

The Past in the Present: A Cleavage Theory of Party Response to European Integration

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This article explains the positions taken by national political parties on the issue of European integration over the period 1984–96. Based on the theory of party systems developed by Lipset and Rokkan, we develop a cleavage account of party response to new political issues. We hypothesize that European integration is assimilated into pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists and constituencies that reflect long-standing commitments on fundamental domestic issues.

European integration has emerged as a major issue for national political parties. The reallocation of authority that has taken place from the mid-1980s amounts to a constitutional revolution unparalleled in twentieth-century Europe. National parties now exist in a multi-level polity in which decisions about further European integration affect virtually all of their established economic and political concerns.

This article provides an explanation of positions taken by national political parties on the issue of European integration over the period 1984–96. Our point of departure is the theory of social cleavages set out by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan in 1967.¹ To what extent is the response of political parties to European integration filtered by historical predispositions rooted in the basic cleavages that structure political competition in West European party systems? Our conclusion is that the new issue of European integration is assimilated into pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists and constituencies that reflect long-standing commitments on fundamental domestic issues. We find that the cleavage approach to party politics provides us with a powerful set of conceptual and theoretical tools for understanding the positions of national political parties on European integration over the period 1984–96.

We begin this article by outlining a theory of party position based on social cleavages. Next, we test this theory with data on party positions on European integration. Finally, we apply the theory to explain variations within the major party families.

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¹ Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

A CLEAVAGE THEORY OF PARTY POSITION

In their seminal article, 'Cleavage Systems, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments', Lipset and Rokkan argue that modern European party systems are shaped by a series of historical conflicts about state building, religion and class that took place from the Protestant Reformation to the Industrial Revolution. According to Lipset and Rokkan, the sequential interaction of these conflicts created distinct and highly durable identities, social institutions and patterns of political contestation that can explain both national variations in party systems and the 'freezing' of such systems.

Although the influence of traditional social cleavages has diminished in shaping individual voting choice, we hypothesize that such cleavages may still be powerful in structuring the way political parties respond to new issues.² Our point of departure is the institutionalist presumption that organizations assimilate and exploit new issues within existing schemes. Most political parties have established constituencies and long-standing agendas that mobilize intense commitments on the parts of leaders and activists.³ Political parties are not 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. The range of a political party's likely responses to a new issue is therefore a product of the ideologies of party leaders and the endogenous constraints of party organization, constituency ties and reputation. In other words, a political party has its own 'bounded rationality', that shapes the way in which it comes to terms with new challenges and uncertainties.⁴

While party competition is no longer 'frozen' along the cleavages identified by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, class, religious and centre-periphery cleavages represent sunk costs that influence how party leaders

² On the power of social cleavages, see Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair, *Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: The Stabilization of European Electorates 1885–1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ivor Crewe and David Denver, eds, *Electoral Change in Western Democracies: Patterns and Sources of Electoral Volatility* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985); and Mark N. Franklin, Thomas T. Mackie and Henry Valen, eds, *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³ See Ian Budge, David Robertson and Derek Hearl, *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁴ This is the approach taken by Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Gary Marks and John Stephens, 'Conclusion: Convergence and Divergence in Advanced Capitalist Democracies', in Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Gary Marks and John Stephens, eds, *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The bases for this approach are laid out in Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For an overview of competing approaches, see Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, 'Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms', *Political Studies*, 44 (1996), 936–57. For an application to political parties, see Herbert Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

process incentives generated by democratic party systems.⁵ We hypothesize that these cleavages constitute institutional frameworks or ‘prisms’ through which political parties respond to the issue of European integration.

This is to say that although political parties exist in a competitive electoral environment, their policy positions cannot, we believe, be predicted as an efficient response to electoral incentives. In the first place, it is not obvious to most citizens where their economic interests lie on the issue of European integration. While it is clear to everyone that European integration has a profound effect on national economies, politics and societies, the extent and even the direction of economic consequences for individuals are contested.⁶ In time, European integration may spawn clearly demarcated sets of winners and losers, but, for the present, the social bases of support and opposition to European integration are indistinct. To the extent that orientations towards the European Union (EU) are weakly structured for individual citizens, it is unrealistic to believe that they may serve as powerful inducements for parties in determining their positions on the issue.⁷

The political parties that currently dominate West European party systems have an interest in blending the issue of European integration into existing patterns of party competition. This is not to say that established political parties are ideologically immutable or unable to raise new issues. But it is to say that

⁵ See Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, ‘Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction’, in Lipset and Rokkan, eds, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, pp. 1–64; and Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Note that our argument, which assumes the persistence of historical lines of cleavage, does not assume either the persistence of individual parties or that cleavages are frozen once and for all. On these issues, see Giovanni Sartori, ‘From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology’, in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *Politics and the Social Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Peter Mair, *Party System Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially pp. 56–66; and Gordon Smith, ‘Core Persistence, System Change and the “People’s Party”’, in Peter Mair and Gordon Smith, eds, *Understanding Party System Change in Western Europe* (London: Sage, 1990), pp. 157–68.

⁶ One might add here that this is not clear to political economists either. Stolper–Samuelson models and Heckscher–Ohlin models yield quite different accounts of individual economic interests under international trade. See Matthew J. Gabel, *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

⁷ Recent analyses of individual orientations towards the EU have begun to explore the complex issue of party–voter interaction under incomplete information. See Gabel, *Interests and Integration*, chap. 6; Christopher J. Anderson, ‘When in Doubt, Use Proxies: Attitudes Toward Domestic Politics and Support for European Integration’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 31 (1998), 569–601; Bernhard Wessels, ‘Evaluations of the EC: Elite or Mass-Driven?’ in Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Sinnott, eds, *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 137–62; Marco R. Steenbergen and David J. Scott, ‘Representation, Persuasion, and Public Opinion Toward the European Union’ (paper presented at the Southern Political Science Association, Norfolk, Va., (1997). On the question of how European integration plays in national electoral competition, see Mark Franklin and Cees van der Eijk, *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), and Alain Guyomarch, ‘The European Dynamics of Evolving Party Competition in France’, *West European Politics*, 48 (1995), 100–23.

one would expect established political parties rooted in the basic cleavages that have historically structured West European party systems to assimilate the issue of European integration into their existing ideologies. The next step, then, is to frame expectations about how political parties will position themselves on European integration given their long-standing ideological commitments.

HYPOTHESIZING PARTY POSITIONS

To understand how political parties respond to European integration we need to unpack the policy content of European integration into two components:

Economic integration, the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to the movement of goods, capital, services and labour, has dominated European integration from its inception in the early 1950s. The creation of a single market was an overarching goal of the Treaty of Rome (1957). The idea was pressed into some 282 specific measures mandated by the Single European Act (1986) that were designed to eliminate an array of non-tariff barriers.⁸ The Maastricht Treaty (1993) builds on these reforms and takes economic integration a big step forward by envisaging a European-wide monetary union.

Political integration involves the creation of a capacity for authoritative decision making in the EU. Over the past fifteen years, the EU has become part of a multi-level polity in which European institutions share authoritative power with national and subnational governments in a variety of policy areas, including environmental policy, competition, social policy, regional policy and communications policy. The EU has a Court of Justice that is in some important respects the highest court in its territory, and a directly elected parliament that plays a vital role in many areas of authoritative decision making. The creation of broad authoritative decision-making powers in the EU has deepened political contention at the European level. Interest groups, social movements and political parties have been drawn there to gain information and influence. From the mid-1980s, European integration has involved the creation of authoritative supranational institutions as well as the deepening of international market activity.⁹

⁸ Helen Wallace and Alasdair R. Young, 'The Single Market', in Helen Wallace and William Wallace, eds, *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 125–56.

