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National Political Parties and European Integration

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We test competing explanations for party positioning on the issue of European integration over the period 1984 to 1996 and find that the ideological location of a party in a party family is a powerful predictor of its position on this issue. Party family is a stronger influence than strategic competition, national location, participation in government, or the position of a party's supporters. We conclude that political parties have bounded rationalities that shape how they process incentives in competitive party systems. Political cleavages give rise to ideological commitments or "prisms" through which political parties respond to new issues, including European integration.

How do political parties position themselves on new issues? In this article we argue that parties have long-standing agendas that condition the way they respond to new challenges. The response of a political party to an issue arising on the agenda is conditioned by the bounded rationalities of party leaders and the reputational constraints imposed by prior policy positions (Marks and Wilson 2000). Parties assimilate and exploit new issues within existing ideologies, and in Western European party systems these are summarized by the social cleavages that give rise to party families (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). We demonstrate the strength of these ideological commitments as predictors of party positions on the emerging issue of European integration.

We evaluate the explanatory power of cleavage theory against three plausible alternative hypotheses. First, the positions taken by political parties on a new issue may depend on the national context. If national states, cultures, societies, or economies are sufficiently distinctive, so variation among individual parties should have a strong cross-national component. This explanation expresses the conventional wisdom among students of international relations who conceptualize European integration as the product of bargaining among governments representing the national interests of each member state (Hoffmann 1966; Moravcsik 1998, chapter 1). From this standpoint, the most important determinant of a political party's position on European integration is its national location, not its ideology or electoral strategy.

A second alternative to cleavage theory explains party positioning as a response to voters' issue positions (Iversen 1994, 157). The way parties respond to the distribution of opinion among voters depends upon the assumptions one makes about voting behavior. In order to test this line of explanation, we elaborate a hypothesis that is consistent with standard spatial

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theories of voting and yields point predictions in multi-party systems.

A third alternative hypothesizes that political parties strategize about dimensions of party competition when adopting positions on new issues. Mainstream parties attempt to protect the status quo by suppressing the salience of a new issue that cuts across existing dimensions of party competition, while small or excluded parties have an incentive to take extreme positions in an effort to raise the salience of such issues and refocus party competition (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989).

This article addresses party positions on the issue of European integration in the period 1984 to 1996, during which the European Union developed rapidly as an integrated economy and a multi-level polity (Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996; Scharpf 1999, conclusion; Hooghe and Marks 1999; Pollack 2000; Wallace and Wallace 2000, chapter 1). The Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1993) created the basis for economic and monetary union within a supranational polity that explicitly weakened national sovereignty. Consequently European integration became increasingly salient for national political parties and mass publics.

Drawing on data from Eurobarometer surveys and an expert survey of party positions in member states of the European Union over the period 1984 to 1996 (Ray 1999), we find empirical support for each of the approaches outlined above. However, the most powerful explanation of party positions is the cleavage hypothesis. Although European integration is a new issue on the political agenda, parties strive to encapsulate it within their established ideologies. The range of likely responses of political parties to this new issue appears to be bounded by historically rooted conflicts, summarized by the political cleavages on which parties stand. To the extent that electoral pressures influence party positions on European integration, we find they are filtered through preexisting ideologies.

Hypotheses

Cleavage theory

Cleavage theory claims that the positions of political parties reflect divisions in the social structure and the ideologies that provoke and express those group divisions (Zuckerman 1982). From this standpoint, political parties are not empty vessels into which issue positions are poured in response to electoral or constituency pressures, but are organizations with embedded ideologies. Parties do not reinvent themselves with each electoral

cycle, but instead have long-standing agendas that give rise to “essential and indelible associations with particular issues and policies” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 24). We hypothesize that these historically grounded *Weltanschauungen* constitute “prisms” through which political parties respond to the issue of European integration.

