

How parties justified the 2014 EP election debate

A comparative analysis in six EU countries

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Agenda

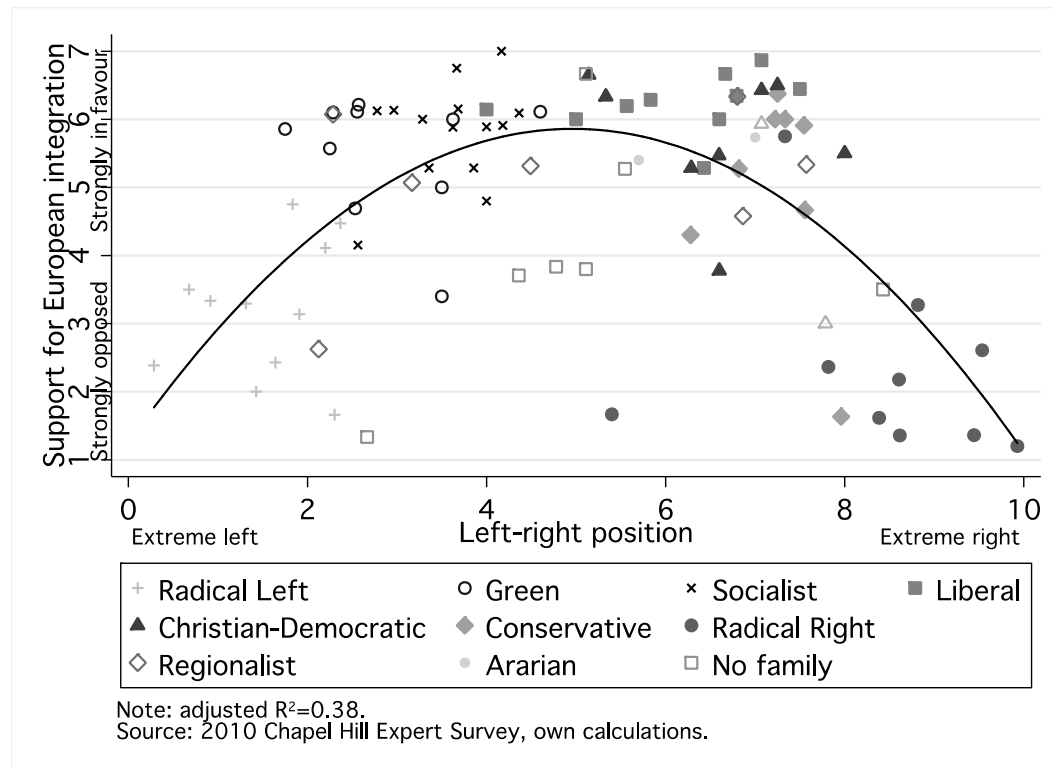
1. Argumentative justifications and political parties – research question and hypotheses
2. Study design and methods
3. Empirical findings
4. Conclusion

Argumentative justifications and political parties

- > New issues such as immigration, civil rights and European integration gained in importance, at least in national elections
- > “Point of departure”:
 - Cleavages and social structure
 - Analysis of discourses on European politics
- > **Research question**
 - How, if at all, political parties justify their positions towards a range of EU-related issues in the 2014 EP election debate?
- > Types of justifications
 - Economic justifications
 - Identity-related justification

Argumentative justifications and political parties - hypotheses

> Role of party ideology and positions towards EU



Argumentative justifications and political parties - hypotheses

> Role of party ideology and positions towards EU

	Left-wing parties	Greens	Social democrats	Liberal	Christian democrats & conservatives	Right-wing parties
Justification	economic	identity	identity	economic	economic	identity

> Structural position in the political system

Opposition	Left-wing parties	Greens	Social democrats	Liberal	Christian democrats & conservatives	Right-wing parties
Justification	(economic)	economic	economic	identity	identity	(identity)

Study design and methods

- > Analysis of parties' campaign communication
 - 6 countries: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, UK
 - Quantitative content analysis of all press releases
 - parties that won at least 3% in the previous national or EP election
 - twelve weeks prior to the EP election
 - at least two references to European policies, European institutions, European politicians and/or the EP elections
- > *EU-issues*
 - 3 main categories: economic, cultural, institutional (other EU-issues)
- > *Justifications*
 - Economic justification
 - Identity-related justification
 - Other justification