⁹ This argument has been elaborated by Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe and Kermit Blank, 'European Integration since the 1980s: State-Centric Versus Multi-Level Governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34 (1996), 341–78; Gary Marks and Doug McAdam, 'Social Movements and the Changing Structure of Political Opportunity in the European Union', *West European Politics*, 19 (1996), 249–78; Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Examining the Present Euro-Polity with the Help of Past Theories', and 'Imagining the Future of the Euro-Polity with the Help of New Concepts', in Gary Marks, Fritz Scharpf, Philippe Schmitter and Wolfgang Streeck, eds, *Governance in the European Union* (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 1–14 and 121–50; James A. Caporaso, 'The European Union and Forms of State: Westphalian, Regulatory, or Post-Modern?' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34 (1996), 29–51; Liesbet Hooghe, *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi-Level*

We hypothesize that the social cleavages that have historically shaped political parties and competition among them influence the policy positions of parties on each of these dimensions of European integration. To use Stein Rokkan's phrase, political cleavages and their interaction create a 'structure of political alternatives' that constrain the orientations of political parties on newly arising issues.¹⁰

The dual character of European integration creates tension for parties that compete on the *class cleavage*.¹¹ Social democratic parties are pulled in two directions. On the one hand, economic integration threatens social democratic achievements at the national level by intensifying international economic competition and undermining Keynesian responses to it. By making it easier for international capital to locate in the country that provides the most favourable conditions and rules, economic integration increases the substitutability of labour across countries, fosters economic inequality, and pressures employers to demand labour flexibility. On the other hand, political integration promises a partial solution to this bleak prospect by recreating a capacity for authoritative regulation – at the European level. If the capacity of national states to regulate markets effectively is declining, then it may make sense to enhance that capacity in the EU.

Parties on the right face the same logic in reverse. For such parties, economic integration is beneficial because it constrains the economic intervention of

(F'note continued)

Governance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Stephan Leibfried and Paul Pierson, 'Social Policy', in Helen Wallace and William Wallace, eds, *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 185–208.

¹⁰ Quoted in Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 77 (1983), 1–18. General treatments of cleavage theory are: Alan Zuckerman, 'New Approaches to Political Cleavage: A Theoretical Introduction', *Comparative Political Studies*, 15 (1982), 131–44; Hanspeter Kriesi, 'The Transformation of Cleavage Politics', *European Journal of Political Research*, 33 (1998), 165–85. In addition to the work of Simon Hix and Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, see John Gaffney, *Political Parties and the European Union* (New York: Routledge, 1996), and particularly Gaffney's introduction, for a discussion of cleavages in the EU. We do not include the new politics cleavage in this article for two reasons: first, it is better described as an ideological cleavage rather than a social cleavage and, therefore, muddies an evaluation of the Lipset–Rokkan model; and secondly, we choose, in the confines of this article, to focus on the major party families – at the expense of the Greens and extreme right.

¹¹ This is one area in which cleavage theory has been applied to European integration. The first attempts to do this were Simon Hix, 'Political Parties in the European Union System: A "Comparative Politics Approach" to the Development of Party Federations' (doctoral dissertation, European Union Institute, 1995); and Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, 'Birth of a Polity: The Struggle over European Integration' (paper presented at the Tenth International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, 1996). See also Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997); Simon Hix, 'Parties at the European Level and the Legitimacy of EU Socio-Economic Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33 (1995), 527–53; Robert Ladrech, 'Partisanship and Party Formation in European Union Politics', *Comparative Politics*, 29 (1997), 167–86; Hermann Schmitt and Jacques Thomassen, 'European Parliament Party Groups: An Emerging Party System?' (paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research, Warwick, 1997).

national governments. International economic integration lowers the costs of shifting investment between various countries and impels national governments to compete in attracting capital to their country. The implications of this for market regulation, social policy and taxation are strongly favourable for parties of the right. Conversely, political integration threatens to create a supranational government for the EU as a whole that can regulate markets while negating regime competition among individual states in the integrated European economy.

The class cleavage continues to dominate European party systems, but many parties compete along other cleavages, and this has implications for their positions on European integration. The Catholic side of the *religious cleavage*, most strongly represented in countries where there was deep conflict about the role of the Catholic Church, is decidedly pro-European integration. European integration, both economic and political, is consistent with the supranational aspirations of the Catholic Church and the anti-national bias of Catholic parties that arose from their historic battles with national state-builders. Religious practice is generally a much weaker source of political competition in Protestant countries, but where parties do identify themselves as Protestant, the national character of Protestant churches should lead them to be decidedly more sceptical of European supranationalism.

Peripheral minorities in party systems characterized by a *centre-periphery cleavage* oppose centralization of authority in the central state and favour various forms of decentralization and cultural defence. While Lipset and Rokkan do not make much of the distinction between peripheral minorities that are territorially concentrated in particular regions (such as Catalonia, the Basque country, Scotland or Wales) and those that are territorially dispersed (such as Scandinavian farmers and Lutheran fundamentalists), this is important for orientations towards European integration. Political parties representing territorially dispersed peripheral minorities are likely to oppose all efforts to centralize authority, whether it is in the central state or at the European level. From their standpoint, European integration is, if anything, more threatening because it shifts decision making even further away from their control and is yet more alien to their cultural milieu. Territorially concentrated peripheral minorities take a different view because European integration can facilitate decentralization of authority from the central state to their region or ethno-territorial nation.¹² The single European market reduces the economic penalty imposed by regional political autonomy because regional firms continue to have access to the European market. European market integration provides an overarching framework that allows regionalists to demand political autonomy without incurring market exclusion. Moreover, the EU is likely to be a more congenial setting for ethno-territorial minorities than their customary

¹² Gary Marks, 'Structural Policy and Multilevel Governance in the EC', in Alan Cafruny and Glenda Rosenthal, eds, *The State of the European Community* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 391–411; Hooghe, *Cohesion Policy and European Integration*.

national setting, because in the EU they become merely one minority among many, instead of a permanent minority facing a national majority. Conversely, political parties that define themselves as nationalist on the centre–periphery cleavage will be opposed to European integration because it diffuses state authority and undermines state sovereignty.

A theory linking cleavages to European integration has testable implications for individual political parties. It suggests, first of all, that party families – summarizing the accumulated historical experience of these cleavages – should be efficient categories for predicting the position of individual parties on European integration. We test this claim in the next section of this article.

ORIENTATIONS OF PARTY FAMILIES

Given the powerful role of cleavages in structuring national party systems and the connections we hypothesize between positions on these cleavages and orientations towards European integration, we expect to find that party families cohere on European integration and, further, that membership in a party family is significantly associated with position on European integration.

The data that we use for positions of political parties on European integration are based on an expert survey conducted by Leonard Ray.¹³ Ray used evaluations from country experts to place political parties on a seven-point scale (ranging from 1 to 7) with the lowest score representing strong opposition to European integration and the highest score representing strong support for European integration for each of four time periods: 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996. Our estimate of each party's position at each time point is the mean of these evaluations. Statistical tests indicate that these data are reliable within conventional limits. There are few comparable sources of data, but where systematically collected manifesto data overlap with the Ray data, they tend to be mutually consistent.¹⁴ The resulting database allows us to view party positions on European integration for individual parties in EU Member States over time.

Variation in party position on European integration within party families tends to be much lower than variation within individual countries. The simplest way to summarize this is to compare standard deviations for party families with

¹³ Leonard Ray, 'Politicizing Europe: Political Parties and the Changing Nature of Public Opinion about the European Union' (doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997).

¹⁴ Leonard Ray's data consists of 134 expert judgements of party position on European integration and is available at www.unc.edu/~gvmrmarks/. A mean of eight and a minimum of five respondents provided judgement for parties in each country. The absolute mean difference between individual judgements and the average judgement of all respondents is 0.65 (on a seven-point scale). The standard deviation is 0.89 for evaluations of all parties in all countries in 1984; 0.85 for 1988; 0.77 for 1992; and 0.78 for 1996. For 1988 the correlation of Ray's data with the Party Manifesto data (archived by the Manifesto Research Group of the ECPR) is 0.78 ($p < 0.001$). For a complete report of the data, see Leonard Ray, 'Measuring Party Orientations Toward European Integration: Results from an Expert Survey', *European Journal of Political Research*, 36 (1999), 283–306. Of these data sources, Ray's data alone is currently available for the period 1988–96.

TABLE 1 *Explaining Party Position on European Integration*

	EU14							EU9			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11
Family	0.63**		0.55**								
Country		0.08*	0.05**								
Family 1984				0.73**				0.73**			
Family 1988					0.72**				0.79**		
Family 1992						0.72**				0.72**	
Family 1996							0.47**				0.71**
Adjusted R^2	0.63	0.08	0.68	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.47	0.73	0.79	0.73	0.70
N	209	209	209	40	53	52	64	40	44	43	43

** $p < 0.001$ * $p < 0.01$.

Notes: Cell entries are the ω^2 statistic for the variables. The ANOVA (analysis of variance) procedure has been used to explore the amount of variation in party position on European integration explained by a set of categorical variables.

standard deviations for individual countries. On our seven-point scale, the average standard deviation for party families that represent traditional social cleavages – the conservative, liberal, Christian democratic, social democratic, extreme left and regionalist families – is 0.83.¹⁵ The average standard deviation for parties grouped by country is 1.2. Hence, party family tells us considerably more about the position of a party on European integration than national location does.

