads to superior estimates of \(\rho\), even when the data are generated for simulations consisting of diverse, unit-specific \(\rho_i\). This because, when using a unit-specific serial correlation estimator each of the \(\rho_i\) is estimated using only a small number (\(T\)) of observations.

In contrast, in Paper III the dynamics is an essential part of the model. In the study of changes in public opinion and party positions there is both theoretical and empirical support for including past values of attitudes and policy positions in the statistical models. This is because I use a method to model the causal structure of the relationship between party positions and electorate opinions in which an attitude at time \(t\) is a function of that same attitude at \(t – 1\), as modified by new information from either political parties or voters (see for example Erikson, et al., 2002; Stimson, et al., 1995 for discussions on the relationship between theory and empirical models in dynamic political relationships).

It should be recognised that pooling data is not a panacea (Beck & Katz, 2001; Green, Kim, & Yoon, 2001; G. King, 2001; Kittel, 1999; Kittel & Winner, 2005; Wilson & Butler, 2007). A fully pooled model, that is, one in which all units are assumed to follow the same specification with the same parameter values, is not always appropriate. A pooled model can contain unit heterogeneity, slope (i.e. parameter) heterogeneity and complex dynamics. The first can be accounted for by fixed effects or random effects modelling; the second by estimating separate slopes for separate units, i.e. by seemingly unrelated regressions, random coefficient modelling or hierarchical/multilevel modelling (as in Paper IV). However, none of these estimation techniques is devoid of shortcomings and each may or may not be successfully implemented in accordance with theory and the available data. Overall, there are therefore several choices to be made in terms of model specification, which in turn increases the risk for misspecification. Therefore, I will briefly discuss choices of model selection in the attached papers. The first paper uses a pooled model with the same specifications concerning unit heterogeneity, slope heterogeneity and temporal dynamics. Concerning unit heterogeneity similar results were obtained using fixed effects and random effects models (i.e. to account for unit heterogeneity), as well as with alternative ways of dealing with serial-correlation or time-dependence in the dependent variable (e.g. by including a lagged dependent variable and Newey-West estimation, which is robust to arbitrary heteroscedasticity and serial-correlation).

Paper II is essentially a methodological paper, in which I discuss how configurational methods, i.e. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), and corresponding statistical methods can be combined in a mixed-method approach. Consequently, I will not discuss that particular paper here.

A discussion on model specifications for the third paper can be found in the online appendix of that paper. In the modelling described in paper IV, I do not
assume unit heterogeneity or slope heterogeneity, but rather make use of hierarchical linear modelling, which allows both intercepts and slopes to vary (for details, see the appendix of that paper).

SUMMARY OF THE PAPERS

Paper I: Partisan responses to Europe: the role of ideology for national political parties’ positions on European integration

This paper examines several aspects of the ways in which national political parties position themselves with respect to European integration that have been postulated to be important in previous research. In particular, the extent to which party ideology influences parties’ stances on European integration is examined. The importance of party ideology for explaining variations in positions among West European parties is evaluated against three sets of alternative hypotheses. First, the positions taken by parties could be responses to voters’ issue positions, i.e. parties could adopt positions in relation to those of the electorate in order to increase their probability of electoral success. The second set of hypotheses focus on parties’ strategic positioning within the party system. With mainstream parties taking up identical (moderately pro-EU) positions, or avoiding competition on the issue completely, peripheral parties (or niche parties) have an opportunity to take extreme positions as an extension of their domestic opposition. Finally, the third set of hypotheses sees party positions on European integration as being principally dependent on the national context, i.e. that differences between nations, such as differences in culture, historical experiences and economic factors, influence the positioning of parties within each country on integration.

The empirical data used in this paper have been largely neglected in previous studies on party support for Europe, which have usually relied on expert data, i.e. responses of experts asked to quantify the level of support for European integration among national political parties, whereas in this paper party manifesto data are used to measure party positions (Budge, et al., 2001; Klingemann, et al., 2007). Since it has been shown that different measures of party positions on European integration may produce quite different results when used in empirical research (Ray, 2007b), it is important to test whether the theoretical propositions raised in previous studies are robust by using a different type of data rather than expert data.

Methodologically, I use regression on a panel consisting of data regarding positions of political parties in 16 West European countries between 1970 and 2003. This is not the first study to have used panel data (or time-series cross-sectional data) on party positions, since this is also done in Marks et al.’s (2002) novel study on the area. However, their study provides somewhat ambiguous and unreliable results, because the authors did not take into account the highly autocorrelated dependent variable when time-pooling their expert survey data. Hence, we cannot be sure that their results are reliable, since failing to control for autocorrelation may lead to an upward bias in the statistical significance of coefficient estimates.\textsuperscript{57}
The results in this paper indicate that political parties’ stances on European integration are to a large extent determined by their ideology. Hence, the study provides auxiliary support for the hypothesis that political parties assimilate the issue of European integration within existing structures or ideological frames. A particularly influential factor is the ideological location of parties in party families. Political parties have significantly more in common with their respective cross-national party families than they do with other parties in the same country. However, the influence of ideology has diminished, since the majority of parties (across the whole ideological continuum) have adopted more favourable positions towards the European project over time. Even so, strong opposition to Europe also has a strategic dimension since it is mainly restricted to fringe parties at the left and right (although a few Eurosceptic Centrist and special issue parties also exist, such as the Norwegian Centre Party and Luxembourgian Democracy and Pension Justice). In addition, this study provides additional support for the hypothesis that factors at the domestic level influence parties’ positions on European integration, but not as exclusively as some previous researchers have claimed (e.g. Hix, 1999; Moravcsik, 1998).

Paper II: Causal complexity and party-based Euroscepticism: mixed method approaches to middle-sized data analysis

This paper discusses how configurational methods, i.e. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), and corresponding statistical methods can be combined to provide tests for the sufficiency of any given set of combination of causal conditions in large-middle-N to small-large-N situations (i.e. in research contexts where there are moderately large numbers of cases). In this approach, QCA provides the ability to explore causal substitutability (i.e. multiple paths to a given outcome), while the statistical analysis provides logic of probability and generalisability (and hence the ability to obtain robust indications of the validity of postulated hypotheses). The potential utility of the mixed-method approach for analyzing political phenomena is demonstrated by applying it to cross-national data regarding party positions on European integration and party-based Euroscepticism in Western Europe.

