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Original Article

The multi-faceted nature of party-based Euroscepticism

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Abstract The article presents a large-scale analysis of party attitudes toward the EU with a specific focus on Euroscepticism. We first compare the attitudes of radical parties to those of mainstream parties in order to assess their differences with regard to many specific aspects of the EU process. Then, we show that extreme left and extreme right express rather distinctive views when moving from broad Eurosceptical stances to more specific preferences on the integration process. Finally, we highlight significant differences in party attitudes toward the EU across countries, particularly between the old and the new member states.

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Introduction¹

The problem of the attitudes of political parties toward the process of European integration has attracted growing attention by party scholars over the past decade. Some of the most significant attempts to understand how European integration works for party systems come from heterogeneous literature claiming that conflict over the EU is, either largely or in some part, shaped by ideology. In particular, a large number of contributions share the point of view that left/right ideology influences party preferences on European integration (Ray, 1999; Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000; Gabel and Hix, 2004; Hooghe *et al*, 2004; Marks and Steenbergen, 2004; Hix *et al*, 2007). In this respect, the centre-left has more commonly been described as developing increasingly Europhile attitudes over time and the centre-right, on the contrary, more cautious attitudes. This approach builds



upon the widespread argument that European integration produces neither a new cleavage, nor new normative orientations in conflict with other long-established ones; instead, it is largely subsumed by historically rooted ideologies. Furthermore, attitudes toward the EU evolve with these ideologies; thus Europe can be interpreted by the same party in different ways at different times due to ideological change.² In the end, the traditional socio-economic left/right dimension of conflict is regarded by these authors as an important (though not the only³) explanation of party attitudes toward the EU.

When moving from mainstream to radical parties, the pattern seems to change as attitudes appear to converge. Extreme left and extreme right often share a tendency to lean toward Eurosceptical attitudes. This phenomenon has driven authors such as Szczerbiak and Taggart (2003) to argue that a party's distance from the centre of the political spectrum determines its attitudes toward the EU. In their view, wholly Eurosceptical parties are confined to the periphery of the political spectrum, while parties located near the centre are, to different degrees, pro-European. The two authors argue that signs of Euroscepticism from mainstream parties only come from factional conflicts and do not involve the party as a whole, while Euroscepticism from radical parties is a party-centric attitude (Taggart, 1998; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2000, 2003). Other empirical studies (Hooghe *et al.*, 2004; Sitter and Batory, 2008) confirm the same view. Sitter (2001, 2002) contends that the most Eurosceptic parties are indeed those that are permanently excluded from the government arena and, apart from a few exceptions, in the EU member states parties on the flanks of the party system tend to be excluded.

Although the convergence of broad Eurosceptical attitudes among radical parties has become a firm point in the literature, other (usually country-specific) studies provide considerable insight into the ideological and national variations which have been regrouped under the label Euroscepticism (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004; Lacroix and Coman, 2007; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). These studies show that the contents of Euroscepticism vary considerably across parties and member states, to the point that a joint anti-European party front is hardly discernible, and what really exists is a plethora of dispersed Eurosceptical party stances. Beyond broad convergence, is the phenomenon of party-based Euroscepticism within and across the member states really so erratic? Could different forms of Euroscepticism be identified? These are the main research questions that we address in the article.

Although they contribute significantly to shaping public Euroscepticism in the member states (De Vries and Edwards, 2009), genuine large-scale comparisons of the specific positions of radical parties on the EU are still quite rare within the literature. Relying on a large-scale analysis, we will try to fill this gap. We will first compare the attitudes of radical parties to those of mainstream parties in order to assess their differences with regard to many



specific aspects of the EU process. Secondly, we will show that moving from broad Eurosceptical stances to more specific preferences on the integration process, extreme left and extreme right express rather distinctive views. Finally, the article will highlight significant differences in party attitudes toward the EU across countries, particularly between old and new member states.

Method

The research that we will present has been conducted through a systematic analysis of party Euromanifestos and carried within the IntUne project,⁴ the main purpose of which was to study the attitudes of several actors – elites, parties, masses, experts, media – toward the EU. A team of country experts coded 298 Euromanifestos in 15 EU member states.⁵ These are the same countries where the elite and mass surveys were carried out by the project, so that in the future, the results of the Euromanifesto analyses can be compared to those of these two other layers. Our sample was intended to represent the wider EU since it covered old and new member states and different EU regions, the only exception being that of the Nordic countries that were, unfortunately, not included in the survey. The available documents cover the period from 1979 to 2004 although the majority of them actually date from 1994 to 2004. The project concluded its surveys before the EP elections of 2009, so it does not include the Euromanifestos of this year. We made use of the European Parliament Election Study 2009 – Manifesto Study Data (EES) for the analysis of these most recent elections.⁶ Use of two different data sets allowed us to cross-validate and reinforce the reliability of our findings. Hence, a long time span will be analysed where parties may have changed their attitudes, thus giving us the opportunity to document this change. The focus of the analysis, however, is represented here by radical parties whose attitudes may have changed less. On the contrary, it has been shown that mainstream parties exhibit a more substantial change in their attitudes, though these parties will be considered as a benchmark for comparison with radical parties, their change over time will not be examined in detail since they do not constitute the main focus of the analysis. At the same time, the article will thoroughly examine any variation across time in the attitudes of radical parties that contradicts the above expectations.