To test the hypothesis that party family explains a significant amount of variation in party position, we use the ANOVA (analysis of variance) procedure, which allows us to explore the amount of variation on a continuous dependent variable that is explained by a set of categorical variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1. Model 1 reveals that party family explains 63 per cent of the variance in individual party positions on European integration ($p < 0.001$). Model 2 shows that the influence of country is far weaker. When combined in Model 3, these two sets of independent variables explain 68 per cent of variance in party position. In this equation, the ω^2 statistic, which standardizes the relative influence exerted by multiple independent variables in an ANOVA procedure, is 0.05 for country and 0.55 for party family.

Models 4 through 7 examine the influence of party family on party position for each of our four time periods. These models show that the influence of party family, while high across all four years for which we have data, is highest in 1984 and 1988 and lowest in 1996. During the 1980s, as we explain below, social democratic parties became more homogeneous in their orientations towards European integration, while the coherence of other party families declined slightly. In the mid 1990s, however, because of the enlargement of the EU to include Northern Scandinavia, the liberals and Christian democrats became significantly more heterogeneous. As a result, the explanatory punch of party family declined markedly from 1992 to 1996.

Models 8 through 11 confirm this by excluding parties in countries that joined the European Union after 1984 (Portugal, Spain, Austria, Finland and Sweden). When we examine positions of political parties on European integration in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the causal power of party family does not diminish appreciably over the period 1984 to 1996.

This statistical analysis disconfirms the null hypothesis that party family is not significantly associated with party position on European integration. The association is remarkably powerful, and there can be little question concerning the direction of the causality because it is clear that party family categories are, at least to this point in time, independent of European integration. The associations between party family and the conventional left–right dimension are stronger still, in the 0.8 to 0.85 range. So party family, as one would expect, is more strongly related to the basic left–right cleavage than to European

¹⁵ The figure is 0.86 when we include party families of the extreme right and Greens based on a new politics cleavage.

integration. But the strength of the connection between party family and the latter, and its causal dominance when compared to country variables, confirm the plausibility of the theory offered here.¹⁶

In the remainder of this article we focus our analytical lens more precisely in order to explain variations *within* the four major party families – the social democratic, liberal, Christian democratic and conservative families. Party family captures a substantial amount of variance among individual political parties, but categorizing parties in this way does not exhaust the causal power of political cleavages in explaining party position on European integration. Lipset and Rokkan stress that the effect of a particular cleavage is mediated by its *interaction* with prior cleavages. Such path dependence results in marked geographical variations in party systems and corresponding variations within party families. These variations allow a more refined, and therefore more accurate, explanation of party positions than that based on aggregate party families.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Social democratic parties are rooted on the left of the class cleavage, supporting greater equality, social welfare spending and political control of markets. As Lipset and Rokkan noted, this party family is exceptionally homogeneous because it arose in response to a deep and relatively uniform cleavage across advanced capitalist societies: the class struggle between employees and owners of capital. Not surprisingly, then, social democratic parties in EU Member States are also the most homogeneous on the issue of European integration.

However, the social democratic party family is by no means uniform. For example, the Scandinavian and British parties were relatively Euro-sceptic in the 1980s, while southern European social democrats (with the exception of the Greek PASOK in the early 1980s) have generally been pro-European.¹⁷ How can one explain such variations? The model we set out below constrains social

¹⁶ A link between party families and EU orientation is suggested by Hix and Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, and Gary Marks and Carole Wilson, 'National Political Parties and European Integration', in Thomas Banchoff and Mitchell Smith, eds, *The Contested Polity: Legitimacy and the European Union* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁷ On social democratic parties and European integration, see Kevin Featherstone, *Socialist Parties and European Integration: A Comparative History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Robert Ladrech, 'Social Democratic Parties and EC Integration: Transnational Party Responses to Europe 1992', *European Journal of Political Research*, 24 (1997), 195–210; Robert Geyer and Dwaine Swank, 'Rejecting the European Union: Norwegian Social Democratic Opposition to the EU in the 1990s', *Party Politics*, 19 (1997), 549–62; Robert Geyer, *The Uncertain Union: British and Norwegian Social Democrats in an Integrating Europe* (Aldershot, Hants.: Avebury, 1997); Dag Arne Christensen, 'The Left-Wing Opposition in Denmark, Norway and Sweden: Cases of Europhobia?' *Western European Politics*, 19 (1996), 525–46; Nicholas Aylott, 'Between Europe and Unity: The Case of the Swedish Social Democrats', *Western European Politics*, 20 (1997), 119–36; J. H. Haahr, *Looking to Europe: The EC Policies of the British Labour Party and the Danish Social Democrats* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993).

democratic strategy along a possibility curve that is a function of the achievements of social democracy at the national level, the costs imposed by European economic integration, and the prospects of Euro-Keynesianism.

To the extent that social democratic parties have been able to achieve their goals at the national level (for example, by creating national Keynesianism, strong welfare states and a highly institutionalized industrial relations system), we hypothesize that they will regard the deepening of market integration in Europe as a threat. This seems plausible on several grounds.¹⁸ Market integration in Europe gives employers immense advantages in bargaining with unions because capital is far more able than labour to take advantage of opportunities for transnational mobility. Competition among national governments to lure the most mobile factors of production (i.e. capital) to their countries constrains government spending, provides incentives for governments to shift the burden of taxation from capital to labour, and leads governments and employers to press for labour 'flexibility'. Increased substitutability of labour across national labour markets further depresses labour bargaining power. Each of these undermines institutional settlements that express neocorporatist class compromise.

But European integration is double-edged for social democratic parties. If social democracy at the national level is weak or difficult to sustain, then European integration is likely to be viewed positively as a means to establish social democratic regulations within the EU as a whole. The logical implication is a tipping point along the possibility curve describing social democratic strategy in Figure 1. Suppose that national social democracy is being undermined by European integration as one moves from *A* to *B* in Figure 1: how do social democrats respond? Assume further that it is politically infeasible for social democrats to turn the clock back and return to *A*. As a country moves towards *B*, we hypothesize that social democrats will demand *more* integration, not less. As the prospect of returning to *A* fades, so the lure of *C*, European regulated capitalism, looms larger.

In this model, social democratic positions on European integration depend less on ideological variation than on evolving institutional constraints. Depending on the achievements of national social democracy (i.e. the vertical height of *A*), social democrats stand to suffer by falling into the valley of single market regime competition at *B*. The slope of the curve from *A* to *B* – the variable cost of European integration for social democrats – depends on the extent to which social democracy is institutionalized at the national level. What social democrats do at *B* cannot be inferred from their absolute preference for national

¹⁸ Wolfgang Streeck, 'Neo-Voluntarism: A New European Social Policy Regime?' in Marks *et al.*, eds, *Governance in the European Union*, pp. 64–94; Wolfgang Streeck, 'The Internationalization of Industrial Relations in Europe: Prospects and Problems' (Max-Planck-Institut, Cologne, 1998). Several chapters of Kitschelt *et al.*, eds, *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*, deal with this issue, including particularly Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks. 'Making of a Polity: The Struggle over European Integration'.

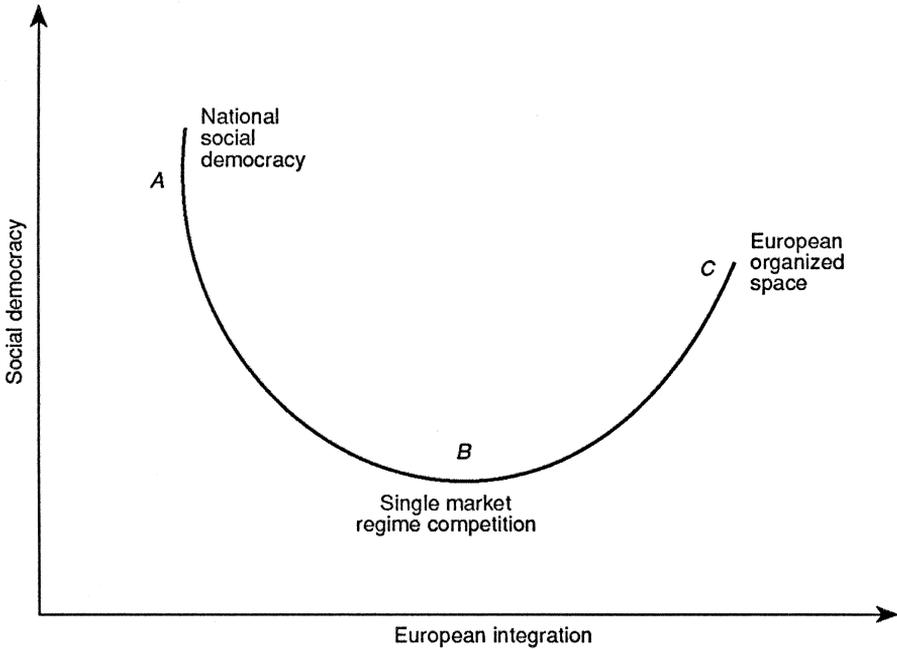


Fig. 1. The social democratic possibility curve

social democracy versus European organized space but from their evaluation of the relative merits of further integration versus the status quo.