Table 1 encapsulates the historical cleavages and programmatic commitments of party families and summarizes how such commitments constrain party positioning on European integration. Political cleavages, and the party families that arise from them, reflect the ideological and constituency bases of political parties as they have developed historically. The older class, religious, and center/periphery cleavages described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), along with the recent “new politics” cleavage, (Inglehart 1990, chapter 2; Kitschelt 1994, chapter 1) summarize political parties’ ideological underpinnings. Cleavages provide voters with manageable information about parties; they represent reputational investments that sustain a party’s credibility; they describe deep-seated ideologies that structure electoral competition; and, most relevant for this article, they filter the response of parties to new issues that arise on the agenda.¹

National location

European integration is an issue for which national context is likely to be crucial. The European Union brings together countries with deeply rooted national histories, identities, and institutions. A new overarching polity has been created, but there are reasons to believe that national contexts remain important in mediating the domestic impacts of international events and processes (Héritier, Knill and Mingers 1996, chapter 1; Kitschelt et al. 1999, 440–441; Soskice 1999, 106 and following; McKeown 1999, 22 and following). Indeed, many scholars have argued that the interplay of national interests is the most important factor shaping basic institutions and policy making in the European Union.

The national view of European integration is based on several literatures. Discourse theorists argue that citizens in different countries have embedded national identities which shape their views of European integration (Hedetoft 1995, chapter 1). This view is consistent with two major streams of international relations literature about European integration: realism and liberal institutionalism. From the realist perspective, responses to a new international issue like European integration reflect

¹Substantive hypotheses linking particular party families to position on European integration are elaborated in Marks and Wilson (2000).

TABLE 1 Cleavage Location and Position on European Integration

Party Family	Cleavage Location: Programmatic Commitments	Position on European Economic Integration	Position on European Political Integration	Overall Position
Extreme left/ Communist	<i>Class cleavage</i> : extreme left position on state regulation of markets, welfare, social justice, democratic decision making. In some countries, these parties take an extreme stand on the <i>new politics</i> cleavage.	strongly opposed: integration increases economic inequality and diminishes the capacity of national governments to regulate markets.	moderately opposed: supranational institutions are undemocratic and controlled by corporate interests.	<i>strongly opposed</i>
Green	<i>New politics</i> cleavage: environmental protection, life style choice, women's and minority rights.	moderately opposed: integration increases economic growth at the expense of human concerns, including the environment.	mixed: supranational institutions may enforce environmental/social standards, but democratic participation is weakened.	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Social democratic	<i>Class cleavage</i> : moderate left position on state regulation of markets, welfare, economic equality.	moderately in favor: integration increases economic growth, but welfare and other government regulation is constrained by regime competition.	strongly in favor: supranational institutions enhance capacity for European-wide regulation, though they are insufficiently democratic.	<i>moderately to strongly in favor</i>
Liberal	<i>Urban/rural</i> cleavage (UK, Germany); <i>church/state</i> cleavage (Low Countries, France, Italy, Spain): opposition to ascription, clericalism, and aristocracy, and support for economic and political freedoms.	strongly in favor: market competition and economic freedoms are enhanced.	strongly in favor: Supranationalism moderates nationalism; political freedom from borders increased; however, democracy is weakened.	<i>strongly in favor</i>
Agrarian	<i>Center/periphery</i> cleavage (Scandinavia, Switzerland): defense of farmers and the periphery.	moderately opposed: economic integration includes some agricultural subsidies, but is driven mainly by industrial and commercial interests.	moderately opposed: supranational institutions may aid farmers and weaker regions but they weaken local control	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Christian democratic	<i>Church/state</i> cleavage: support for social market economy, supranational Catholic church, conservative values.	strongly in favor: integration increases economic growth and limits division within Europe.	strongly in favor: supranational institutions provide a capacity for positive regulation while constraining nationalism.	<i>strongly in favor</i>
Protestant	<i>Church/state</i> cleavage (Scandinavia, Switzerland, Netherlands): fundamentalist Lutheran opposition to liberalism, permissiveness, and central state elites.	moderately in favor: integration weakens the role of the state in the economy.	strongly opposed: integration shifts authority further away from national control to a more alien cultural milieu.	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Conservative	<i>Class cleavage</i> : support for free markets, minimal state intervention, and defense of national community.	strongly in favor: integration extends free markets and pressures competing national governments to reduce market regulation.	strongly opposed: supranational authority undermines national sovereignty, national culture, and democracy.	<i>moderately in favor</i>
Extreme right	<i>New politics</i> cleavage: defense of the nation, national culture, and national sovereignty.	moderately opposed: integration produces losers and undermines national economic control.	strongly opposed: supranational authority undermines national sovereignty	<i>strongly opposed</i>
Regionalist	<i>Center-periphery</i> cleavage: defense of the ethno-territorial minority against the center and demand for political autonomy.	strongly in favor: integration provides a economic framework favorable for regional political autonomy.	moderately in favor: supranational authority weakens national control and creates a plural Europe	<i>moderately to strongly in favor</i>