The IntUne coding scheme created for the analysis of Euromanifestos allows for an accurate examination of the content regarding the EU arena, from two points of view in particular: (1) the *occurrence* of EU-related themes; (2) the party *positions* on the EU. The coding process proceeded as follows. First, the Euromanifesto was taken as the unit of analysis. Then, coders examined whether or not a set of specific issues (see Appendix B) were mentioned within each Euromanifesto. They then coded the relevant party positions on such



issues, regardless of their salience. We did not consider salience because some of our selected themes are so specific that they occupy very limited parts of the texts, still they are very relevant to describe the party vision of Europe. The rationale behind our choice for specificity stems from the fact that the EU is currently facing a number of important challenges and given that its legitimacy and democratic capacities are being increasingly questioned, it is important to document *if* and *how* parties support/oppose the EU in its most specific aspects.

European integration has been theorised as a process that has produced an impact on the main constitutive dimensions of citizenship, particularly on *representation*, *policy scope* and *identity*. These dimensions nurture the quality and legitimacy of every democratic system (Benhabib, 2002) as well as that of the EU (Bartolini, 2005, p. 211). According to Cotta and Isernia (2009), any overall assessment of the EU as a system of governance should take these dimensions into consideration. How has the EU changed mechanisms of representation and democratic control over political authorities? In relation to the policy scope of governance, is there a desire to delegate more competences to the EU? What are the feelings of attachment to the EU political community? In order to analyse party attitudes, we have identified a number of themes in the Euromanifestos that are relevant to the above questions. Party positions on these themes constitute the dependent variables of our analysis and are reported in Appendix B.

In Table 1 we reported our selected themes' levels of occurrence in order to present an initial general description of the structure of the Euromanifestos. In the period 1979–2004, we found that representation is the domain that

Table 1: Occurrence of themes in the Euromanifestos (1979–2004, $N = 298$)

	<i>Mentioned in % of Euromanifestos</i>		
	<i>All parties</i>	<i>Mainstream parties</i>	<i>Radical parties</i>
<i>Representation</i>			
Membership	88.8	87	95.3
EU decision-making	70.1	67.8	78.1
<i>Policy</i>			
Foreign policy	71.3	71.7	69.8
Defence policy	71.4	73.5	64.1
Social policy	71.4	69.1	79.7
<i>Identity</i>			
National identity	35	30.9	50
European culture	52	54.8	42.2

Source: IntUne project.



was most frequently mentioned; themes within this domain were mentioned in 70.1 per cent (EU decision-making) to 88.8 per cent (membership) of Euromanifestos. Policy was also a widely mentioned domain (located within 71.4 per cent of Euromanifestos), while identity is the one that was least frequently mentioned (35–52 per cent). It is interesting to note that in the Euromanifestos, the functional domains of representation and policy are more widely diffused than any identity call. It could be argued that the lower occurrence of references to identity issues may be predetermined by our research design itself. Identity could also be treated as a transversal category cutting across particular policy issues and EU membership. Notwithstanding the possible limitations of our conceptual framework, we still found it quite interesting to note that broad themes such as those referring to national identity and to European culture occurred so rarely in the Euromanifestos in comparison to representation and policy themes. This evidence goes against the argument of Hooghe and Marks (2009) contending that identity has become critical in shaping contestation on Europe.

The data in Table 1 also show that for several themes the discourse on the EU of radical parties was very rich in references and even richer than that of mainstream parties. This confirms that the EU, and in particular the opposition to the EU, has become a central feature in the ideology and in the programmatic offer of radical parties (Mudde, 2007). In the following sections, we will document the specific contents of this attitude.

Representation

The analysis of the Euromanifestos starts by a broad representation theme that traditionally the empirical literature and the Eurobarometer have adopted as a starting point for measuring the support for the EU: the evaluation of the country *membership*. In light of the EU impact on the country interests we have analysed whether Euromanifestos express a rather positive judgement, a negative one, or one that is mixed (see the coding details in Appendix B). For the analysis, we used a multinomial logistic regression model that estimates the likelihood of the occurrence of a given category of the dependent variable (compared with a reference category of the same variable). In Table 2, we present estimates disaggregated by year (since the 1990s) and for the whole period 1979–2004. Additionally, in Table 3 we show estimates for the variables of the EES 2009 that are comparable with those used for the analysis of 1979–2004. Finally, since research shows that attitudes in the new member states can be rather distinctive from those in the old member states (Neumayer, 2008), we also disaggregated our estimates by EU geographic areas, distinguishing between old and new member states.⁷