To measure party-based Euroscepticism, and to identify parties that oppose the project of European integration, I rely on information from both Chapel Hill expert survey datasets and party manifesto data. My main methodological arguments are that given a sufficiently large number of cases/observations, configurational methods could be successfully combined with related statistical methods to introduce probability assessments into the QCA-framework. Nonetheless, I argue that this may not always be entirely unproblematic. For instance, attempts to evaluate results from crisp-set/binary QCA with logit or probit models (with interaction terms) could require additional pre-analytical data manipulation, and the results may be difficult to interpret. An alternative method, Boolean logit/probit modelling, is easy to combine with crisp-set QCA, and in many cases may be a superior alternative. Regarding fuzzy-set QCA (fsQCA), multiplicative interactive regression models may in many cases be used to accomplish the goal. Even when fsQCA results are
fairly complex (involving multiple conjunctural causal claims), it should still be possible to evaluate them in a probabilistic manner in most practical research situations.

The empirical findings indicate that oppositional stances to European integration reflect a ‘politics of opposition’ from the periphery of the political system, since they are mainly restricted to oppositional (i.e. non-governmental) ideological fringe parties on both the left and right. Further, radical left parties with Eurosceptical positions are largely restricted to countries with social democratic (i.e. Nordic) welfare state regimes. Thus, these results correspond quite closely with findings of previous strictly quantitative or variable-oriented research (e.g. Hellström, 2008a; Hooghe, et al., 2002; Marks, et al., 2002).

Paper III: Who leads, who follows? Re-examining the party-electorate linkages on European integration

This paper examines the link between electorates’ opinions and national political parties’ positions on European integration, i.e. the extent to which political parties lead and/or follow public opinion on this issue. If parties are responsive to their electorates’ opinions we should observe a ‘bottom-up’ or ‘electoral connection’ in EU politics. In contrast, in representative democracies national political parties help not only to aggregate, but also to communicate politics, and help voters to form preferences on policy issues. Hence, a relationship between party positions and voter opinions may exist simply because the voters are taking cues from party positions regarding what their preferences should be. In addition, some scholars have argued that causality runs in both directions, i.e. that voters are not completely manipulated by parties and candidates, but rather that public opinion both shapes and is shaped by political elites, or that the electorate and the parties influence each other simultaneously. In other terms, the mass–elite linkage may be either uni- or bi-directional, i.e. party elites may adapt their positions to their electorates and/or political parties may cue the mass public.

The empirical data used in this paper consist of a panel concerning political parties’ positions, as indicated by references to European integration in party manifestos, and voters’ opinions, as indicated by Eurobarometer surveys, in 15 West European countries from 1973 to 2003.

In methodological terms, this study represents the first application of causal modelling (i.e. Granger causality tests) to the relationship between national political parties’ positions and electorates’ opinions on European integration. Where previous investigations have assumed a certain causal direction of the relationship, this study is the first to test empirically the causal structure of this party-electorate link.

Contrary to previous research (Carrubba, 2001; Schmitt & Thomassen, 2000; Steenbergen, et al., 2007; B. Wessels, 1995) the findings in this study indicate that there is no robust feedback, reciprocal causation, or dynamic representation of opinion in the mass–elite linkages, nor an electoral connection on European integration in this respect. Conversely, I find evidence of unidirectional “Granger causality” from political parties to voters. Essentially,
political parties are to some extent able to influence public opinion, but parties do not seem to have responded to shifts in voter opinions by modifying their positions accordingly. These results are also robust when using Chapel Hill expert survey data on party positions (see Appendix). Thus, if voters do have an influence on parties’ stances on European integration it is likely to be minor. In the paper I argue that the observed unresponsiveness of political parties to electorates’ opinions found in this study is not surprising, for several reasons. First, when a party is in accordance with its supporters on an issue, there is no pressure for it to change its position. Second, voters are known to have little knowledge about the EU generally so it is not surprising that constituents’ opinions appear to be ‘cued’ by political parties, since parties to some extent fulfill an important role by communicating the content of the political decision-making process and thus helping uninformed voters to form opinions.

Paper IV: Mass support and opposition to European integration: Reconsidering the conditional influence of party positions on voter opinions

The purpose of this paper is to examine conditions in which parties matter for the voters’ opinions about EU policy issues. According to the literature on public support for European integration, as well as theories regarding political persuasion, this relationship is conditional on several factors. Whether voters will adjust their views and bring them into line with their preferred party is alleged to be conditional upon characteristics of the individual voter, party, and party system. That is, political parties can influence public opinion, but only under certain circumstances and support for or opposition to European integration is therefore be understood to be partly mediated by political parties. Whether parties are able to persuade their constituents to adopt their standpoints is assumed to depend on several conditions, including individual characteristics and preferences of the voter, intra-party factors, inter-party factors and several factors determining the salience of EU issues at the domestic level.

My analysis employs data at the individual, party, and national level in 14 West European countries (i.e. the 15 EU member states as of 1995, excluding Luxembourg). Consistent with previous studies of how parties influence public opinion I use Eurobarometer survey data to measure support for the EU and other individual-level variables, combined with expert survey data on party positions on integration and other party level factors, as well as manifesto data to measure electoral salience of EU issues.

In methodological terms this study is the first application of hierarchical/multilevel linear modelling to a relationship that should require such models for making statistically reliable inferences. Since individual support among party supporters varies significantly across parties and countries, hierarchical linear models are appropriate options for investigating these relationships, since they account for hierarchical clustering, and they are capable of both accounting for causal heterogeneity (at party and country levels) and estimating potential interactions between the individual, party and country characteristics. The findings in this study indicate that the influences of parties on voters vary significantly with the characteristics of the individual party supporter (i.e. level
of political awareness), political party (i.e. intra-party dissent over the issue and issue importance for the party), and the national context (i.e. how divided the party elites are on the issue and how salient the issue is in the country).