its impact on the distribution of power in the international system (Waltz 1979, chapter 5). Liberal institutionalists pose national economic preferences, not relative power, as the motor of interstate relations (Moravcsik

1998, 28 and following). From the realist and the liberal institutionalist standpoint, regional integration gives rise to distinctly national, not party-political, variations in position.

Median supporter

An alternative theory is that parties position themselves to maximize their share of the popular vote. Formal spatial models of multi-party competition yield the broad prediction that party positions will tend to spread across the available issue space assuming that citizens vote sincerely, not strategically, and that parties maximize votes irrespective of coalition potential. We sharpen this finding into a testable point prediction by assuming that the way in which parties spread out reflects “the central tendency of attitudes of their electorates” (Iversen 1994, 157).

The key assumptions justifying our prediction that the positions taken by political parties will mirror that of their median voter, revolve around the heterogeneity of the electorate. Electoral competition may be conceived of as two-sided. On the one hand, political parties appeal to their long-term supporters; on the other hand they seek to peel off the least committed supporters of competing parties. The formal literature on the topic suggests that it is rational for a vote-maximizing party to locate its issue positions near that of its median supporter across a range of assumptions concerning the distribution of voter issue preferences and the trade-off for individual citizens between issue proximity and party support (Adams 1998, 6).

There is also the possibility, raised in the literature investigating party-citizen links, that causality here may run in both directions. That is to say, voters may follow parties, as well as parties voters (Steenbergen and Scott 1997, 3). However, this possibility is not a problem for the analyses presented in this article. Our formulation of the partisanship linkage hypothesis avoids assumptions about the directions of causality in the party-voter relationship. We hypothesize that the issue position of a political party will be the same as that of its median supporter.

Strategic competition

A political party may take a position on a new issue to manipulate its salience, with the ultimate goal of altering the underlying dimensions of party competition. Budge, Robertson, and Hearl summarize the basic argument: “Parties compete by accentuating issues on which they have an undoubted advantage, rather than by putting forward contrasting policies on the same issues” (1987, 391). According to the directional model of party competition, mainstream parties seek to defuse the salience of a new issue by taking median positions with respect to it, while parties that are peripheral will attempt

to “shake up” the system by taking extreme positions (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989).

This expectation accords with informal observation of party positioning on European integration. Several writers have hypothesized that major parties support European integration, while minor parties take skeptical positions in an effort to shake up the party system (Hix and Lord 1997, chapter 3; Taggart 1998; Scott 2001, chapter 2). Issue convergence among mainstream parties minimizes competition among them and thereby minimizes intra-party tensions. As for minor parties, they have little to lose in formulating an extreme position on the new issue. In this way they can “set themselves apart from the ‘centre’ of politics” (Taggart 1998, 384), and, in the process, compete on a new dimension of contestation that is tangential to the established left/right dimension on which they are marginal players.