Table 2: Membership: Multinomial logistic regression by mainstream/radical parties and years

<i>EU membership evaluated as</i>	<i>1994 Exp(B)</i>	<i>1999 Exp(B)</i>	<i>2004 Exp(B)</i>	<i>1979–2004 Exp(B)</i>
<i>Negative constraints</i>				
Mainstream parties	0.30*	0.24***	0.12***	0.22***
Radical parties	9.00*	11**	18.00**	10.75***
<i>Mixed</i>				
Mainstream parties	0.55	0.41*	0.31***	0.44***
Radical parties	3.0	4.00	5.00	3.50**
<i>No reference</i>				
Mainstream parties	0.15**	0.11***	0.35***	0.25***
Radical parties	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.75
<i>Reference category: Favourable opportunities</i>				
R^2 (Mc Fadden)	21.8	26.2	21.6	18.2
<i>N</i> (valid cases)	53	67	114	294

***Significant at 0.001; **significant at 0.01; *significant at 0.05.

Note: All models significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: IntUne project.

Table 3: Representation and policy in 2009 by party type: Multinomial logistic regression models (Exp(B) coefficients shown)

	<i>Transfer of power to EU: negative</i>	<i>Majority voting in the Council: positive</i>	<i>Majority voting in the Council: negative</i>	<i>Common Defence system: positive</i>	<i>Social policy: positive</i>
Mainstream parties	-0.20***	-0.09***	-0.12***	1.05	—
Radical parties	-0.67	-0.05***	-0.03***	-0.29**	—
Centre-left parties	—	—	—	—	2.21**
Centre-right parties	—	—	—	—	-0.95
Radical parties	—	—	—	—	1.67
<i>Reference category: no reference</i>					
R^2 (Mc Fadden)	27.5	62.9	57.9	5.6	6.4
<i>N</i> (valid cases)	167	167	167	167	167

***Significant at 0.001; **significant at 0.01.

Note: All models are significant at the ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: European Parliament Election Study 2009 – Manifesto Study Data (27 member states).



As for the issue of membership, the results very clearly show that the centrality of a party's position along the political spectrum is indeed a strong predictor of its stance. We estimated the likelihood for mainstream and radical parties⁸ to present the EU in their Euromanifestos either as a set of favourable opportunities or as negative constraint. Considering the category 'EU as favourable opportunity' as a reference category, we see in Table 2 that the Euromanifestos of mainstream parties showed a probability close to zero (in 1979–2004 the total ExpB=0.2) to present the EU as negative constraint. Breaking down the analysis into groups of countries yielded identical results both in the old and in the new member states.

The likelihood that the EU was represented as negative constraint was high for radical parties (total ExpB=10.8) both in the old and in the new member states. We also found an increase in the negative stance for radical parties over time (ExpB=9 in 1994 and 18 in 2004). This is evidence of the fact that Euroscepticism is emerging as a focal point in their discourse. These findings largely hold true also in 2009. We considered the variable 'transfers of power to the EU: negative' and we found that it was definitely unlikely for mainstream parties to make reference to this issue, while values for radical parties were not significant (Table 3).⁹ More precisely, in 2009, 40 per cent of radical parties as opposed to 16.5 per cent of mainstream parties, in similar percentages in the old and new member states, stressed the negative impact of the transfer of power and loss of national sovereignty. This was, however, more acute in the extreme right (50 per cent) than in the extreme left (21.4 per cent).

We now move to the problem of the preferred mode of *EU decision-making* in the view of political parties. The interest is in assessing whether or not they are more supportive of the extension of majority voting and therefore they want to empower the supranational level of decision-making or instead, if they favour the unanimity vote and the intergovernmental mode of decision-making. From the logistic regression in Table 4 we see that taking the most Eurosceptical solution – that is, the preference for a 'shift of powers back to member states' – as a reference category, the Euromanifestos of mainstream parties were more likely to respectively choose either the supranational/majority vote solution (total ExpB=5.6), the intergovernmental/unanimity vote option (3.1) or a mix of the two (4.5), but no reference to the theme is an option that was likely to occur as well (6.7). The preference of mainstream parties for supranationalism/majority voting was more marked in the old member states, while in the new member states silence on this issue (absent from 49 per cent of the Euromanifestos) was dominant. In the end, mainstream parties seem quite divided between supranationalism, inter-governmentalism or a combination of the two, and they have become even more divided over time with the deepening and widening of the EU (in 2004 the ExpB coefficient for supranationalism, inter-governmentalism and a combination of the two