We now have a logical set of expectations about the orientations of social democratic parties that depend on the slope of the possibility curve in Figure 1 and the position of parties along it. How consistent is this with the evidence?

Figure 2 bifurcates social democratic parties successively along three variables. The first is the strength of national social democracy, which we measure by combining scores for the extent of social democratic participation in government, the organizational strength of labour, and the extent to which resources in a society are allocated authoritatively.¹⁹ Social democratic parties

¹⁹ The extent of social democratic participation in government is measured as the number of years social democratic parties were part of national government coalitions between 1950 and 1980 (Evelyne Huber, Charles Ragin and John D. Stephens, 'Social Democracy, Christian Democracy, Constitutional Structure and the Welfare State', *American Journal of Sociology*, 99 (1993), 711-49). Organizational strength of labour is indicated by union density in 1985 (International Labour Organization Task Force on Industrial Relations, 'World Labor Report 1997-1998: Industrial Relations, Democracy, and Social Stability' Table 1.2). The extent to which economic resources are allocated authoritatively rather than by the market is indicated by the share of taxation in gross domestic product in 1985 (Statistics of Norway, 'Tax Revenue of OECD Member Countries as Percentage of GDP', <http://www.ssb.no/www-open/english/yearbook/tab/T1512004.shtml>). These variables are each standardized around a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 and then arithmetically summed to create an index of national social democracy.

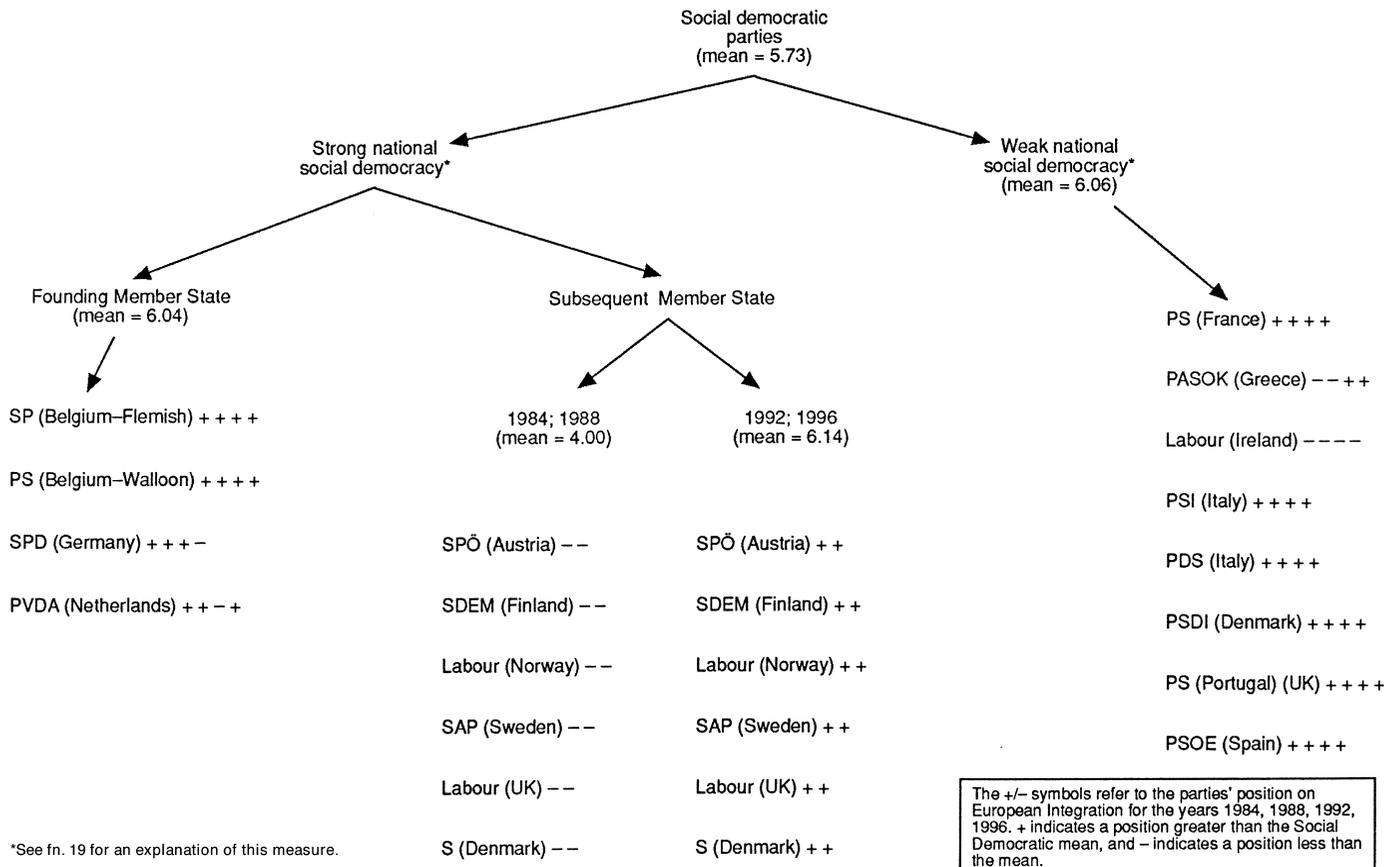


Fig. 2. Social democratic parties

that do not defend entrenched national social democracy are, as we expect, inclined to support European integration. On our seven-point scale, the mean level of support among these parties is 6.06.

The orientations of the remaining parties depend on whether they are strategizing at point *A* or point *B* in Figure 1. The second bifurcation of social democratic parties in Figure 2 is between social democratic parties in the founding Member States and in subsequent Member States. By the beginning of the 1980s, social democratic parties in the founding Member States were nearer to *B* than to *A*. They had experienced more than two decades of economic integration. The European Economic Community (EEC) was so deeply institutionalized that it was unrealistic to propose exiting the regime.²⁰ National social democracy pursued outside the EEC appeared a chimera, particularly after the debacle of ‘socialism in one country’ in France in 1982–83. In his electoral programme for the 1980 presidential election, François Mitterrand proposed to increase France’s room for manoeuvre in the EEC by reducing trade to 20 per cent of French gross domestic product by 1990. The policy was unsustainable under the pressures of international currency and capital markets, and after 1983 Mitterrand and the majority of socialists came to believe that the only realistic alternative was to deepen, rather than marginalize, the European Economic Community.²¹ The debate between national social democrats and supporters of European regulated capitalism turned decisively in favour of the latter, and, under Jacques Delors’s leadership in the European Commission, social democratic parties in these countries sought to deepen and extend the Single Market programme. By the mid to late 1980s most social democrats in established European Union (EU) Member States came to the conclusion that the European Community was the ‘only game in town’, and adjusted their policies accordingly.

This conviction was not shared by social democrats in countries that were recent members of the EEC or were outside the EEC. To forge a policy in the valley of single-market regime competition is one thing; to face the prospect of descending there is another. Without exception, as Figure 2 reveals, social democratic parties in these countries in 1984 and 1988 took a sceptical position on European integration. The British Labour party is an interesting example.²² In the early 1980s, the Labour party actually resolved to pull the United

²⁰ Social democratic parties were generally more sceptical in the early years of the EEC. Despite their internationalist origins, by the early post-Second World War period, socialist parties were deeply embedded in national states and opposed to economic liberalization and supranational governance. As a result, they were deeply divided in their response to plans to create the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community (see R. T. Griffiths, ed., *Socialist Parties and the Question of Europe in the 1950s* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993)).