There are three ways to formulate this hypothesis depending on whether one conceptualizes “mainstream” party in terms of votes, left/right position, or government participation. First, one might expect parties that win a large share of the vote to converge on more positive positions with respect to European integration and less electorally successful parties to be Euro-skeptical. Second, parties that are centrally located on the left/right dimension of party competition may seek to minimize the salience of European integration by taking positive positions, while parties that are located towards the left or right extremes may take correspondingly critical positions on European integration. Finally, parties that have been excluded from government may take extreme, i.e. Euro-skeptical, positions on the issue.

Models and Data

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is party position on European integration at four points: 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996.² Our data are averages of evaluations from an expert survey conducted by Ray (1999). Eight to ten experts for each country evaluated the position of each national party along a seven-point scale from “strongly opposed to European integration” to “strongly in favor of European integration.” For ease of interpretation, we rescale

²The data cover political parties in the member states of the EU. Parties are included for a given year only if they participated in the preceding national election. New members of the EU are included in the analysis following their accession to the EU. We exclude Luxembourg because of problems of data availability.

these positions to range from 0 (strongly opposed) to 1 (strongly in favor).

The experts were instructed to evaluate the positions taken by the leadership of each political party, and these estimates refer to four years, 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996. Reliability is a particular concern when experts are being asked to make retrospective judgments of party positions. An analysis of the standard deviations of the individual expert judgments suggests only a modest decrease in reliability for the early years.³ As reported in the appendix to this text, the reliability of these expert judgments (as indicated by the standard deviation as a proportion of the scale range) is comparable to the reliability of estimates produced by previous expert surveys.

The validity of our data can be established by comparing the estimates for 1988⁴ with Eurobarometer survey data for spring 1988, and party positions derived from party platform data collected by the Comparative Party Manifesto project (Budge et al. 1992). Principal components factor analysis indicates that one underlying factor accounts for most of the variance in these three indicators. Differences in factor loadings suggest that Ray's expert survey data come closest to the underlying party positions (loading = .95), while the Comparative Party Manifesto data are a near second (loading = .93), and the Eurobarometer data third (loading = .87).

Independent Variables

We operationalize political cleavages by creating dichotomous variables for ten party families: extreme right, conservative, Protestant, Christian democratic, liberal, agrarian, green, regionalist, social democratic, and extreme left/communist (see Lipset and Rokkan 1967 and von Beyme 1985, chapter 2). We follow Lipset and Rokkan in distinguishing between liberal and agrarian parties and between Christian democratic parties having Protestant roots and those having Catholic roots.⁵

³As reported in Ray (1999), the standard deviation of the expert judgments decreases slightly each year dropping from .97 for evaluations of 1984 to .82 for evaluations of 1996 (on a scale from 1 to 7). Ray's data set includes more cases than used in this analysis since we exclude non-EU countries and Luxembourg and parties that do not receive votes in at least one lower house election immediately prior to the years 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996.

⁴1988 is used because of the availability of two comparison datasets for that year.

⁵Until recently, Catholic Christian democratic parties could be differentiated from Protestant parties on account of the latter's exclusion from the transnational "European Christian Democratic Union." However, this organization became obsolete with EU en-

Our national location hypothesis refers to the country in which a party is located. Accordingly, we include dichotomous variables for each of the fourteen countries of the European Union in this analysis.

To test the median supporter hypothesis we use data from Eurobarometer.⁶ We identify party supporters according to the party they would vote for "if a general election were held tomorrow." Opinion about European integration is measured using an additive index of responses to two survey questions. The first asks "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?'" with responses coded 0.4, 0.2, and 0, respectively. For the second, "In general, are you for or against efforts made to unify Western Europe?" responses were coded as follows: "against very much" = 0, "against to some extent" = 0.2, "for to some extent" = 0.4, and "for very much" = 0.6. Our additive scale ranges from zero to one. The interpolated median⁷ is used to indicate the position of the *median supporter* of each party.