**Table 4:** Voting system in the EU: Multinomial logistic regression by mainstream/radical parties and years

<i>Favourite voting system in the EU</i>	<i>1994</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>1999</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>2004</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>1979–2004</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>
<i>Majority voting</i>				
Mainstream parties	4.50	20.00**	5.67**	5.63***
Radical parties	0.40	3.00	0.67	0.76
<i>Unanimity voting</i>				
Mainstream parties	4.00	5.00	5.00*	3.09***
Radical parties	0.40	3.00	1.00	0.88
<i>Mixed</i>				
Mainstream parties	5.00*	12.00*	6.67**	4.45***
Radical parties	/	0.50	0.67	0.29**
<i>No reference</i>				
Mainstream parties	5.50*	13.00*	10.67***	6.72***
Radical parties	0.80	0.50	1.17	0.82
<i>Reference category: shift of powers back to member states</i>				
<i>R</i> ² (Mc Fadden)	9.3	15.7	8.2	7.3
<i>N</i> (valid cases)	53	67	114	294

***Significant at 0.001; **significant at 0.01; *significant at 0.05.

Note: All models significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: IntUne project.

was almost equal at 5.7, 5 and 6.7, respectively). Values for radical parties in Table 4 were not significant due to the limited number of observations in all categories other than that of shifting powers back to member states. According to the EES data, these lukewarm attitudes toward supranationalism can also be found in 2009; indeed, only 11 per cent of Euromanifestos of mainstream parties (and 2.5 per cent of those of radical parties) expressed a preference for majority voting, 7.9 and 5 per cent respectively favoured unanimity voting, while a large share remained silent about the issue.¹⁰ Certainly, in 2009 an open support for majority voting was rather rare; it was residual among mainstream parties and virtually absent among radical parties. However, we found that the support of the extreme left for supranationalism/majority voting reached a peak in 1999, when the French and the Italian communist parties were part of government coalitions and the Spanish Izquierda Unida was allied with the socialists in a government-oriented coalition. Supposedly, in line with Sitter's argument (2001), these parties became more pragmatic and even benevolent toward the EU exactly when their overall stance was more government-oriented.

In the end, the picture that we can draw for problems of representation in the EU is as follows. The analysis confirms, as it has been argued by other



authors (Taggart, 1998; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2000; Hooghe *et al.*, 2004; Mudde, 2007), that mainstream parties have an underlying support for the EU while radical parties tend more to Eurosceptical stances. The underlying support of mainstream parties develops as a positive representation of the country membership in the EU and a recognition of the EU level of decision-making against which the option of a re-nationalisation of competences is seldom opposed. On the other hand, the Euroscepticism of radical parties develops as a negative representation of the country membership in the EU accompanied by recurrent stances in favour of withdrawing the EU or some of its building-block policies and fierce protection of national interests seen as threatened by the EU.

However, we also found differences between, as well as within, extreme left and extreme right. They both shared hard criticisms for the current trajectory of the EU and its impact on the member states. At the same time, the extreme right developed a more patent nationalist discourse that was oriented to preserve national sovereignty, while the extreme left was more open about the role and future developments of the EU, especially when in government-oriented coalitions at the national level.

Policy

The focus of the analysis moves now to another problem: the preferred level of competence in policies that are not yet intensely Europeanised. The aim is to assess whether or not parties support the idea of a greater involvement of the EU in such policies. For this purpose, the exploration started by the policies of what used to be the second pillar of the EU before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. In this respect, we see in Table 5 a logistic regression for *foreign policy* where the preference for the 'national level of competence' has been taken as a reference category. Remarkably, mainstream parties were very likely to fall under the categories of preference for either the supranational (total ExpB=9.9) or a mixed national-supranational system of competence (9.3). A result that is most astonishing when we consider the slow improvements in the Europeanisation of this policy against which national governments have often opposed their reluctance. However, this likelihood becomes higher for the old member states, whereas most (59 per cent) Euromanifestos of mainstream parties in the new member states kept silent about the issue. In particular, the accession of the new member states substantially reduced the ExpB coefficient of mainstream parties for the supranational preference (it was 23 in 1999, but it decreased to 3.2 in 2004) and the mixed national-supranational preference (it was 20 in 1999 but it decreased to 4.2 in 2004).

**Table 5:** Foreign policy: Multinomial logistic regression by mainstream/radical parties and years

<i>Favourite level of competence</i>	1994 <i>Exp(B)</i>	1999 <i>Exp(B)</i>	2004 <i>Exp(B)</i>	1979–2004 <i>Exp(B)</i>
<i>Supranational only</i>				
Mainstream parties	17.00**	23.00**	3.17*	9.87***
Radical parties	0.67	1.00	0.88	0.76
<i>Supranational + National</i>				
Mainstream parties	16.00**	20.00**	4.17**	9.25***
Radical parties	1.67	0.50	0.75	0.59
<i>No reference</i>				
Mainstream parties	6.00	7.00	5.83**	8.12***
Radical parties	1.00	1.50	0.63	1.11
<i>Reference category: national only</i>				
R ² (Mc Fadden)	16.2	18.2	7.9	10.1
N (valid cases)	53	67	111	289

***Significant at 0.001; **significant at 0.01; *significant at 0.05.

Note: All models significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: IntUne project.