²¹ Alistair Cole, ‘The French Socialists’, in Gaffney, *Political Parties and the European Union*, pp. 71–85.

²² See Stephen George and Deborah Haythorne, ‘The British Labour Party’, in Gaffney, *Political Parties and the European Union*, pp. 110–21; Philip Daniels, ‘From Hostility to “Constructive Engagement”: The Europeanisation of the Labour Party’, *West European Politics*, 21 (1998), 72–96.

Kingdom out of the EEC because membership was deemed to be incompatible with its radical Alternative Economic Strategy. But by the 1990s, as the third bifurcation in Figure 2 makes clear, every single social democratic party in this group had become favourably orientated to European integration, and all were above the social democratic mean of support for European integration for the 1984–96 period as a whole.

This is consistent with our model. On the one hand, these social democratic parties have become less sanguine about social democracy at the national level. The bases of national social democracy have been weakened *economically* by the internationalization of capital and goods markets, and the decline of traditional manufacturing and resource extraction; *politically* by intensified employer demands for labour market flexibility, and the renewed influence of neo-market liberal ideology; and *socially* by the growing heterogeneity of the workforce and of labour unions, and by the declining salience of social class.²³

On the other hand, the European Union has become a more propitious arena for social democrats to achieve their goals. The EU has come to wield authoritative powers in a range of policy areas relevant to social democrats, including social policy, cohesion policy, environmental policy and communications. There is the expectation that monetary integration will give rise to serious pressures for the creation of a fiscal policy to counter asymmetries of response to exogenous economic shocks within the Union. Decision making in the European Union has become more open to democratic (and, therefore, social democratic) pressures. The European Parliament has come to play a decisively larger role in decision making since the introduction of the co-operation (1986) and co-decision (1993) procedures.²⁴ Interest groups, including trade unions and a range of social and public interest groups, have mobilized at the European level.²⁵ The European Union is no longer the preserve of national governments operating in a business-dominated climate. It has become a contested polity in which the social democratic project for regulated capitalism competes with neoliberal and nationalist projects.

In short, as regulated capitalism at the European level became a feasible goal, and as social democratic parties came to the realization that they could not exit the single market, they sought to deepen the European Union. The shift in support for European integration is, as we predict, sharpest in countries where, at the beginning of this period, national social democracy was strong and where

²³ These and other factors are evaluated in Kitschelt *et al.*, eds, *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. In the conclusion of that volume they claim that the Scandinavian model has been hit harder than the Rhine model by these developments. This is confirmed in our data by the marked shift in social democratic party positions from Euro-scepticism to Euro-support in Scandinavia relative to Germany, Austria and other Rhine model countries.

²⁴ George Tsebelis and Geoffrey Garrett, 'An Institutional Critique of Intergovernmentalism', *International Organization*, 50 (1996), 269–99.

²⁵ Doug Imig and Sidney Tarrow, 'From Strike to Eurostrike: The Europeanization of Social Movements, and the Development of a Euro-Polity' (Harvard University Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Working Paper, No. 97–10, 1997).

social democratic parties could realistically call for non-membership of the European Union. In these countries, the steep decline from national Keynesianism to regime competition (i.e. from *A* to *B* in Figure 1) was strongly felt. Mean support for European integration among this group was just 4.00 in 1984–88, but rose to 6.14 in 1992–96. The sharpest discontinuities are in countries that joined the EU during this period. In the 1980s, from their standpoint outside the EU, Austrian, Finnish, and Swedish social democrats were deeply opposed to membership. Once social democrats accepted that membership could not be averted, they became strong supporters of deeper integration. In 1984–88 the mean orientation of social democratic parties in these three countries was 3.12; in 1992–96 it rose to 6.34.

LIBERAL PARTIES

Liberal parties form the most ideologically diverse of the major party families. They arose out of the urban–rural cleavage (particularly influential for liberal parties in England and Germany in the nineteenth century), the cleavage between state and church (dominant for liberal parties in the Low Countries, France, Italy and Spain), and the centre–periphery cleavage (dominant for liberal parties in the Nordic countries, but present also in Wales and Scotland). Across these diverse cleavages, liberal parties share some diffuse common values based on opposition to ascription, clericalism and aristocracy, and support for economic and political freedoms, though the substantive content of their programmes varies considerably.²⁶

Three variants can be distinguished in the liberal party family. The first – *liberal-radicalism* – describes liberal parties that are left-of-centre on economic issues and support a broad interpretation of democratic rights. Liberal-radical parties, such as the Danish Radicale Venstre and the Dutch D66, favour substantial state intervention in the economy on the grounds that this is necessary to achieve social justice and protect individuals from the vagaries of the market. The second variant of liberalism, *liberal-conservatism*, emphasizes economic freedom and tends to be right-of-centre. Liberal-conservative parties, such as the Dutch Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) and the Belgian liberal parties, adopt an economically conservative agenda, advocating a minimal role for the state in the economy.

While they differ in left–right terms, there is good reason to expect that liberal-radical and liberal-conservative parties will support European integration. Liberal-radicals oppose aggressive nationalism and seek to minimize the constraints that national borders exert over the lives of

²⁶ Emil J. Kirchner, ed., *Liberal Parties in Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Gordon Smith, *Politics in Western Europe* (London: Heinemann, 1972); Gordon Smith, 'Between Left and Right: The Ambivalence of European Liberalism', in Kirchner, ed., *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, pp. 16–28; and K. von Beyme, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower, 1985).

individuals.²⁷ However, liberal-radicals also value decentralized decision making, and this leads them to criticize bureaucratization and the democratic deficit in the EU. On balance, though, liberal-radicalism is strongly pro-European integration.

Liberal-conservatives advocate European integration as a means to lower trade barriers and institutionalize free markets. But liberal-conservatives are also wary of the potential for a Fortress Europe to develop behind regional tariff barriers and they oppose the social democratic project for regulated capitalism at the European level. Hence liberal-conservatives favour economic integration, but oppose political integration.

The third variant – composed of *agrarian* or *centre parties* – is sufficiently distinctive to cast doubt on its inclusion in the liberal family.²⁸ These parties are distinguished by their agrarian roots and their defence of the periphery in opposition to the national establishment.²⁹ They reflect the particular interaction of social cleavages characteristic of Scandinavia: the dominance of the Protestant Reformation and consequent absence of a Catholic Church; the relative weakness of feudalism and consequent scarcity of large landholdings; the relative weakness of the urban side of the urban–rural cleavage at the time of the extension of mass suffrage.³⁰

Figure 3 reveals that both liberal-radical and liberal-conservative parties have been strongly supportive of European integration.³¹ The difference between these groups is slight. In contrast, agrarian-liberal parties are distinctly Euro-sceptical. Their location on the peripheral side of the centre–periphery cleavage, and their corresponding opposition to central authority, appears to carry over to their position on European integration.³² Hence, as the European

²⁷ Scott Clarke and John Curtice, 'Why Have the Liberals Been so Keen on Europe? An Analysis of the Attitudes Held by the British Liberal towards European Integration 1945–1996' (paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, Washington, DC, 1997).

²⁸ Whether to place the agrarian parties in the liberal party family can be argued on both sides. Most general studies of party families (including those of Wessels, 'Evaluations of the EC', and Hix and Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*) classify the agrarian within the liberal party family. Lipset and Rokkan, 'Cleavage Structures. Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction', and Ray, 'Politicizing Europe', group the agrarian parties as a separate family.

²⁹ This pattern is distinctive of Scandinavia, but it is also characteristic of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland.

³⁰ Lipset and Rokkan, 'Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction', pp. 161ff. See also John D. Stephens, 'Religion and Politics in Three Northwest European Democracies', in Richard F. Tomasson, ed., *Comparative Social Research, Vol. 2* (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1979), pp. 129–58.

³¹ The orientation of the Danish Venstre is indicative of the shift of the party away from its agrarian roots towards a liberal-conservative position. This is very clear in Venstre's Proposals for the Intergovernmental Conference of the EU in 1996 (<http://www.venstre.dk/english/default.htm>). Venstre has, in the period under review, pursued an explicitly neoliberal policy line.

³² Ulf Lindström and Ingemar Wörlund, 'The Swedish Liberal Party: The Politics of Unholy Alliances,' in Kirchner, ed., *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, pp. 252–78. Clearly, other factors are at work also, including the realization on the part of Northern Scandinavian farmers that the subsidies offered to them within the EU, while high by most standards, are significantly less than those they have been receiving from their national states.