Using different data and methodology, the results presented in this paper provide auxiliary support for the factors identified as important in previous research (Gabel & Scheve, 2007a; Ray, 2003b). However, the results differ to some extent. First of all, I find no significant conditional effect of intra-party dissent on parties’ ability to persuade their voters. I observed a rather small, reductive effect of party cues on voters, attributable to levels of intra-party dissent, but only in cases where the issue was divisive but also important for the party. Second, my findings indicate that there is a contingent relationship between party cues and elite polarisation, that more diverse and negative elite messages on Europe have a negative marginal effect on public support for Europe, whereas Ray (2003b) found a reinforcing positive effect of increasing elite polarisation. The results obtained in this study also indicate that public debate by party elites on integration and their public promotion of competing policy positions on EU polity within a country also affects parties’ influences on their voters’ opinions, since voters obtain more information about the parties’ positions. Parties are also more successful in cueing supporters that are politically interested and attentive to political matters, since these supporters are more likely better able to receive information about parties’ stances on EU policies from their respective political parties. In addition, this study also confirms Gabel and Scheve’s (2007a) findings refuting Zaller’s (1992) claims of a mainstream effect of elite communication, according to which political awareness increases support for Europe in cases in which elites have a pro-EU consensus.

DISCUSSION

How do the findings presented above relate to the overall theme of the thesis and my research questions? First of all, the main factors influencing partisan responses to European integration have been identified and examined (Papers I and II). The findings provide auxiliary support for the hypothesis that ideology and ideas matter for parties’ and governments’ attitudes to Europe (cf. Aspinwall, 2007), an important aspect that has been largely neglected in the classic mainstream literature on integration.58 Therefore, the findings presented in this thesis place further emphasis on the need to take into account not only strategic considerations and context-specific factors in attempts to explain representatives’ behaviour in EU politics, but also the ideology and ideas that set the frames for actors’ behaviour.

Moreover, in EU studies there is extensive academic discussion regarding the “democratic deficit” of the EU, in which it is often argued that the EU is not responsive to its mass publics. For instance, Follesdal and Hix (2006:535-537) argue that the academic discussion on the alleged democratic deficit centres around five main claims. First, that European integration processes have increased the power of the executive at the expense of national parliaments and reduced parliamentary control (cf. Raunio, 1999). Second, regarding the only directly elected EU institution, most analysts of the democratic deficit argue that
the European Parliament is too weak, since it is unable to perform the central function of a parliament, namely controlling the executive and holding it to account (also see Lodge, 1996; W. Wessels & Diedrichs, 1999). Third, despite the increasing powers of the EP, European elections are primarily “second-order”, meaning that national policy concerns dominate over European issues and no European-wide political parties are competing for power (Marsh, 1998; Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996). Fourth, European institutions are seen as “too distant from ordinary European citizens”, in that the characteristics of the European polity exacerbate the lack of direct input from European citizens, in being fundamentally technocratic rather than political. For example, the lack of transparency of decision-making within the Council (Wallace & Smith, 1995) and the construction of the Commission, which is “neither a government nor a bureaucracy, and is appointed through an obscure procedure rather than elected by one electorate directly or indirectly”, do not make it easy for “citizens to understand the EU, and so will never be able to assess and regard it as a democratic system writ large, nor to identify with it” (Follesdal & Hix, 2006:536). Finally, it has been argued that policies adopted at the European level are not supported by a majority of its citizens (Scharpf, 1997, 1999), and that European integration produces “policy drift” from voters’ ideal policy preferences to policies and priorities that for most part have a neo-liberal character, while citizens on average prefer a more social Europe, more regulation of capital and oppose the common agricultural policy (Follesdal & Hix, 2006:537).

Nonetheless, several scholars have questioned these claims of a democratic deficit in EU politics (e.g. Majone, 1996; Moravcsik, 2002). The above claims originate from a particular model of democracy (i.e. the party government/popular sovereignty model), but another model is said to better reflect the nature of EU democracy and is more consistent with the EU’s current institutional structure, namely the pluralist/veto-group liberalism model (Katz, 2001). Briefly, this model is characterised by “a division in the organisation of political power (checks and balances), relatively weak parties, strong interest groups and government that is not an extension of a sovereign parliament, as in the parliament model, but more a collection of independent or intra-dependent decision-making structures” (de Vries, 2007a:32). Therefore, as Moravcsik argues “Constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament are sufficient to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, clean, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens” (2002: 605). According to this view, European voters should be able, to a greater extent, to express their views and indirectly control the integration process, by delegating power to national political parties and governments. Supporting this argument, recent research has indicated that EU-issue voting is (sometimes) a feature of national elections (de Vries, 2007a; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004). If this is the case, voters do have a channel of representation through which they can express their concerns about European integration.
However, the findings presented in this thesis provide no support for the hypothesis that parties are responsive to their constituencies, which raises questions about whether national political parties really help to reduce the legitimacy and participation deficits at the European level. In addition, since major parties avoid contestation on European issues, either by refusing to differentiate themselves on integration by generally adopting moderately pro-European positions and/or by downplaying the differences between them, “it is difficult for voters to actually make a choice even if they wanted to” (Taggart, 1998:384), thus making issue voting difficult (cf. Campbell, Converse, & Miller, 1960:169-171). That said, even if one accepts the argument that EU policies derive their legitimisation and citizen participation through parties and governments, political parties in both national and European Parliament elections generally fail to reflect many voters’ preferences on the content and direction of EU polity (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 1996; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004), and more importantly often fail to raise policy debates on these issues at all. One way forward would be to increase the extent of political involvement by facilitating electoral contests for the content, direction and leadership of the EU policy agenda (e.g. Follesdal & Hix, 2006). In this respect national political parties could play an important role in the making of a representative democratic institution at the European level.