The same tendency applies to the *defence policy* (Table 6) where taking the preference for the exclusive national competence as a reference category, mainstream parties showed a large preference for the supranational solution (total $\text{ExpB} = 12.3$) or a mixed national-supranational solution (10.3). In the new member states most (56.4 per cent) Euromanifestos of mainstream parties kept silent about the issue, decreasing after their accession the overall ExpB coefficient for the supranational (from 20 in 1999 to 8.7 in 2004) and for the mixed national-supranational option (from 18 in 1999 to 9.7 in 2004). In 2009, according to the EES data, in the new member states 58.7 per cent of mainstream parties kept silent about the issue¹¹ and considering that the effect of mainstream parties on the dependent variable was not significant (Table 3), we can conclude that it has become more problematic over time to find open support from mainstream parties for a common defence system in the EU.

Values for radical parties were not significant (Tables 5 and 6), or they were significant but negative (Table 3). One reason is that observations were quite evenly distributed and rather dispersed among the different categories. Although the preference for the exclusive national competence was overall most recurrent for radical parties (in 27 and 25 per cent of their Euromanifestos for foreign and defence policy, respectively), without any substantial difference between extreme left and extreme right, the other categories entailing some sort of EU involvement were almost as recurrent. Particularly, it should be noted that

**Table 6:** Defence policy: Multinomial logistic regression by mainstream/radical parties and years

<i>Favourite level of competence</i>	<i>1994</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>1999</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>2004</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>1979–2004</i> <i>Exp(B)</i>
<i>Supranational only</i>				
Mainstream parties	15.00**	20.00**	8.67***	12.28***
Radical parties	0.75	1.33	1.17	0.93
<i>Supranational + National</i>				
Mainstream parties	13.00*	18.00**	9.67***	10.28***
Radical parties	1.00	0.67	0.67	0.62
<i>No reference</i>				
Mainstream parties	9.00*	12.00*	9.33***	8.71***
Radical parties	0.50	2.33	1.67	1.43
<i>Reference category: national only</i>				
R ² (Mc Fadden)	12.2	14.6	10.5	11.5
N (valid cases)	51	67	113	290

***Significant at 0.001; **significant at 0.01; *significant at 0.05.

Note: All models significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: IntUne project.

since the end of the 1990s the stance of the extreme left evolved substantially, as it had for other issues, becoming more benign. Their support for the (exclusive or mixed) supranational competence in these policy areas reached a peak in 2004 (it was at 66.6 and 53.9 per cent for foreign and defence policy, respectively) but then, the support for a common defence system was at 18.2 per cent in 2009 (this is the reason of a negative coefficient in Table 3). Interestingly, we found that not all radical parties rejected the EU involvement in these policy areas in principle, but the situation was fluid. We were able to document several contradictory combinations and radical parties that changed position over time. For example, in the new member states silence on these issues prevailed, but in some countries (Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia) many parties differentiated between EU Foreign policy that they opposed and EU Defence policy that they were more ready to back. In other countries, even radical parties were ready to support the EU involvement in these policies¹² as they saw the EU as a potential barrier against global threats and US predominance to which national scale action could not really oppose much resistance. This is, again, evidence of the rather erratic nature of the policy preferences of broad Eurosceptical parties, as well as of the difficulty in understanding Euroscepticism as one discernible ideology.

Moving on to other policy areas, the analysis has focused in particular on *social policy*. Many scholars (Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000; Hooghe *et al*, 2004;

**Table 7:** Social policy: Multinomial logistic regression by centre-left/centre-right/radical parties

<i>Favourite level of competence</i>	<i>1979–2004 Exp(B)</i>
<i>Supranational only</i>	
Centre-left parties	6.66***
Centre-right parties	1.60
Radical parties	0.82
<i>Supranational + National</i>	
Centre-left parties	14.33***
Centre-right parties	3.70***
Radical parties	1.00
<i>No reference</i>	
Centre-left parties	7.00***
Centre-right parties	3.40***
Radical parties	0.76
<i>Reference category: national only</i>	
R ² (Mc Fadden)	9.7
N (valid cases)	245

***Significant at 0.001.

Note: Model significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

Source: IntUne project.

Hix *et al.*, 2007) have argued that over time the left has developed an idea of the EU as a social regulator which assigns an important role to supranational institutions in creating regulated capitalism. The main pattern expected to emerge in the contestation of this policy is, therefore, one in which the left and the right diverge. In Table 7 we can see that when taking the preference for the national level of competence as a reference category, the centre-left was indeed more likely than the centre-right to prefer either the supranational level ($\text{Exp}B = 6.7$) or a mixed national-supranational competence (14.3).¹³ The pattern of opposing left to right was only visible in the old member states, as most Euromanifestos (64 per cent) in the new member states kept silent about this issue. Values for radical parties were, instead, not significant. The radical left strongly supported the EU involvement in social policy (35.3 per cent of their Euromanifestos supported the exclusive supranational competence and 38.2 per cent supported a mixed national-supranational competence¹⁴) in particular from 1999, whereas the extreme right mainly supported the exclusive national competence (40 per cent) or made no reference to the problem (33.3 per cent). These tendencies were also confirmed in 2009: 95.5 per cent of Euromanifestos of the extreme left made reference to the need to develop social



security schemes at the EU level, against 68.8 per cent of centre-left, 48.7 per cent of centre-right and 22.2 per cent of the extreme right (Table 3).¹⁵ In the same year, the share of Euromanifestos of the new member states that did not mention the issue was again considerably high at 49.2 per cent.