We expect marginal parties to take distinctive stands on the issue of European integration. Data on the left/right position of political parties are drawn from Castles and Mair (1984) for 1984 and Huber and Inglehart (1995) for 1996. We interpolate data linearly between these years to yield scores for 1988 and 1992. Given our expectation of an increasing effect of left/right distance as a party moves to an extreme, we use the squared distance of that party from the median party position for that country in a given year to measure *left/right extremism*. *Electoral support* is the share of the vote a party receives in the national legislative election for the lower house prior to the end of the survey year.⁸ *Government*

largement and it merged with the EPP in 1999. Most sources on party families distinguish between these two groups of parties (Von Beyme 1985, 89; Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 18 and 38). Marks and Wilson (2000) note that liberal and agrarian parties and Protestant and Catholic/nondenominational parties have clearly distinct cleavage bases, and they hypothesize that parties in these families have correspondingly distinct positions on European integration.

⁶The Eurobarometer surveys used were # 21, 22, 29, 30, 37, 38, and 44.2 bis, which correspond to the years of the expert survey. Eurobarometer #29 was provided by the Zentralarchiv in Cologne; all other surveys were provided by the ICPSR.

⁷With a six-point scale, the use of a simple median would greatly restrict the variance of this variable by discarding relevant information about the distribution of party supporters in the intervals above and below the one containing the median.

⁸Parties that compete as part of electoral coalitions are excluded when it is impossible to partition the vote.

participation is a dummy variable that takes the value of one for political parties that have participated in at least one national government over the period 1965–1995 and zero otherwise.

Discussion

Each of our hypotheses finds some support in the evidence that we bring to bear. When our measure of party position is regressed on the full set of variables (plus controls for year), the resulting regression model explains 80 percent of the variance in party position (see Table 2).⁹

Our statistical analysis strongly confirms the hypothesis we draw from cleavage theory. Party family explains almost two-thirds of the variance in the issue positions of individual political parties on European integration. The coefficients for the categorical variables in this model represent the difference between the mean for that category and the mean of the omitted reference category. In our model, we omit the communist/extreme left, which is located near the negative extreme and contains more than fifteen cases (parties by year). Any party family that tends to be similarly Euro-skeptic will have a small and insignificant coefficient.

The relative positions of party families are in line with the expectations set out in Table 1. The most favorably oriented party families are the liberal and the Christian democratic, followed by the social democratic and regionalist. Next come the agrarian, the conservative, and the green party families. The Protestant, extreme right, and communist/extreme left families are the most Euro-skeptical. Party families vary systematically in their support for European integration and this variation is intelligible in terms of their cleavage location.

While the most dramatic differences in mean position involve small and/or extreme parties, the differences among the large moderate party families are important. The contrast in support between extreme party families and the rest does not drive our results. When we exclude communist/extreme left, extreme right, and green parties

TABLE 2 Multivariate OLS Analysis Of Party Position On European Integration

Independent Variables	β	s.e.	ω^2
<i>Party Family</i>			0.12**
Extreme Right	-0.08	0.05	
Conservative	0.15**	0.05	
Liberal	0.36**	0.04	
Christian Democratic	0.36**	0.05	
Social Democratic	0.29**	0.04	
Green	0.05**	0.05	
Regionalist	0.29**	0.05	
Protestant	0.07	0.05	
Agrarian	0.19**	0.06	
<i>National Location</i>			0.05**
Austria	-0.07	0.06	
Belgium	-0.07*	0.03	
Germany	-0.15**	0.04	
Greece	-0.01	0.07	
France	-0.21**	0.04	
Finland	-0.10	0.05	
Ireland	-0.25**	0.04	
Italy	-0.16**	0.04	
Netherlands	-0.22**	0.04	
Portugal	-0.28**	0.07	
Spain	-0.12*	0.05	
Sweden	0.01	0.05	
UK	-0.12**	0.04	
<i>Left/Right Extremism</i>	-0.60**	0.15	0.01**
<i>Median Supporter</i>	0.78**	0.07	0.08**
<i>Electoral Support</i>	0.003**	0.001	0.01**
<i>Government Participation</i>	0.05	0.03	0.00
<i>Year</i>			0.00
1984	-0.05*	0.02	
1988	-0.04	0.02	
1992	-0.04	0.02	
<i>Constant</i>	0.04**	0.05	
Adjusted R-squared	0.80		
N	261		

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 Reference values for categorical variables are: Communist/Extreme Left (Political Cleavages), Denmark (National Location) and 1996 (Year).