Leaving this normative discussion, a relevant question is what are the plausible explanations for the lack of responsiveness to voter opinion on EU policies? Parties do change their positions towards European integration over time, but their freedom to manoeuvre is not as unconstrained as the ‘mass-driven’, ‘bottom-up’ or ‘run-from-below’ models of representation suggest. Since parties’ positions on European integration are quite stable over time, parties do not appear to be especially responsive to exogenous factors, such as voter opinion. Several factors may be involved in these relationships. When a party is in accordance with its supporters on an issue, there is no pressure for it to change its position, since it is gaining from the status quo. In addition, the public opinion to which party elites try to respond is not the public opinion reflected in the polls at the time of making decisions, but rather the opinion that a rival party may appeal to in the next election. For this reason, if EU policy issues are not a major concern for the public at the election, i.e. they are low salience issues, parties have little incentive to follow the electorates’ opinions. Parties’ responsiveness could also be related to voters’ expectations of parties. Party labels provide concise ideological cues for voters to choose among parties, since they encapsulate certain bundles of more or less coherent policies. Thus, parties usually need to adopt policy positions on EU policies that are coherent with the core identities of their ideology (Hellström, 2008a; Hooghe, et al., 2002; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). A low degree of flexibility and thus responsiveness to voters may also help make parties more credible and predictable to the voters. It is difficult for activists and supporters to relate to a party that changes its positions almost mechanically in response to shifts in public opinion, or for them to predict its future policies. Finally, the lack of influence from the voters on its representatives is most likely due to the fact that the issue of European integration is rather complex. As argued by Hurley and
Hill (1999; 2003), when issues are relatively straightforward and crosscut lines of party cleavage these should conform to a ‘standard demand-input’ model of representation, and consequently demonstrate only one-way linkages from voters to elite. This is because the less complex an issue, the more people will be able to understand it and form their own opinions, independently of elite cues. The parties should therefore have incentives to pay attention to constituency preferences on such issues. Furthermore, the issue needs to be ‘crosscutting’, since elite consensus will take away the electoral opportunities for strategic exploitation of the issue. In contrast, when issues are complex and also crosscut lines of party cleavage, voters are unlikely to exercise influence on their parties’ attitudes. This is because complex issues require substantial cognitive ability as well as a considerable time commitment on the part of the citizen to form an opinion. Thus, it is rational for voters to rely on elite cues to form opinions or grant elites discretion with respect to policy-making on these issues. Consequently, since European issues are usually complex, it is unsurprising that voters appear to be cued by party elites and that parties tend to show little responsiveness to voters’ opinions.

So, where do we go from here? First, the studies underpinning this thesis rely on, like the vast majority of comparative studies on mass opinions concerning EU policies, secondary analysis of mass survey data. In particular, in the words of Ray, researchers have been “like the apocryphal drunk looking for lost keys under the streetlight, … drawn to the wealth of publically available data sets, and particularly to the time-series data of Eurobarometers studies run on behalf of the European Commission” (2007a:264). As indicated in this introduction, the Eurobarometer data may provide sufficiently reliable measurements of mass opinions on integration, but there have been no systematic investigations of its reliability, and no empirical analysis (regardless of its methodological sophistication) can compensate for poor measurements with an unknown bias. I intend to address this knowledge deficit in my future research, by evaluating the measurement validity and reliability of the main trend indicators in the Eurobarometer dataset.

Secondly, the observed unresponsiveness of political parties to electorates’ opinions found in this thesis warrants further attention, not least since recent research has raised the possibility that parties may be particularly sensitive to shifts in opinion among “opinion leaders”, i.e. voters who are regularly engaged in political discussions and persuasion (Adams & Ezrow, 2009). Nonetheless, as these voters are also to a large extent committed supporters of certain parties, it is quite possible that this observation merely reflects the influence that party activists and party members have on the policy positions adopted by their party’s leaderships.

Moreover, although it is possible that the effects of voters’ opinions on parties’ attitudes are heterogeneous with respect to different sub-constituencies, I think there is also reason to consider that the mass-elite linkages may also be contingent on several factors at the party level. For instance, to mention a few: essentially ideologically-driven parties are presumably not very responsive to changes in voter opinions, apart from those of party activists and dedicated supporters, while more vote-seeking parties are likely to pay more attention to
such changes (cf. Adams, Clark, Ezrow, & Glasgow, 2004); parties with higher degrees of intra-party democracy should have a different opportunity structure, constrained by the rank and file of the party, than run-from-the-top political parties; and potential government coalition partners could refrain from adopting positions opposite to those of their future collaborators. Thus, some parties may be more responsive to their constituencies than others.

Furthermore, the studies described in Papers I-IV have focused on general attitudes towards integration and the results presented here do not necessarily transfer to specific policy issues regarding integration. For instance, it is possible that parties are more responsive to electorates' opinions regarding specific EU-related issues, such as immigration, the environment or labour legislation, in terms of both the content and competences (i.e. if the policies should be decided at the EU level or the national level).

It is also possible, as mentioned above (and in Paper III), that the observed unresponsiveness among parties is caused by a lack of voter salience, that is, parties may respond to electorate opinion but merely on those issues that are prioritised among the electorate (Jones, Larsen-Price, & Wilkerson, 2009). If so, concerning the question on European integration, in cases where voter salience tends to be relatively high do parties and governments show responsiveness to the opinions of the voters, or can voters still be largely ignored? Or, from another point of view (under the assumption that parties are rational, vote-maximising actors), when there is a representational gap between parties and voters, are parties being electorally punished for being out of step with the voters? This is an important question that requires future research. We know relatively little about the independent effect of European issues on party choices in national elections, although recent research indicates that parties' position on European integration might affect vote choices in some countries (de Vries, 2007b; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004). For instance, in the UK European integration emerged during the 1990s as a significant issue influencing citizens' voting behaviour (Evans, 1998). Thus, taking into consideration the partisan dealignment that has taken place among European electorates (e.g. Dalton, 2004; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000), “integration is likely to increase electoral volatility and thereby make national elections more dangerous and less predictable for the parties” (Raunio, 2002:415). However, the importance of European integration for party contestation in Europe is more uncertain: Will it constitute a part of an emerging ‘new cleavage’ in the Rokkanian sense that is restructuring the political space in Western Europe (Kriesi, 2007, 2009)? Is it merely an important political issue that parties have to relate to (Hooghe & Marks, 2009)? Is it a “sleeping giant” that is “ripe for politicization”, and is it “only a matter of time before policy entrepreneurs … seize the opportunity … to differentiate themselves from other parties in EU terms” (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004:47)? Alternatively, has the ‘giant’ “been deliberately sedated” and (hence) will European issues remain largely de-politicised by political elites (Mair, 2007:13)?
NOTES