In the end, the analysis showed that in this domain the extremes were more reluctant toward the extension of policy competences of the EU compared to mainstream parties. While we found warmer feelings in the old member states, we found greater reluctance in the new member states, something that could contribute to the deadlock in integrating these policy areas. We also found that, even in this dimension of the integration process, the extreme right championed Euroscepticism and the extreme left showed a tendency toward pro-EU positions starting in the late 1990s. At the same time, radical parties were divided across countries and policy areas and their positions volatile, making their Euroscepticism a sort of moving target.

Identity

So far we have concentrated on the functional face of the EU represented by its institutional functioning and its policies, but now we will investigate problems of identity. In this respect, the aim of the analysis is to explore whether Europe has become not only an object of functional integration for parties, but also one of identification. From the *limited diffusion* of themes of this domain (Table 1), we could argue that identity is not very salient in the party discourse on Europe. In the EES data set of 2009, national identity and European culture were both mentioned only in 34.7 per cent of Euromanifestos.¹⁶ The low number of references to these themes also reduced our ability to infer any possible cause of variation. For instance, when using as a factor the mainstream/radical party classification we found no statistically significant values for any logistic regression that we performed.

However, some specifications can still be made. In the 1979–2004 period, it was possible to find considerable details on the theme of a European culture, rooted in common values, history or traditions, both in (54.8 per cent) Euromanifestos of mainstream and (42.2 per cent) radical parties. Furthermore, the same theme was more recurrent in the Euromanifestos of the new member states (62 per cent) than in those of the old member states (53 per cent). At first glance, it could seem surprising that the countries and the parties that showed less sympathy for the EU in the other domains so often mentioned a European culture. However, it is to be seen if this clear reference to a sort of European ‘civilisation’ or ‘meta-culture’ (Mudde, 2007, p. 169), often depicted as a cultural heritage actually preceding the EU, translates into an idea of European identity that could justify



the deepening of the EU. Or whether it was mostly an attempt to differentiate the in-group of Europeans from the out-group of 'others'.

In fact, in the same period, *national identity* was a more recurrent theme in the new member states (it occurred in 46 per cent of Euromanifestos of mainstream parties and in 83 per cent of radical parties) than in the old member states (in 28 per cent of mainstream and 47 per cent of radical parties). This evidence shows that the defence of national identity was a strong belief in the discourse of most parties in the new member states, while in the old member states it was strong predominantly among radical parties. Furthermore, the evidence seems to suggest that the emphasis on both European culture and national identity – in particular in the new member states – represented mainly an attempt to mark the distance from an out-group, more than it revealed a genuine devotion to the EU and to efforts to build a European citizenship rooted in a set of shared values. In particular, it appears that where references to the European meta-culture were more recurrent, there was not an attempt to challenge the sovereignty of European states but, rather, to mark the distance from the supposed non-Europeans. These tendencies were largely confirmed in 2009: the EES data show that references to the European meta-culture occurred in 35.2 per cent of Euromanifestos in the old member states and in 33.9 per cent of those in the new member states, but references to national identity were definitely more recurrent in the new (55.9 per cent) than in the old member states (23.1 per cent) both for radical and mainstream parties.

As we have seen, although relevant for citizenship, identity was not so recurrent in the European discourse of domestic parties. At least, it was not so relevant in the party discourse addressed to the electorate and framed in the Euromanifestos. It was, however, more recurrent in the countries and parties that were less enthusiastic about the EU, where references to national identity overlapped or even outweighed those references to European culture. Any attention to the theme of how to build a European identity was, overall, shaded by the stronger emphasis on arguments about the supposed threats of the out-group of non-Europeans on the one hand, and of threats to national identity on the other hand. Identity seems indeed to exist in the discourse of parties, predominantly under the form of defence from external threats.

Conclusion

In this article we have analysed party attitudes toward the EU, relying on two different data sources: the IntUne project (1979–2004) and the EES (2009). The results of the analyses were highly congruent and they showed a definite structure of party attitudes. Mainstream parties tend to share a broad support for the EU, while a marked Euroscepticism is an attitude to be found among



radical parties. However, we also found that unconditional opposition to the EU was more marked in the extreme right, to the point that this could very well be described as an essential part of its programmatic supply (Mudde, 2007) and electoral appeal (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2007; De Vries and Edwards, 2009), on the contrary it was less linear in the extreme left. The latter, in fact, showed a broader acceptance of the EU since the late 1990s, a time when several communist parties were either in government or in government-oriented coalitions. The extreme left was more active in presenting proposals for reforming the EU, for example in order to make it a parliamentary system submitted to the control of both the EP and national parliaments. The extreme left also demanded an extension of competences of the EU in social policy in order to transform the Common market into a social market economy. On the other hand, the main request of the extreme right was a shift of powers from the EU to the nation state. Yet, as we have documented, this attitude was not uncontested, on the contrary, there were exceptions across countries and at different points in time. Finally, by means of a longitudinal cross-national analysis, our findings confirmed arguments on the fluid nature of party-based Euroscepticism (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004; Lacroix and Coman, 2007; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008): this broad attitude actually includes a constellation of irreducible positions.