⁹Given the structure of our data, we do not discount the possibility there are dynamic processes occurring over time and/or violations of error assumptions in regression analysis when we time-pool our data. We assign dummy variables for country and time to minimize errors of inference given that panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) analysis and generalized least squares error components (GLSE) analysis are inappropriate for our data. When we analyze the data for each year in our data set, we find that the relationships reported here are robust. A more complete statistical analysis and discussion of results are available at <http://www.unc.edu/~gwmrmarks>.

from our analysis, we find that party family still explains 45 percent of the remaining variance.

ANOVA (analysis of variance) models allow us to measure the extent to which variation on our continuous dependent variable, party position, is explained by continuous variables and sets of categorical variables. The ω^2 (omega-squared) for party family is consistently high in relation to those for all other variables in our analysis and is the strongest influence in the full model (see Table 2). When we drop left/right extremism from the analysis, the influence of party family is especially large, at least twice that of the next most powerful influence, median supporter. The reason for this is that left/right extremism taps the Euro-skepticism of the extreme left and right in relation to all other party families, and so competes directly with party family. However, left/right extremism captures only one dimension underlying differences among party families. Cleavages based on religion, center/periphery, and new politics also shape party families, and these exert an independent effect on party positioning.

The model in Table 2 includes categorical variables for individual countries, with Denmark as the excluded reference category. Several country variables are highly significant, though the combined explanatory power of the country dummies is only five percent of the total explained variance (given by the ω^2). National location and political cleavages do not appear to be contending sources of party positioning on European integration.¹⁰

Given the weight of expectations in the scholarship of European integration, it is surprising that national location is not a more powerful source of party position than political cleavages. Our results indicate that national political parties do not change their stripes when they engage new political issues. This is the basis for the speculation (Hooghe and Marks 1999, 76 and following) that transnational coalitions will arise at the European level based on the left/right dimension of party competition which has long structured national party systems in Western Europe. The European Union has "domesticated" international relations among states, and thus the EU is characterized by the kinds of political contestation that have shaped national politics (Hooghe and Marks 2001, Part III; Steenbergen and Marks, forthcoming). This is not to deny that nationality shapes politics at the European level. Still, it is noteworthy that party family

is far stronger than country location in determining positioning of national political parties on European integration.

The hypothesis that a political party will approximate the issue positions of its median supporter is strongly confirmed in our analysis. The correlation between this variable and party position on European integration is 0.62. In the multivariate analysis, this variable remains highly significant and substantively strong. A one-unit change in the issue position of the median voter is associated with a change of .78 on a similarly configured scale measuring party position.

The performance of this variable is impressive, particularly in relation to other variables that attempt to capture the electoral dynamics of party positioning. While the correlation between left/right extremism and party position is similar to that of median supporter, median supporter becomes much more influential when both are present in the same model. The chief weakness of the median supporter measure is that the variable does not distinguish efficiently among parties in the four major families. In particular, it mispredicts the relatively Euro-skeptical positions of conservative parties. These parties are rooted in the defense of national culture and community against the influx of immigrants, against competing sources of identity within the state, and in defense of national sovereignty (see Table 1). The relative Euro-skepticism of conservative parties is not reflected in the positions of their median supporters.

We cannot determine the extent to which the association between median voter and party position on European integration results from voters following parties or parties following voters. But the association is strong. This is all the more surprising because few parties have been punished when they were out-of-line with their supporters on the issue of European integration. European integration is rarely decisive in national or EU elections (Franklin and Van der Eijk 1996, chapter 1).

One plausible explanation for the strength of the association between median supporter and party position is that party supporters and activists share ideologies that give rise to particular positions on a range of issues, including those that are not electorally decisive. Party family is designed specifically to capture the role of ideology in framing party positions, and when median voter and party family are placed in the same equation, party family accounts for most of the explained variation.