1  As quoted in Bogdanor (1993).

2  These two perspectives of democratic representation are to some extent based on different scholarly traditions. In American political research there is a long tradition of studies using mass-driven or ‘run-from-below’ models of opinion formation. In a European context, political analysts have been more “cynical (or realistic)” regarding the influences of voters and have to a larger extent acknowledged “the existence of party elites, political leadership and opinion molding from above” (Holmberg, 1997:267).

3  I do not conceptualise political representation as a state, but as a dynamic relationship between the citizens and the representatives. Thus, I use the concept of ‘dynamic interaction’ to capture the potential two-way relationship between voters’ opinions and political parties’ positions. Another related concept is ‘dynamic representation’ used by Stimson et al. (1995) and Erikson, et al. (2002) to describe how government policy-making in the US responds over time to movements in public opinion (i.e. a mass-driven relationship). In another context, Holmberg (1997) uses the concept ‘dynamic opinion representation’ when he examined how voter’s issue preferences corresponded to the positions of their representatives in Sweden, and he argued that Swedish and most likely European politics are better described by elite-driven opinion models.

4  A similar conclusion is reached by Wlezien (2008) when investigating the dynamic representation of public spending preferences on different policy domains, i.e. “politicians’ ‘responsiveness’ to preferences varies understandably across the different domains. Indeed, the pattern is symmetrical to the pattern of public responsiveness to policy itself. It thus would appear that the behavior of politicians reflects the public importance of different policy domains” (pp. 20-21).

5  In the broadly defined research area of European integration that relates to the thesis’ theme there has been a “discernible shift from an almost exclusive concern with parties at the European level – whether in the form of transnational organizations or Europarlimentary fractions – to a growing concern with the impact of European integration on party politics and political representation at the national level. At the same time, there has been a greater emphasis on questions that derive from theories of comparative politics and political behavior rather than international relations /…/ and hence a growing and welcome tendency to relate specific European-focused research to more broad-ranging patterns of mass political and institutional development” (Mair, 2006:165). For a detailed discussion on current developments of, and dividing lines within, the research field see Rosamond (2006).

6  For instance, in Papers I and III I make use of party manifesto data rather than the Chapel Hill expert survey data that have been used in previous investigations. More details on the shortcomings identified and my specific contributions can be found in the individual papers.
In this thesis the term EU refers to the present institution as well as its predecessors (i.e. the European Coal and Steel Community, European Communities and the European Economic Community).

Due to the lack of comparable data Switzerland is excluded from the analysis, as the country is not included in the Eurobarometer surveys, or in the expert dataset on party positions which are both used in this dissertation.

In this thesis, the term ‘EU policy issues’ is sometimes used instead of ‘European issues’.

A problem with the concept of European integration is that it can be seen as both process and outcome; the process of delegating policy competences from domestic to supranational level to achieve certain policy outcomes, and the establishment of European political institutions with executive, legislative and judicial powers. When an actor evaluates the integration process that actor may be referring to either (or both) the current institutions, i.e. how the EU is designed today and the policy outcomes it generates, and the expectations actors have regarding future outcomes that the integration process may generate. However, it is not only policy outcomes that are important in this respect, but also the institutional arrangements referred to (e.g. a process towards confederation or a federal state, social welfare project with regulated capitalism vs. neo-liberal free trade project, etc.). In other words, the concept encompasses substantial variations in terms of the integration processes’ scope, arrangement and content. In this dissertation, I sidestep these conceptual difficulties by narrowing the definition of the integration issue to an actor’s general orientation to the EU, regardless of whether it is the actual process or outcomes that prompts a particular attitude or position of that actor.

This assumption is somewhat relaxed in Paper IV, where I also take into account levels of intra-party dissent, i.e. how united a party is with regards to the party leadership position on European integration. In relation to this, I briefly discuss that if European (policy) issues are divisive for a party, dissenters within the party may be voicing oppositional stances to that of the leadership, and thus the party will not be completely unified.