Evidence on the diverse attitudes of radical parties could raise the question of whether or not they can all be classified as Eurosceptic. The answer would be positive if we define Euroscepticism as a fierce opposition to the current trajectory of the EU, which both extremes indeed opposed. At the same time, the extreme left concentrated more than the extreme right on how to transform – however deeply – the EU. So, this attitude could be referred to as one of Euro-criticism – that is, criticising the EU without being opposed to it (Benedetto, 2002, p. 17; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, p. 252) – and it is consistent with a definition of Euroscepticism as a continuum of postures (De Vries and Edwards, 2009, p. 11). We agree that Euroscepticism should not be locked into one static definition of categorical or typological nature, but instead it should be thought of as a continuum of stances. Beyond their broad Euroscepticism and although their attitudes tend to be subject to participation in government-oriented coalitions, the parties of the extreme left could prove to be more viable allies in the project of deepening European integration. Actually, this was the case in countries such as France and Italy where, during the 1990s, communist parties were part of majorities which implemented the monetary union. These, together with Spain and Greece, are indeed the countries where it was possible to document the most benevolent attitudes of the radical left toward the EU.

Finally, it is important to note that the parties in the new member states were silent on many of the analysed themes, failing in the end to produce any particular pattern of party competition. In addition to this, in some domains in



the new member states we have observed a more pronounced cautiousness, even of mainstream parties, on solutions in favour of deeper integration. For example, they were more reluctant than parties in the old member states about the supranational mode of decision-making, more concerned about the defence of national identity, as well as about the supposed threat represented by the out-group of non-Europeans. In the end, although in the new member states the EU was framed by mainstream parties as an optimistic normative theme (Neumayer, 2008), the image of the party discourse which has emerged from the analysis of these countries is one of a more nationally introverted fashion, where preferences about future developments of the EU are not fully shaped yet, but they present inner elements of resistance to deeper integration. Party attitudes in these countries might be a reflection of their recent entry in the EU and their asymmetric experience with EU affairs compared to parties in the old member states. Over the long term, parties in the new member states may fill in the gaps with regards to the more detailed policy positions of Western parties. However, in the context that we were able to depict, the Euroscepticism of radical parties in the new member states can prove particularly strident, lacking on the side of mainstream parties a support for the EU that is as solid and articulated as in the old member states. When parties in the new member states lack purposefulness but, at the same time, commit the country to the constraints of EU membership, they may become an easy target for accusations of being too submissive *vis-à-vis* Brussels (Neumayer, 2008), a phenomenon that could help to explain the mounting Euroscepticism in these countries.

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Notes

- 1 This article is the result of collaboration between the authors. The first and third sections can be attributed to Nicolò Conti, the second and fourth to Vincenzo Memoli. The Introduction and Conclusion were co-authored.
- 2 Gabel and Hix (2004) noted a swap in the attitudes of the centre-left and the centre-right toward the EU as part of a broader ideological change.
- 3 For example, Hix *et al* (2007) specified this thesis showing a (more limited) influence of being in government or in opposition. Hooghe *et al* (2004) made reference to the division between parties that represent values of *new politics* and conventional parties as an additional source of influence.
- 4 The INTUNE project (Integrated and United: A Quest for Citizenship in an Ever Closer Europe) was financed by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union, Priority 7, Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Based Society (CIT3-CT-2005-513421).
- 5 The countries included are as following: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and United Kingdom. Some of the radical parties that are well-known today were not included in the sample as they were not as established at the time, or simply because they did not issue a proper Euromanifesto. The data set includes 64 Euromanifestos belonging to the radical parties reported in Appendix A.
- 6 The two data sets are not homogeneous in terms of variables, cases and metrics. While the IntUne data set is strictly focused on positions on the EU, the EES survey is much broader as its coding system is based on the Comparative Manifesto Project that, since 1979, has assessed party policy positions and issue emphases on seven domains and numerous themes (Braun *et al*, 2010). Moreover, the EES 2009 data refer to all 27 EU member states (196 Euromanifestos in total, of which 40 of radical parties), a larger number than those surveyed by the IntUne project. In spite of all these differences, we were able to select a number of variables from the two data sets that, after adaptation of their metrics, were suitable for comparison.
- 7 Owing to limits of space, differences between old and new member states are only reported in the text when relevant.
- 8 Mainstream parties have been considered those belonging to the following party families: Christian democrats, socialists, liberals, conservatives, regionalists (except the Italian *Legha Nord*), greens and some other moderate parties following the indication of the country experts involved in the research. Communist, nationalists, extreme left and extreme right parties have been considered radical (see Appendix A). These classifications were made *ex-ante* on the basis of party broad ideological alignments.
- 9 The variable consists of critical references to the own country's 'loss of power, competences, and sovereignty' that were consequent to European integration.
- 10 We analysed the EES 2009 variables labeled 'Majority voting in the (European) Council: Positive/Negative'.
- 11 We analysed the EES 2009 variable labeled 'Military: Positive' consisting of references to the 'need to maintain or increase military expenditure; modernising armed forces and improvement in military strength; rearmament and self-defence; need to keep military treaty obligations; need to secure adequate manpower in the military, need for military cooperation' at the European level.
- 12 Among them, the Italian MSI-Alleanza Nazionale, the German PDS and the Greek Synaspismos were the most supportive parties, but at some point other radical parties such as the Greek LAOS and the German Republicans were supportive too.
- 13 We only show results for the 1979–2004 period because we do not dispose of enough cases to break it down into centre-left and centre-right and into years and still produce robust results. At