Results

Party ideology and positions towards EU

	Left-wing parties	Greens	Social democrats	Liberal	Christian democrats & conservatives	Right-wing (& populist) parties	Total
Economic justification	25.6	17.1	41.7	48.9	41.4	43.6	36.0
Identity justification	14.4	18.2	13.4	18.6	11.6	16.8	14.9
Other justification	44.3	45.7	25.1	19.5	28.1	17.3	30.1
No justification	15.7	19.1	19.9	13.0	18.9	22.3	19.0
Total (N)	249	192	347	102	225	287	1,416

Comment: Combinations with less than 10 cases are not shown. Data weighted by country and parties.

	Left-wing parties	Greens	Social democrats	Liberal	Christian democrats & conservatives	Right-wing parties
Justification	economic	identity	identity	economic	economic	identity

Results

Party ideology and positions towards EU

	Economic just.	Identity just.	Other just.	No just.	Total (N)
Economic EU issues					
<i>All party families</i>	48.4	10.9	23.4	17.3	520
Left-wing parties	31.8	9.1	49.5	9.6	136
Greens	34.7	11.3	37.7	16.3	58
Social democrats	59.6	13.5	14.8	12.1	135
Liberal	97.8			2.2	16
Christian democrats and conservatives	65.9	4.5	18.1	11.5	78
Right-wing (and populist) parties	59.9	9.7	11.4	19.0	96
Cultural EU issues					
<i>All party families</i>	15.4	22.1	34.8	27.7	332
Left-wing parties	3.5	21.6	44.6	30.4	47
Greens	8.9	42.1	28.3	20.7	47
Social democrats	27.4	19.7	30.3	22.6	104
Liberal	34.7	19.9	27.1	18.3	22
Christian democrats and conservatives	9.7	13.1	54.3	23.0	49
Right-wing (and populist) parties	12.9	13.7	21.3	52.1	63
Institutional EU issues					
<i>All party families</i>	41.4	26.3	15.9	16.4	177
Left-wing parties	43.5	13.1	28.6	14.9	15
Greens	30.5		39.0	30.5	(8)
Social democrats	31.5	1.3	31.7	35.4	19
Liberal	48.1	41.1	3.5	7.4	39
Christian democrats and conservatives	15.9	29.6	21.5	32.9	30
Right-wing (and populist) parties	35.7	26.7	18.0	19.6	66

Comment: Combinations with less than 10 cases are not shown. Data weighted by country and parties.

Results

Opposition mainstream parties

	<i>Germany</i>		<i>Austria</i>		<i>Greece</i>	
	left	right	left	right	left	right
	<i>Grüne</i>	<i>FDP</i>		<i>FPÖ</i>		
Economic justification	17.4	57.9	-	30.0	-	-
Identity justification	28.3	10.5	-	20.0	-	-
Other justification	32.6	15.8	-	37.8	-	-
No justification	21.7	15.8	-	12.2	-	-
Total (N)	46	19		90		

	<i>Netherlands</i>		<i>France</i>		<i>UK</i>	
	left	right*	left	right*	left	right
		<i>CDA, CU-SGP</i>		<i>UMP, MoDem</i>	<i>Labour</i>	
Economic justification	-	42.9	20.7	66.7	68.8	-
Identity justification	-	4.0	20.7	22.2	0.0	-
Other justification	-	19.9	34.5	0.0	12.5	-
No justification	-	33.2	24.1	11.1	18.8	-
Total (N)		45	29	11	16	

Comment: Opposition parties identified based on whether they have held cabinet posts since 1945 during a full electoral term. Ideological classification based on Data weighted by parties (*).

<i>Opposition</i>	Left-wing parties	Greens	Social democrats	Liberal	Christian democrats & conservatives	Right-wing parties
Justification	-	economic	economic	identity	identity	-

Conclusion

- > No clear evidence that use of justification differs systematically across parties (*mainstream left*: identity vs. *right*: economic)
 - Economic justifications
 - Right-wing and populist parties do not rely stronger on identity-related justification compared to other parties

- > Future analysis
 - Media
 - Longer time period
 - Alternative explanations?