First-order elections are elections that determine who is in power and which policies are pursued (i.e. elections for the government and/or executive power in a political system). Second-order elections, in contrast, are viewed by voters, parties and the media as less important than first-order elections, simply because less is at stake. Indications that EP elections can be regarded as second-order include the following: election campaigns emphasise national rather than European issues; turnout is lower than in national elections; voters are more inclined to vote for parties in the periphery of the political system (rather than mainstream parties which they would vote for in national elections), that is, major parties perform less well (especially government parties) than in national elections (although this varies over the national election cycle), because EP-elections can be seen as a low-cost opportunity for the voters to voice their dissatisfaction with government parties.
13 In addition, national political parties play a central role in candidate selection for the EP elections and thus also influence MEPs’ voting behaviour in the EP (Hix, 2002), although this influence could be indirect and vary with the engagement of the party (Blomgren, 2003).
14 In fact, in most cases government representatives can usually ignore their parliaments when making decisions in Brussels (Follesdal & Hix, 2006:534-535).
15 Famous words from a famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes (Doyle, 1892:7).
16 The data used for the separate papers are described and their data sources are listed within these papers and/or in their respective appendices.
17 The expert data used in this study were originally gathered by Ray (1999) and later updated by Steenbergen and Marks (2007), and Hooghe et al. (2008). I refer to these data sets as Chapel Hill expert survey in the text.
18 Using mass opinion surveys to aggregate to positions of political parties is not a good idea, since I am interested in matching the party level data with mass opinion data. Besides, since there is a gap between partisan positions and voter opinions on European integration such a proxy would not provide very accurate measurements either.
19 For a more comprehensive review of the mainstream methods of determining policy positions of political parties, see Mair (2001).
20 A quasi-sentence is defined as an argument, and an argument is the written (or verbal) expression of one political idea or issue (Budge, et al., 2001:96, 217-218).
21 Recent attempts to assess coder reliability of the manifesto codings (Mikhaylov, Laver, & Benoit, 2008) have indicated that this may cause some bias in this measurement, but further research is needed to determine if this has significant consequences for its use in empirical models.
22 As a consequence, this method requires us to assume that parties are unitary actors, since the manifestos express the official policy stances of the parties.
23 The numbers refer to my own calculations, using the closest MRG/CMP cases for corresponding years to Chapel Hill expert surveys. If two or more cases are within a two-year spread around the years of interest, the mean has been used.
24 I would add another problem to this list, namely the survey items scale range, since it should be easier to allocate scores and provide valid rankings for scales with low ranges. For example, if an expert is asked (in the absence of strict criteria) to rank a party on its policy position on public healthcare on a scale from one to six, the ranking is more likely to be more accurate than if the scale ranged from one to 20.
25 All questionnaires can be found at http://www.unc.edu/~gwmarks/data_pp.php (accessed 06 May 2009).
26 Only Paper IV makes use of data measured at the individual level, while the other papers rely on aggregated opinions.
27 For more comprehensive discussions about the Eurobarometers see Saris et al (1997) and Schmitt (2003).
Because of oversampling the number of actual completed interviews is always about 1000, but this may still bias the results (i.e. introduce sample bias) if there are systematic non-responses within a certain group of the population. For Sweden the non-response rate varies around 40-50 percent.

The original phrasing in Swedish is “Är du i huvudsak för eller mot det svenska medlemskapet i EU eller har du ingen bestämd åsikt?” see Statistics Sweden http://www.scb.se/Pages/TableAndChart____27403.aspx (accessed 05 May 2009).

The Eurobarometers have a small overestimation of EU opinions compared to those measured by Statistics Sweden, but even if the Eurobarometer data are somewhat biased upwards this will almost certainly not affect the results in my papers.


The countries’ plots are ordered according to accession date.

Nonetheless, whether the issue is considered to be important or not by electorates is probably related to whether there are any real opportunities for the voters to express their opinions on integration. For instance, as seen from past EU referenda (regarding membership or treaty revisions) these have generally had relatively high electoral turnouts (with some exceptions, such as the two referenda regarding the Nice treaty ratification in Ireland and the Spanish referenda on the Lisbon Treaty). This indicates that voters do consider these issues to be important, at least when given opportunities to have a more or less direct influence over the policy outcome. Conversely, the electoral participation in EP-elections has remained considerably lower than in national parliamentary elections, but since these elections have less impact on the course of integration (see pp. 9-10) than referenda, the low turnout should not necessarily be considered an indication that voters do not prioritise these issues.

Regarding the CMP/MRG manifesto data in the figure, values between two data points (elections) have been linearly interpolated, thus in practice the data points have been smoothed.

According to the Chapel Hill expert survey data, there is a slightly different ordering at the country level, since Spain, Germany, Greece, Belgium, Portugal, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Italy have most Europhile parties in general, followed by Austria, Denmark UK, (and somewhat surprisingly) France, Finland and Sweden (not shown here). Data from Norway and Luxembourg are not included in this dataset.

It should be noted that the numbers of positive and negative references in the fourth and fifth columns refer to any mention of European integration in the party manifestos and that a party can have both negative and positive references to integration in the same electoral manifesto.

Danish, Finish and Norwegian parties are overrepresented in avoiding the issue, but for different reasons. In Danish national elections, the European issue is rarely on the agenda probably because of their recurrent EU-referenda and EU-critical parties running for EP-elections (i.e. Juni Bevægelsen; Folkebevægelsen mod EU), which provide alternative political arenas for this issue. The Finish and Norwegian cases are discussed below.
In the figures values between two data points (elections) have been linearly interpolated, thus in practice the data points have been smoothed.

To estimate EU support among the voters I use the survey item in the Eurobarometers: “Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership in the Common Market/European Community/European Union is ‘a good thing,’ ‘neither good nor bad,’ or ‘a bad thing?’”. Support for European integration is measured by taking the aggregated difference between the percentages that describe the EU as a “good thing” and as a “bad thing” (cf. Carrubba, 2001). The index ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates strong Euroscepticism and 1 strong support. The data on parties’ EU stances are derived by taking the mean expert evaluations of each party elite’s view on European integration. In these surveys experts on different countries evaluated the positions of national political parties on European integration using a seven-point scale, where 1 indicates strong opposition and 7 strong support. This variable has been recoded to range from 0 to 1 (where 0 indicates strong opposition and 1 strong support). Since voter attitudes and party positions are measured on two different scales it could be problematic to make any firm conclusions about the relative positions of voters and parties in each year, but it still gives us some indications of the opinion congruence between the two.

An additional factor that allegedly influences public opinion on European integration is the media focus on European issues. Although this is a rather limited research area as yet it could become a promising addition to research on public opinion about the EU if the data collection becomes more systematic. Media reporting is most likely an important factor mediating communication between party elites and the citizens. In addition, it is highly probable that the media have an independent effect on citizens’ attitudes, although the empirical evidence for a general influence on broad support for integration, in my view, is not very convincing (see, for example, Vliegenthart, Schuck, Boomgaarden, & De Vreese, 2008). Nonetheless, several studies have indicated that the media plays an important role in shaping opinion directly (i.e. taking strong positions on an issue) and indirectly (i.e. media reporting on political campaigns) on policy-specific support for European integration (e.g. Carey & Burton, 2004; de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; de Vreese & Semetko, 2004).

It should be noted that scholars of EU public opinion frequently use eclectic theoretical approaches, drawing on rational-choice models in conjunction with political communication, social psychology and other theoretical approaches to produce competing or complementary hypothesis about the determinants of support for the EU.