- the same time, aggregating centre-left and centre-right into one category would create some false evidence because their respective scores would neutralise each other.
- 14 For example, communist parties in France, Italy and Spain and Synaspismos in Greece were univocally in favour of these solutions.
 - 15 We analysed the EES 2009 variable labeled 'Welfare State General: Positive' consisting of references 'to need to introduce, maintain or expand any social service or social security scheme' at the European level.
 - 16 The variables of the EES 2009 data set that we considered are the 'National way of life – positive' defined as 'appeals to patriotism and/or nationalism, support for established national ideas, suspension of some freedoms in order to protect the state against subversion'; and the 'European way of life – positive' defined as 'appeals to a European way of life, the Occident, or Western Civilization'.
 - 17 In order to guarantee the highest standards of inter-coder reliability, the coding system was tested on a standard text by all country experts. For the variables analysed in the article, the test's inter-coder convergence rate was 64.7 per cent. After the test, the variables with lower convergence rates were further simplified and dichotomised as shown in the appendix.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Radical parties considered in the analyses (1994–2004)

Austria	Linke
Austria	FPÖ
Belgium	Vlaams Belang
Belgium	Vlaams Blok
Belgium	Front National
Czech Republic	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
Czech Republic	Republikani
France	Parti communiste français
France	Lutte ouvrière/Ligue communiste révolutionnaire
France	Mouvement pour la France
France	Rassemblement Pour la France
France	Majorité pour l'Autre Europe
France	Front National
Germany	PDS
Germany	Republikaner
Greece	Synaspismos
Greece	Greek Communist Party
Greece	LAOS
Italy	Partito dei Comunisti Italiani
Italy	Rifondazione Comunista
Italy	Movimento Sociale Italiano
Italy	Lega Nord
Lithuania	Party of National Progress
Lithuania	National Centre Party
Poland	Liga Polskich Rodzin
Portugal	Partido Comunista Português
Portugal	Coligação Democrática Unitária
Portugal	Bloco de Esquerda
Slovakia	Komunistická strana Slovenska
Spain	Izquierda Unida
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party

Appendix B

Excerpts from the codebook of the IntUne project¹⁷

MEMBERSHIP

Favourable opportunities

Europe has mainly brought benefits and improvements to the country. Agreement and consensus are expressed for European integration processes.



	<p><i>Negative constraints</i> Europe has mainly limited and constrained the country without bringing positive results. Discontent is expressed for European integration processes.</p> <p><i>Mixed</i> <i>No reference</i></p>
EUDEC	<p><i>Supranational</i> Preference for decisions made by majority voting. Positive mentions of this method of decision-making. Positive mentions of the empowerment of the supranational level.</p> <p><i>Intergovernmental</i> Decision-making should be kept central to the member-states and decisions in the EU made by unanimity. Negative mentions of the empowerment of the supranational level.</p> <p><i>Mixed supranational and intergovernmental</i> <i>National preference</i> European institutions are severely criticised, powers should be shifted back to member states. European institutions should have solely advisory or implementation functions.</p> <p><i>No reference</i></p>
SGFORE	Foreign Policy
SGDEF	Defence Policy
SGSOC	<p>Social Policy (includes employment) The favourite level of competence is registered for each policy area. Combinations of different levels are registered only when mentioned explicitly.</p> <p><i>Supranational only</i> <i>National only</i> Supranational + National (it may include local) <i>No reference</i></p>
EUCULTUR	<p><i>Reference</i> Reference to ascribed or acquired elements that define belonging to Europe, such as a common culture, values, customs, history or traditions.</p>



Reference to elements differentiating the in-group (the Europeans) from the out-group (the others).

No reference

IDNAT

Reference

Reference to national identity or to commonalities/similarities among the country citizens.

No reference

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