Variables tapping left/right extremism, participation in government, and electoral support are strongly correlated with party position ($p < 0.01$). Political parties that are nearer to the median party position on the left/right dimension in their respective party systems, have

¹⁰It is also possible that political cleavages and territorial location are interactive rather than competing influences on party (Hix 1999, 73 and following). However, analysis of the *interaction* of territorial location and political cleavages lies beyond the scope of this paper.

participated in government, or have greater electoral support tend to be more favorable to European integration.

Of these variables, left/right extremism has the strongest correlation (-0.57). Even in a multivariate analysis, left/right extremism retains its significance, though its causal effect is much reduced by the presence of control variables. The left/right extremism hypothesis competes directly with the political cleavage hypothesis, and when these variables feature in the same equation, it is the latter that captures the bulk of the association. The ω^2 for left/right extremism is 0.01 compared to 0.12 for party family.

There are two principal reasons for this. In the first place, the left/right extremism hypothesis is virtually a subset of the political cleavage hypothesis. Party families form relatively coherent clusters along the left/right dimension, so party family captures much of the power of the left/right dimension in accounting for party positioning on European integration. Secondly, party family provides a more accurate representation of the variation among parties in the middle of the left/right scale. Dummy variables for individual party families are able to capture differences among parties that are equidistant from the median party on the left/right dimension. This is particularly important for social democratic parties, liberal parties, and Christian democratic parties—party families that have distinct positions on European integration that escape the left/right extremism hypothesis.

The left/right extremism hypothesis is highly efficient: it generates predictions on the basis of minimal information. This is because it correctly predicts the EU positions of a relatively small number of parties at either end of the left/right spectrum in relation to the much larger number parties in between. This is an important finding, but it is not the last word. Cleavage theory can explain a greater proportion of variance in party position, and unlike that explained by left/right extremism, it is not tapped by other variables set out here. The chief virtue of the left/right extremism hypothesis is its parsimony. The chief virtue of the party family hypothesis is its accuracy.

Conclusion

Each of the hypotheses evaluated in this article provides insight into the positioning of political parties on new issues that arise on the political agenda. The location of a party on the left/right dimension is closely associated with its position on European integration. Even stronger

is the connection between the position of a party and that of its median supporter. Stronger yet is the effect of party family.

These findings are consistent with a cleavage theory of party positioning in which basic social divisions give rise to ideological commitments that condition the response of political parties to new issues. European integration is a substantively important case for investigating this line of theorizing, but we should caution that it is a single case. Future research will have to evaluate whether and how variation among new issues affects the relative weight of the factors we have investigated. A logical extension of our theory is that the less transparent the electoral consequences of party positioning on a new issue, the greater the influence of cleavage location.

When Ernst Haas set out a neofunctional theory of European integration in the late 1950s he scrutinized party orientations in great detail because he was convinced that the fate of European integration was in the hands of domestic actors, party leaders chief among them, who would press their governments to integrate further or hold back (Haas 1958, chapter 4). To what extent, Haas asked, was a European polity emerging in which political actors across different countries were driven by similar interests? The question remains a vital one. The answer offered in this article is that political parties across Western Europe are driven by similar and explicable historical forces to take particular positions on the issue of European integration. The fact that one can speak meaningfully of party families that stretch across Western Europe, from Iberia to Scandinavia, from Ireland to Austria (and beyond), speaks volumes about the commonalities that underlie the process of European integration.

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APPENDIX Reliability Measures from Current and Prior Expert Surveys of Party Position.

Author(s)	N of Scales	Scale Range	Standard Deviation of Expert Judgments	SD/Scale Size
Laver and Hunt 1992	8	20	2.4 ^a	.12
Huber and Inglehart 1995	1	10	.87	.09
Ray and Narud 1999	10	20	2.3 ^a	.12
Ray 1999	1	7	.87	.12

^a Mean standard deviation across all parties and all policy scales included in the survey

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