For an evaluation of the relative significance of utilitarian and affective factors see Hooghe and Marks (2004).

An exception to this pattern is at least one mainstream party, the British Conservative party, which has long advocated a Eurosceptical party line. Nonetheless, at the same time the party leadership position has been causing increasingly intensive internal divisions over Europe, which have seriously threatened the party cohesion altogether (and not only on this specific
issue). For discussions about the British case see, for example, Aspinwall (2000) and Baker et al (1998).

44 For discussions about how voters choose parties and the specific party strategies that follows from different propositions about such electoral behaviour, i.e. proximity vs. directional models of electoral choice see e.g. Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989); Westholm (1997, 2001) and Macdonald, at al. (1998, 2001).

45 It may not be completely unproblematic to assume that voters are using party elite cues for their evaluation of politics, since there may be an endogeneity problem between party support and mass opinion. With the erosion of the ability of social cleavages (although some issues derived from theses cleavages is still influential), to explain vote choices and party affiliation (Dalton, 1984; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000), parties will be evaluated by the issues and policies they advocate. Thus, if EU issue voting is evident, voters will choose parties based on their positions on European issues, rather than the other way around (cf. de Vries, 2007a). Nonetheless, since there are rather few single-issue Eurosceptic parties and these issues are not highly prioritised by most other voters, it should be safe to assume that in general party support is not predominantly determined by parties’ positions on European issues.

46 In addition, the erosion of party membership organisations has also weakened the parties’ capacity to aggregate interest within their own organisations, thus they have to rely more on techniques of opinion (or market) research to collect rather than aggregate relevant societal interests (Poguntke, 2004).

47 In most methodological textbooks, ‘N’ refers to the whole population and ‘n’ to a sample of that population. However, in this context “small-N” refers to analyses with a small number of cases (usually below 30), irrespective of whether these cases constitute the whole population or a sample thereof.

48 A panel refers to any dataset that has both a cross-sectional (N) and a time-series dimension (T), where the data are following the same cross-section units (e.g. parties) over time. In the political science literature, observational panel data sets are usually referred to as panel data, pooled time-series (Stimson, 1985), time-series-cross-section data (Beck & Katz, 1995), or (more rarely) multiple time-series. Panel data usually refers to data that are mostly cross-sectional, meaning T<N, time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data usually refers to data that are mostly time series, meaning T>N. In this dissertation I use the two terms synonymously, since the literature that I make use of does not usually make this distinction. Panel data in a broad sense refers simply to the “pooling of observations on a cross-section of households, countries, firms, etc. over several time periods” (Baltagi, 1995:1). An unbalanced panel means that the groups (i.e. cross-sectional units) in the panel have different sizes (i.e. numbers of observations).

49 An unbiased estimator has a sampling distribution with a mean equal to the parameter to be estimated. An efficient estimator is one that has the smallest variance. Finally, an estimator is consistent if the sampling distribution
becomes closer to the true value of the parameter if the sample size tends to infinity. See, for example, King et al. (1994:63-74).

Collinearity (or multicollinearity) occurs when the independent variables are correlated, i.e. some of the independent variables can be (almost) completely predicted by the other independent variables. This could cause problems in estimating the regression coefficients and increase the risk of Type II-errors (especially with small sample sizes).

In this case, OLS is the best linear unbiased estimator (BLUE).

The errors are spherical if they satisfy Gauss-Markov assumptions, i.e. the residuals are linear, homogeneous and independent.

Unfortunately, the space available for peer-reviewed papers is too limited to include all these tests in the published papers.

The common practice is to include a lagged dependent variable (LDV) to control for serial correlation. Inclusion of a LDV was recommended by Beck and Katz, but they did not actually do so themselves. Instead they transformed the data to eliminate the serial correlation of errors (Beck & Katz, 1995:645). The former has, however, become the standard procedure, probably because it is the simplest method. This procedure is not uncontroversial, particularly if the level of the dependent variable is not influenced by the level of the previous year. Even then, the LDV measures the weighted average of the right-hand side variables, and not the level of persistence. To include a lagged dependent variable together with period dummies may absorb most of the time-series variance in the data, as well as bias the estimates. The introduction of a lagged dependent variable may bias the coefficient of the lagged dependent variable upwards, while others covariates are likely to be biased downwards (Achen, 2000). For a discussion on when it is (and is not) appropriate to use LDV see Keele and Kelly (2006).

In a fully pooled model one assumes that the causal effect is the same across units of analysis, thus only one coefficient is estimated to summarise the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable.

Various issues concerning different model specifications were examined in an earlier, unpublished version of this paper. Use of fixed-effect models, which are equivalent to estimating different intercepts for our units, but make the slopes the same across units, offers the possibility to control for omitted variables that differ between cases, but are constant over time. However, this approach would not be especially appropriate for this study, because fixed-effects models cannot include time-invariant variables. Furthermore, slowly-changing variables will generally be ineffectively estimated. More seriously, the fixed effects remove average unit-to-unit variation from the analysis, and are thus only suitable for investigating whether intra-unit changes in y are associated with intra-unit changes in x. However, unit-to-unit differences in averages between y and x can be theoretically interesting for explaining the variation in positions among political parties' stances to the EU, through factors that do not change over time (cf. Beck & Katz, 2001). More specifically, in Paper I national
location- or country-specific factors would be impossible to investigate using fixed effects models.

57 In addition, the impact of national location is somewhat confusing in Marks et al paper, where all country dummy coefficients, except for Sweden, show negative signs. This implies that the dummy reference group, Danish left parties, are more Europositive than similar political parties in other member states (including the founding member countries), which is somewhat opposite to what could be expected.

58 For instance, the two dominant theories, namely neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, ignore the possibility that ideological factors could matter for the integration process. The reason for this neglect of ideological factors is, according to Goldmann (2003:155-156), a consequence of the fact that the leading scholars of integration were active in American political science departments. In the US, domestic politics is less ideological in general, parties less coherent and less ideological than European parties. Instead, the focus at the time was more on structures and interests rather than ideas and ideologies, which in turn may have had an influence on theories of European integration.
APPENDIX

To test whether the results in Paper III were robust by using other types of data rather than the party policy positions as indicated by party manifestos (i.e. the MRG/CMP dataset), the same relationships were examined using Chapel Hill expert survey data (see tables A1 and A2, which are equivalent to tables 1 and 2 in the paper).