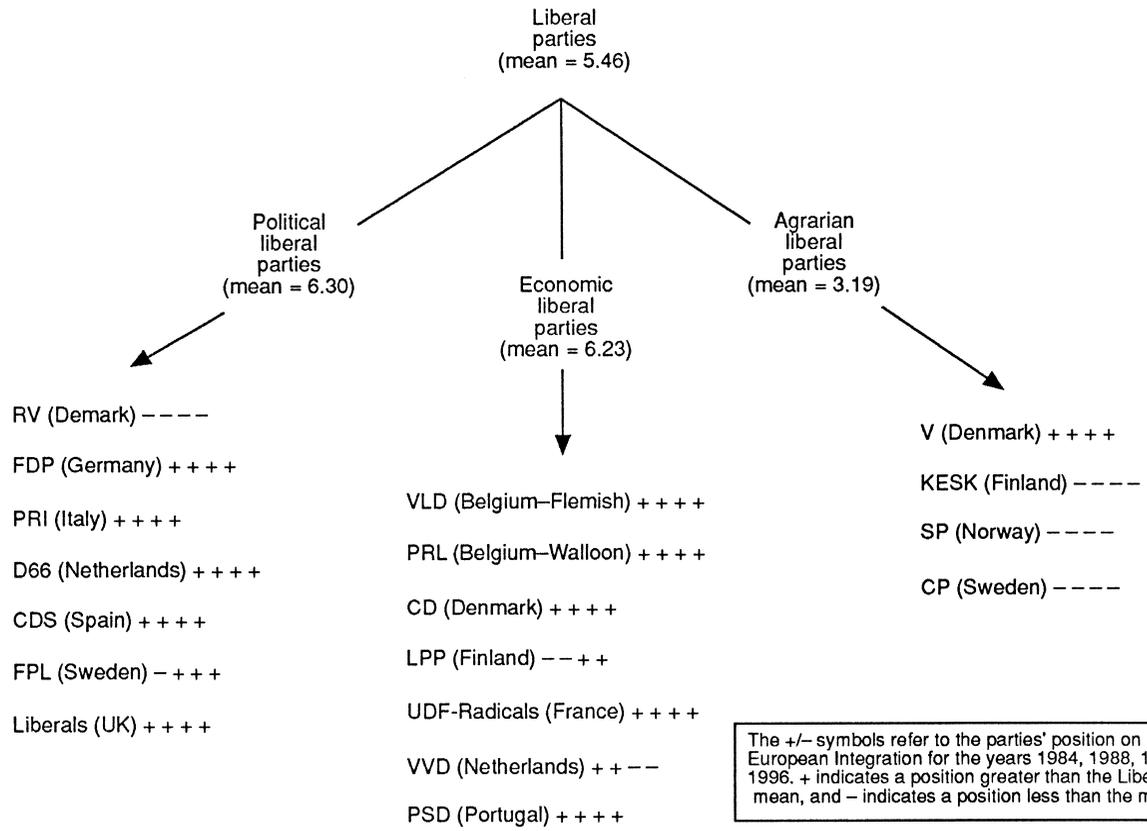


Fig. 3. Liberal parties

Union has come to encompass Northern Scandinavia, the liberal party family has become more diverse. This weakens party family as an explanatory variable in accounting for party positions from 1992 to 1996 (Table 1).

The result is explicable from a cleavage perspective. Social cleavages do not shape political parties in isolation. The historical layering of social cleavages in the Lipset–Rokkan account is a prime example of path dependence in which the effects of successive cleavages are filtered through existing institutions. Figure 3 places Scandinavian agrarian parties in the liberal family, but, were one to take a more refined approach and consider agrarian parties as a separate category, this would slightly increase the overall association between party family and position on European integration.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Most Christian democratic parties represent the Catholic side of the church–state cleavage rooted in the Protestant Reformation. As the church–state cleavage has lost prominence, many of these parties have toned down their Catholic ideology or become interdenominational. Such parties identify themselves at right-of-centre along the left–right dimension of party competition and occupy much the same position as conservative parties in non-Catholic countries.

Christian democratic support for European integration expresses affinity with a supranational church and the long-standing rejection of nationalism that emerged in historic battles with state-builders. In contrast to Protestant churches, which are distinctly national in origin, Catholicism is explicitly supranational. The first programme of the transnational organization of Christian democratic parties in Europe, the European Peoples' Party, established in 1977, based its pro-European policy on the principle that 'Human rights and fundamental liberties have priority everywhere in the world over national sovereignty'.³³

Christian democratic parties also support European integration on pragmatic grounds, as a means to economic prosperity. While their support for welfare and social programmes to moderate the unwanted effects of capitalism distinguishes Christian democratic parties from market liberal parties, Christian democrats do not question the benefits of international economic integration.

Christian democratic parties have been more closely associated with the founding of the European Union than any other party family. Each of the countries that joined the European Coal and Steel Community (1952) and the European Economic Community (1958) had influential or governing Christian democratic parties, and all but one of the countries where such parties were strong (Austria) were part of the integration process. While communist, socialist and conservative parties were opposed or divided on the Treaty of Paris

³³ Quoted from R. Papini, *The Christian Democratic International*, trans. Robert Royal (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), p. 110.

(1951) and the Treaty of Rome (1957), Christian democratic members of legislatures across the Member States were strongly in favour. Not a single Christian democratic deputy abstained or voted against either treaty.³⁴

To what extent does cleavage theory explain variation *within* the Christian democratic party family? Alongside mainstream 'social' Christian democratic parties are two variants. The first is composed of the Protestant parties of Scandinavia. These parties originated in fundamentalist Lutheran opposition to the dominance of central government elites and the mainstream Lutheran church. As a result, Christian democratic parties in Scandinavia share none of the supranational affinities of parties rooted in Catholicism. These parties are typically categorized within the Christian democratic family, but they are shaped by the distinctive pattern of cleavages in Scandinavia noted above and, in particular, by the interaction of the centre-periphery cleavage with the urban-rural cleavage and religion. Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Christian democratic parties have long exhibited fundamentalist Lutheran opposition to liberalism and permissiveness, and (with the exception of the Finnish Suomen Kristillineri Liitto (SKL) defence of rural values.³⁵ Their religious fundamentalism, cultural reaction and resistance to central authority generates a distinctly anti-EU orientation, as is evident in Figure 4, and is explicable in terms of their cleavage location.

A second variant is distinguished not by its cleavage location, but by its nationalism and defence of traditionalist values. Euro-scepticism can arise within a Christian democratic party because the party is responsive to reactionary traditionalism, as is the case with the German Christian Socialist Union (CSU), or because Christian democratic traditions are a superficial element in defining a party's programme, as is the case with the Portuguese Partido Popular (CDS/PP). These two parties stand far to the political right, and as Figure 4 indicates, are distinctly less favourable to European integration than more moderate Christian democratic parties. These two cases may be covered by a general hypothesis: to the extent that the religious cleavage diminishes in salience relative to other sources of right-wing politics rooted in authoritarianism or nationalism, support for European integration will decline.

In 1984, the Christian democratic party family was more favourably orientated than any other to European integration, with a mean score above 6.5, and this positive orientation persisted through 1992. By 1996, however, the mean position of Christian democratic parties had fallen to what was almost certainly a historic low, 5.08, less than either the liberal or social democratic party families. The enlargement of the EU to Southern and Northern Europe –

³⁴ R. E. M. Irving, *The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 239; and Papini, *The Christian Democratic International*, chap. 2.

³⁵ I. Karvonen, 'Christian Parties in Scandinavia: Victory over the Windmills?' in David Hanley, ed., *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective* (London: Pinter, 1994), pp. 121–41; and John Madeley, 'The Antinomies of Lutheran Politics: The Case of Norway's Christian People's Party', in Hanley, ed., *Christian Democracy in Europe*, pp. 142–54.

