The structure of the debate on EU integration issues

A comparative analysis of party communication in the EP 2014 elections

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Research question

How is the debate on European integration issues structured?

Focus on:
> on the political conflicts at the EU level
> salient EU issues addressed by parties
From national political conflicts to European political conflicts

Left \hspace{2cm} All issues \hspace{2cm} Right

National level
From national political conflicts to European political conflicts
From national political conflicts to European political conflicts

**EU level**

1a

Left → All EU issues → Right

1b

Libertarian

Left → Cultural EU issues → Right

Authoritarian

Economic EU issues

**National level**

Left → All issues → Right

Libertarian

Left → Cultural issues → Right

Authoritarian

Economic issues
From national political conflicts to European political conflicts

**EU level**

From left to right:
- All EU issues
- EU dimension

From right to left:
- Economic EU issues
- Authoritarian

**National level**

From left to right:
- All issues
- EU dimension

From right to left:
- Economic issues
- Authoritarian
From national to European political cleavages (cont.)

(1) Absorption of EU issues along national political conflicts:
   a) one single dimension:
      - general left-right dimension (Tsebelis and Garrett’ regulation model)
      - left-libertarian/right-authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt 1994, Hooghe et al. 2002)
   b) in two dimensions:
      - economic and cultural dimension (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008)

(2) No absorption, but emergence of a EU-specific dimension, in addition to the:
   a) left-right divide (Hix-Lord model, and Marks-Hooghe model)
   b) economic and cultural dimensions (Bakker et al. 2012)

For an overview see also Marks and Steenbergen 2002
Parties’ positions on European integration: the economic and political/cultural dimension

Dilemma of mainstream parties with regard to European integration

**Social democrats**: divided on economic/market integration
  → competition from radical left (economic demarcation)

**Conservatives (and Christian democrats)**: divided on cultural integration
  → competition from radical right (cultural demarcation)

**Liberals**: divided on political dimension (opposition to further political integration)
Hypotheses – issues and positions parties follow in their political campaign

“Distraction from internal party division”

> Parties on the left tend to focus stronger on and support cultural/political integration, while parties on the right put more emphasis on and support economic integration.

EU crisis as a chance to emphasize party division

> Parties on the left tend to focus stronger on and support (regulative) economic integration, while parties on the right put more emphasis on and oppose cultural/political integration.

Peripheral/fringe parties

> Peripheral parties on the left tend to focus stronger on and oppose economic integration, while fringe parties on the right put more emphasis on and oppose cultural/political integration.
Methodological approach

> Press releases referring to the European Union published 12 weeks before the 2014 EP elections in 7 countries — Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK) or a selection thereof – suggestions are very welcome.

> Indicator(s): combination of issues and positions communicated by political parties

> Comparison across countries
Party positions: Economic and cultural dimension

Party position in Austria (2010)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Party position in France (2010)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Party position in Portugal (2010)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Party position in the UK (2010)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.
Party positions:
Economic and cultural dimension

Party position in Germany (2010)

Party position in Greece (2010)

Party position in the Netherlands (2010)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.
From national political conflicts to parties’ position towards European integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Economic dimension (market integration)</th>
<th>Cultural/political dimension (integration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mainstream parties</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social democrats</td>
<td>Internal division</td>
<td>integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian democrats</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>demarcation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>Internal division</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Peripheral parties</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radical left</td>
<td>demarcation</td>
<td>(moderate) integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>(moderate) demarcation</td>
<td>(moderate) integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radical right</td>
<td>demarcation</td>
<td>demarcation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issue categorization - (2) «inductive» logic

Issue categorization (EU project)

- Economy
- Social and labor market policy
- Education and research
- Law and order
- Immigration
- International Affairs
- Culture and Other
- Environment and Energy
- Infrastructure
- Agriculture and Food
- Consumer protection
- Citizens’ rights
- Constitutional questions and functioning of EU
- Territorial questions
- Administration and bureaucracy (corruption)
- Elections

1. Empirical verification whether two dimensions – economic and cultural – can be found (based on issue position)

2. Alternative version: combination of issue position (pro/contra) and the specific justification of the position
   - Economic
   - Cultural (ethnic, religious, political)
   - Other
   - (no justification)