The results from these analyses provide weak auxiliary support for the hypothesis that the results are robust for alternative measurements of party policy positions on European integration. Nonetheless, as mentioned in the paper (Hellström, 2008b:1133), the time-series is somewhat shorter and one may question if the observations of individual parties over time are truly independent of each other. This is because the first four series of observations in this time-series (1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996) are not independent observations, since they are derived from a single expert survey administered by Leonard Ray in 1996, in which expert respondents were asked to provide assessments of each party at four points in time (see Ray, 1999). We know from the literature that expert surveys are not a good method for determining party positions retrospectively (Budge, 2000; Mair, 2001). By asking experts to evaluate parties as far back as 12 years, this method of measurement is likely to have poor reliability or a conservative bias, i.e. underestimate changes in party positions, and this may have quite serious implications for the conclusions of this analysis. In addition, as a consequence some of the individual panels contain unit roots. However, unit root tests (i.e. Fisher's tests for unbalanced panels as developed by Maddala and Wu, 1999) provided no sign of overall non-stationary for party positions.

In these tables columns 1 and 2 show the results for pooled linear and within-group (i.e. fixed effects) estimators, which respectively provide upper and lower bounds for the autoregressive coefficient of voter opinions (in table A1) and party positions (in table A2); columns 3 and 4 show estimates obtained using one- and two-step difference GMM estimators, respectively; and estimates obtained using System GMM estimators are presented in columns 5 and 6.

The results from a first set of Granger causality tests in which electorates’ opinions were the dependent variable across various estimators are shown in table A1. Overall, the results provide weak and ambiguous support for the claim that political parties are able to influence voter opinions. The results for the one- and two-step Difference GMM estimators, presented in columns 3 and 4, show that the estimated autoregressive coefficient is smaller than the corresponding Within-Groups estimate, indicating that these estimators are downward biased. Only the system GMM estimations in column 5 are in the appropriate range, but neither of these estimations is especially reliable since the validity of GMM estimates is dependent on the assumption that the instruments are exogenous. The Hansen test of over-identifying restrictions indicates whether the instrumental variables are valid (i.e. uncorrelated with the error term). In models 3 to 6 the Hansen test statistic of overidentification restrictions is
significant, rejecting the null hypothesis of instrument validity, which makes inferences unreliable.

The effects of political parties’ positions on their electorates’ opinions are reported in a corresponding manner in table A2. In both the difference and system GMM estimations, the insignificant influence of the lagged voter opinion variable indicates that parties are not adapting to electorate opinion on European integration. Although both the difference GMM and the system GMM estimations provide estimates within an acceptable range, the Hansen test of over-identifying restrictions in column 5 and 6 is significant, which again indicates that these results must be interpreted very carefully.
**Table A1.** Results of additional Granger causality tests. Do shifts in party positions cause shifts in voter opinions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables:</th>
<th>Pooled OLS (1)</th>
<th>Within group (2)</th>
<th>Diff-1 GMM (3)</th>
<th>Diff-2 GMM (4)</th>
<th>Sys-1 GMM (5)</th>
<th>Sys-2 GMM (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Voter opinion (t)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voter opinion (t-1)</td>
<td>0.8488*** (0.0143)</td>
<td>0.4815*** (0.0286)</td>
<td>0.3961*** (0.0529)</td>
<td>0.3797*** (0.0845)</td>
<td>0.5908*** (0.0956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Party position (t-1)</td>
<td>0.0022 (0.0100)</td>
<td>-0.0438 (0.0379)</td>
<td>-0.8834*** (0.3206)</td>
<td>-0.8937* (0.5117)</td>
<td>0.4008*** (0.1510)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.0892*** (0.0144)</td>
<td>0.4476*** (0.0293)</td>
<td>0.0696 (0.1177)</td>
<td>0.2286** (0.1057)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AR(2)</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.25</td>
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</table>

Note: Un-standardised coefficients with robust standard errors in parenthesis; where *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For one-step estimates Huber–White standard errors were used; the two-step estimates are Windmeijer-corrected. The values reported for the Hansen test are the p-values for the null hypothesis of instrument validity. The values reported for AR (1) and AR (2) are the p-values for first and second order autocorrelated disturbances in the first difference equations. Other estimates are excluded from the table to save space but are available on request from the author.
Table A2. Results of additional Granger causality tests. Do shifts in voter opinions cause shifts in party positions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables:</th>
<th>Pooled OLS</th>
<th>Within group GMM</th>
<th>Diff-1 GMM</th>
<th>Diff-2 GMM</th>
<th>Sys-1 GMM</th>
<th>Sys-2 GMM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party position (t)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party position (t-1)</td>
<td>0.9335***</td>
<td>0.5038***</td>
<td>0.7999***</td>
<td>0.7742***</td>
<td>0.8504***</td>
<td>0.8045***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0117)</td>
<td>(0.0474)</td>
<td>(0.2082)</td>
<td>(0.2750)</td>
<td>(0.1290)</td>
<td>(0.1466)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter opinion (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.0086</td>
<td>-0.0316</td>
<td>0.1005</td>
<td>-0.0868</td>
<td>-0.2133</td>
<td>-0.2368</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0167)</td>
<td>(0.0359)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(0.1504)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of groups</td>
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<td>133</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Un-standardised coefficients with robust standard errors in parenthesis; where *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For one-step estimates Huber–White standard errors were used; the two-step estimates are Windmeijer-corrected. The values reported for the Hansen test are the p-values for the null hypothesis of instrument validity. The values reported for AR (1) and AR (2) are the p-values for first and second order autocorrelated disturbances in the first difference equations. Other estimates are excluded from the table to save space but are available on request from the author.
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