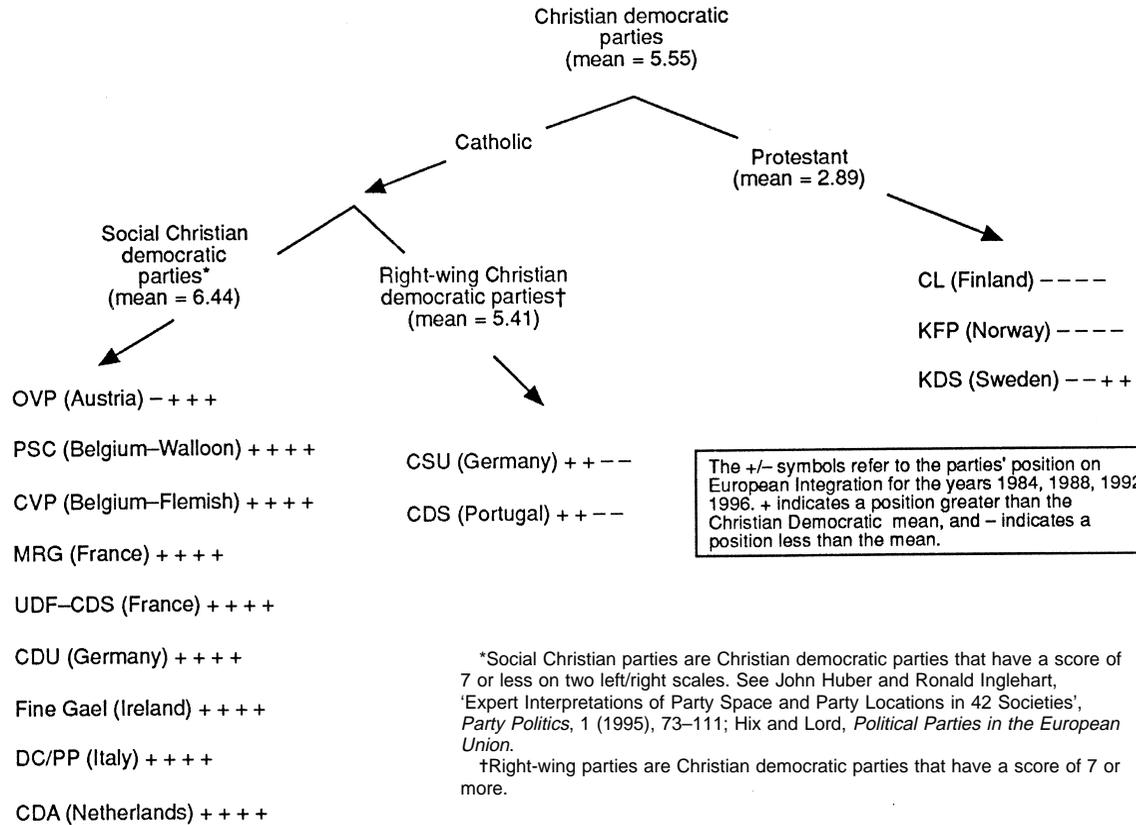


Fig. 4. Christian democratic parties

away from the traditional heartland of Christian democracy – has increased the heterogeneity of this party family. As a result, the explanatory power of this party family category has eroded over time. But, as in the case of the liberal party family, an examination of variation within this party family sustains a cleavage approach. The most distinctive subgroup within the Christian democratic party family when viewed from cleavage perspective – the Protestant parties of Scandinavia – are outlying cases in terms of their position on European integration.

CONSERVATIVE PARTIES

Conservative parties stand on the class cleavage appealing to middle- and upper-class voters in support of economic liberalism and in opposition to social democracy. These parties combine two distinct strands: neoliberalism (i.e. support for free markets and minimal state intervention) and a national appeal that denies the relevance of class to the major political issues facing the nation. Variation among conservative parties on European integration reflects the relative strength of these ideological strands.

The European project of neoliberalism, including those in the British Conservative party, the Swedish Moderate party, and the French Rassemblement Pour la République (RPR), is an extension of the basic political-economic ideas that guide their domestic policies. Neoliberals support European integration in so far as this leads to regime competition within an integrated market. For neoliberals, European integration should focus on market integration, though it is recognized that some minimal political superstructure is necessary to induce compliance to market-making agreements, constrain monopolies and adjudicate conflicts arising from incomplete contracting. But neoliberals stress that such supranational institutions should not diminish regime competition, that is, competition between national governments to attract mobile factors of production (i.e. capital).

Figure 5 summarises these ideas by plotting a possibility curve relating neoliberalism to European integration. This curve is essentially the converse of that for social democracy (Figure 1). At point A neoliberals will be in favour of European integration as part of their effort to weaken national market regulation. The creation of a single European market undermines national regulation in two ways. First, it creates supranational rules that eliminate or reduce non-tariff barriers, including national subsidies, national industrial policies and regional policies carried out by national governments. Secondly, economic integration creates incentives for national governments to compete with each other in establishing capital-friendly environments where companies pay little tax and face minimal regulation.

Single market regime competition is the preferred outcome for neoliberals. Most support Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) as the final step in this process. Neoliberals are opposed to further integration, whether it is to democratize the Euro-polity or to shift competencies to the European level.

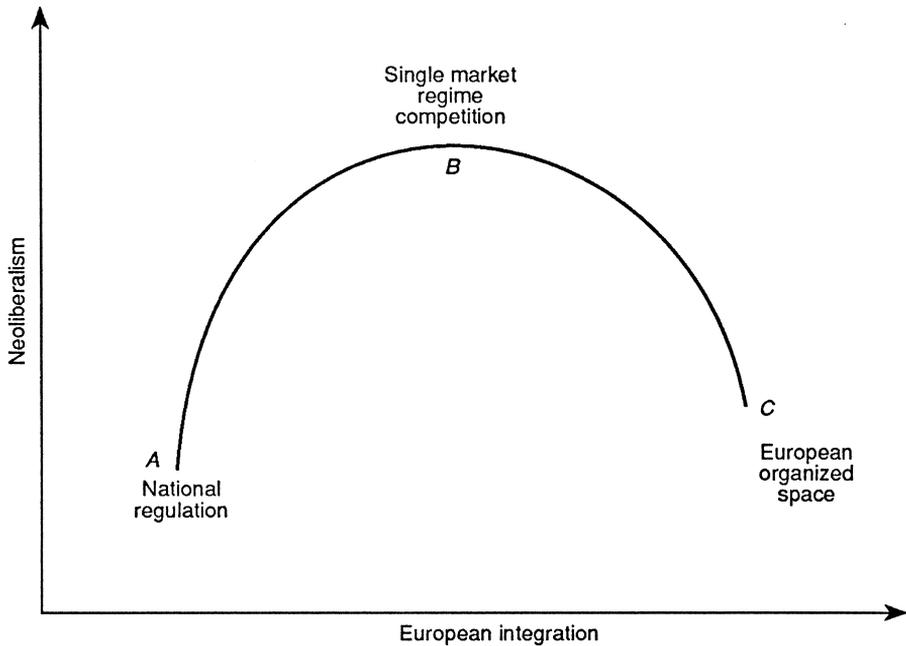


Fig. 5. *The neoliberal possibility curve*

Their fear is the social democrats' hope: that political integration will create authoritative capacity for market regulation at the European level.

Neoliberalism is influential in most conservative parties, but it exists alongside a national orientation. Many conservatives defend national culture, language, community and national sovereignty against the influx of immigrants, against competing sources of identity within the state, and against external pressures from other countries and international organizations. Nationalism has an unambiguous bottom line for European integration: the national state should not share with European institutions its legitimate sovereign right to govern persons living in its territory.

National opposition to European integration both complements and conflicts with the neoliberal view. Nationalists share neoliberal opposition to political integration at the European level. But they disagree with neoliberals in that they oppose any weakening of national sovereignty, even if it is in the cause of economic integration. Neoliberals, including Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, agreed to weaken national sovereignty by instituting qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers to stop recalcitrant national governments holding the single market programme hostage to national vetoes.³⁶

³⁶ However, once the single market was set in motion, Thatcher opposed further political integration on nationalist grounds.

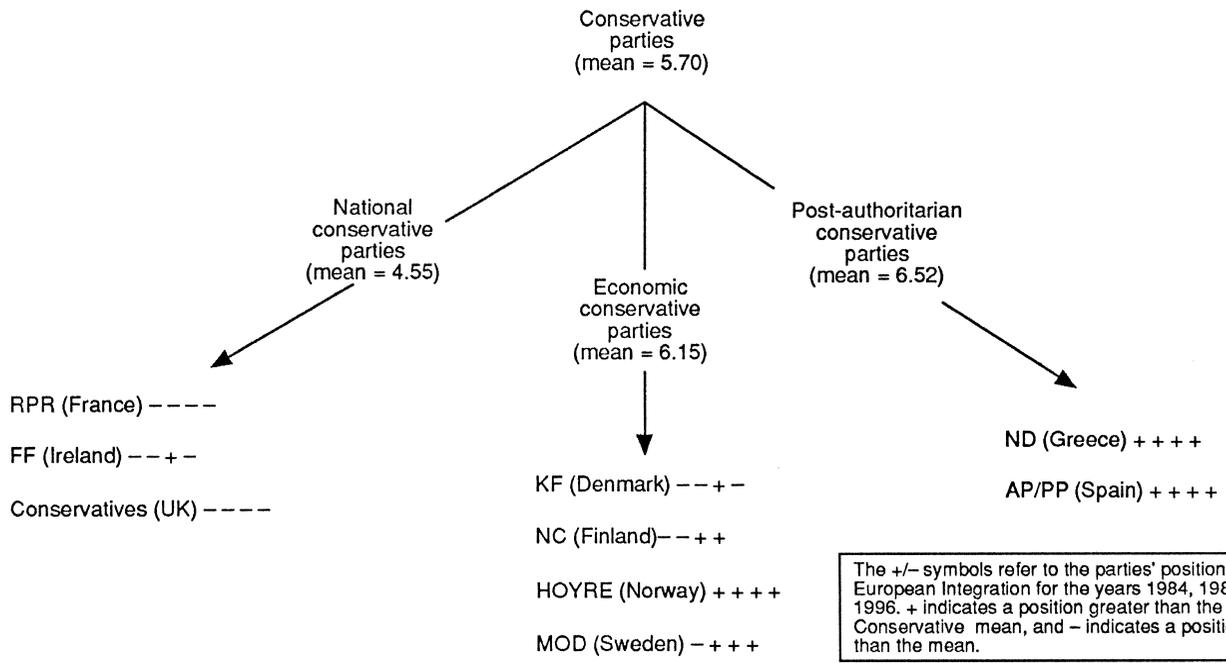


Fig. 6. Conservative parties

When it comes to hard choices between national sovereignty and market integration, the national and neoliberal strands of conservatism part company. In recent years the flashpoint of dispute has been European Monetary Union. Neoliberals are inclined to support EMU because it will put the finishing touches on the single market and because they believe it will put intense pressure on remaining national regulations, particularly those that impede flexible labour markets. National conservatives reject EMU because it undermines a vital element of national sovereignty, the authority to determine monetary policy.

Nationalism is strongest on the extreme right, in parties like the Front National and Austrian Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), which are distinguished by their intense Euro-phobia, but it is also present to varying degrees in conservative parties. Accounts of conservative parties in Western Europe describe three parties in particular as being strongly national in orientation – the Irish Fianna Fáil, the French RPR and the British Conservative party. Fianna Fáil and the RPR have, from their founding, been expressly national parties in which neoliberalism has been relatively weak. The Conservative party, building on its Tory heritage, has always emphasized the unity of the British nation against peripheral nationalism, disestablished churches and, during the twentieth century, class conflict analyses. Classical liberalism, based on a competing Whig tradition, has also been an important stream within the party, but it has rarely eclipsed the national proclivities of Toryism, even during the heyday of Thatcherite neoliberalism.

It is no surprise then that Fianna Fáil, the RPR and the British Conservative party are relatively sceptical of European integration, as depicted in Figure 6. In each of these parties there is an ongoing struggle between nationalists and neoliberals about the future of the European Union, the outcome of which is an unstable balance of forces and rhetorical equivocation designed to avoid costly political splits and the impression of internal discord. A recent survey indicates just how deeply nationalism has become ingrained within the British Conservative party. In 1994, around 50 per cent of Conservative MPs believed that the creation of a single EU currency would signal the end of the United Kingdom as a sovereign nation.³⁷ Concern with national sovereignty is by far the strongest factor associated with variation in orientations on European integration within the Conservative Parliamentary Party.

Other conservative parties have been far less nationalist. Scandinavian conservative parties have defined themselves mainly in left–right terms, in opposition to social democracy, rather than as national parties.³⁸ In these countries, conservatives were deprived of a strong national base in the countryside, with the result that the left, not the right, has been most successful in appropriating national symbols to its socio-economic programme.

³⁷ D. Baker, A. Gamble, S. Ludlam and D. Seawright, 'The 1994/96 Conservative and Labour Members of Parliament Surveys on Europe: The Data Compared' (paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, Washington DC, 1997).

³⁸ S. B. Ljunggren, 'Conservatism in Norway and Sweden,' in Brian Girvin, ed., *The Transformation of Contemporary Conservatism* (London: Sage, 1988), pp. 120–44.

Conservatism in Spain and Greece has traditionally combined reaction and nationalism, but contemporary conservative parties in these countries have striven to distance themselves from this tradition. Reactionary nationalism is indelibly associated with Franco and the colonels, authoritarian regimes that are an electoral albatross for modern-day democratic conservatives. The story of conservatism in these countries from the 1980s is essentially an attempt to redefine conservatism in ways that can appeal to moderate voters. In Spain, the Alianza Popular under Manuel Fraga struggled to escape the heritage of its leaders as ex-Franco ministers.³⁹ After Fraga resigned (1986) and the party was relaunched as the Partido Popular (1989), the party succeeded in establishing itself as a moderate right party.

The Greek Nea Dimokratia (ND) has been closer to the Gaullist model of a party of the nation. It has been centrist or even statist on economic issues, including nationalization, and has drawn on a rhetoric of national independence, emphasizing the 'true' interests of the nation.⁴⁰ But there are two important differences. First, successive leaders of the ND have made a sharp distinction between Greek national interests and defence of national sovereignty. Greece's vulnerable geo-political position *vis-à-vis* Turkey has led ND leaders to support strongly the integration of Greece into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union.⁴¹ Secondly, as in Spain, the ND has consistently had to disassociate itself from the nationalist-authoritarian right to sustain its democratic credentials.

Variations among conservative parties arise mainly from the tension between neoliberal and national conservatism. This makes the point that cleavage positions are sometimes fraught with ambiguity in the face of new issues. When this is the case, there is plenty of scope for acute tensions within parties as contending factions battle over policy. To probe the orientations of conservative parties one must therefore go beyond comparisons of individual parties and pay serious attention to the divisions within them. There is a cleavage dimension to such conflicts. Once again the Scandinavian parties are distinctive. But to explain conservative party policies on European integration demands that one combine cleavage theory with an analysis of politics *within* parties.

CONCLUSION

Cleavage theory appears to shed considerable light on the positioning of national political parties on European integration. We have shown that party families summarize a sizeable portion of variation among individual parties on the issue

³⁹ J. R. Montero, 'More than Conservative, Less than Neoconservative: Alianza Popular in Spain', in Girvin, ed., *The Transformation of Contemporary Conservatism*, pp. 145–63.

⁴⁰ R. Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece: The Search for Legitimacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), chap. 5.

⁴¹ Susannah Verney, 'Greece and the European Community', in Keith Featherstone and D. K. Katsoudas, eds, *Political Change in Greece: Before and After the Colonels* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 253–70.

of European integration. Political parties have significantly more in common with parties in the same party family that they do with other parties in the same country. The reason for this is that parties are shaped by their distinctive historical experiences, the most influential elements of which are the ideological propensities and constituency links that arise out of the basic cleavages that structure contention in a society. The thesis of this article is that if one wishes to know how a political party will respond to a new issue like European integration, one must pay close attention to these historically embedded predispositions. The characteristics summarized by party family groupings – ideological schemas rooted in political cleavages – are a ‘prism’ through which political parties come to terms with new issues that arise in a polity.

We further believe that the explanatory power of cleavage theory is not exhausted by grouping parties in families. Much variation among individual political parties on European integration can be explained by territorial differences in the historical interaction of cleavages across particular countries and regions. In short, a cleavage theory of party positioning allows one to make sense of variations within party families as well as variations among them.

The cleavage theory set out here feeds into a stream of theorizing about European integration that goes under the term ‘multi-level governance’. In contrast to those who treat European integration as an international phenomenon, scholars of multi-level governance argue that politics in the European Union can be explained using tools of comparative politics as they have been applied to domestic political systems. This article substantiates this claim for national political parties. Supranational institution building in Europe is interpreted by political parties through ideologies that reflect centuries of domestic conflict. As international relations (i.e. relations among national governments) have become domesticated in the process of European integration, so domestic political concerns have come to shape relations among countries. To rephrase the old adage about war and diplomacy: European integration is domestic politics by other means.