

When Parties Matter:  
The Conditional Influence of Party Positions  
on Voter Opinions about European Integration.\*

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\* Paper prepared for presentation at the seventh biennial conference of the European Community Studies Association, Pittsburgh June 3-5 1999.

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## **Abstract**

The literature on public support for European integration often suggests that political elites play an important role shaping public attitudes towards the European Union. However, empirical findings reveal an inconsistent pattern of political effects with partisan variables predicting individual opinion in some contexts, but not in others. This paper explains temporal, national, and partisan variations in the strength of the party/voter connection. Characteristics of the national political context, as well as characteristics of individual parties are found to condition the influence of political parties on mass opinion. Unified parties send clearer cues to their voters. However, a cross party consensus on the issue of integration mutes the effectiveness of party cues, as does broad agreement at the mass level.

Political parties play a central role linking citizens of a democratic society with the political institutions of that polity (Lawson 1980). Rumors of party "decline" notwithstanding, no other organizations have emerged which can play a comparable role articulating the opinions of citizens. European political scientists have often described the relationship between parties and voters as a top down model of elite leadership. However, elite influence is not consistent over time and across issues. This paper addresses the contingent nature of political leadership by analyzing the influence of political parties on support for European Integration.

Twenty years after the first direct elections to the European Parliament, observers still decry the "democratic deficit" of the European Union. EU institutions and decisionmaking are perceived as remote and unresponsive. Often critics of the democratic deficit look to the political parties of Europe to remedy this failing. Much research on political parties and European integration focuses on the European Parliament. Some work analyzes the behavior of the party groups within the EP for evidence of transnational coordination among political parties (Attina 1990, Hix and Lord 1997, Raunio 1996). Other scholars examine the elections to the European parliament for hints of cooperation or signs of debate over "European" issues (Pridham and Pridham 1979, Pridham 1986, Bogdanor 1989, Lodge 1990, Lodge 1996, Eijk and Franklin 1996). Another topic attracting much scholarly investigation has been the role of parties during EU referenda campaigns (Gleditsch 1972, Kitzinger 1975, Shepherd 1975, Robins 1979, Siune and Svensson 1993, Siune, Svensson and Tonsgaard 1994, Franklin, Marsh and McLauren 1994, Jenssen and Valen 1995, Gilljam and Holmberg 1996).

This paper is concerned with the influence of political parties in the national political contexts, during the "ordinary time" between high profile European events. Referenda are infrequent, if exciting, and European elections have not proven to be particularly marked by a focus on "European" issues. I argue that the key to understanding patterns of party influence on public attitudes lies in structural characteristics of political parties, and in the nature of the national political contexts. These characteristics persist between referenda and EP elections, and condition the role

parties play during these "european" events. While parties do influence public attitudes, this influence is conditional, and in the case of the European Union, infrequent.

This paper moves beyond the existing literature in three ways. First, it identifies the factors that strengthen or attenuate the influence of political actors on public opinion. Second, it demonstrates the influence of partisan cues at four points in time, demonstrating the independence of the results from events such as European elections and referenda. Third, it employs objective measures of the positions of political parties as indicators of party cues.

The argument that political actors influence public opinion about European Integration is not new. Many scholars have felt that such an influence exists, although not all have tested this proposition, and the empirical record on political influence is mixed. Several hypotheses have been suggested for the recurrent anomalous findings, but these have not been systematically tested. This paper will evaluate four such arguments found in the literature.

For decades, scholars have suggested that political elites affect public opinion about integration. As early as 1970, Ronald Inglehart identified the charismatic euroskepticism of Charles De Gaulle as an influence on French support for the European Community (Inglehart 1970). However, the absence of political effects in Britain, Italy, or Germany lead him to conclude that party preference has little influence on attitudes about European integration. Later work cast even more doubt on the extent of political influence and Inglehart wrote in 1971 that issues of integration "transcend" party cleavages (1971). Wilgden and Feld concluded voter perceptions of party positions are somewhat influential, however, they discount the overall importance of this influence because of the large pro integration consensus among European elites. (Wilgden and Feld 1976). Inglehart and Rabier concluded that partisanship has a substantial influence on opinion only in Denmark. (1978)

The question of elite effects on opinion was revisited in the 1990's. After casting doubt on the usefulness of postmaterialism as a predictor of support for integration, Janssen urged that research "be directed at the role political elites play in teaching the public what to think about it." (1991 p.468). Several scholars did turn their attention to

political elites. Evidence from the 1989 European Elections Study indicates that the opinions of party electorates are generally related to the positions taken by parties, although the strength of this relationship varies considerably across nations. (Eijk and Franklin 1991). A seminal piece on economic determinants of EU support concluded with an endorsement of political influences. "political campaigns, elite actions, and the international environment can independently move public opinion."(Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; p 530).

Work inspired by the referenda of the early 1990's reached inconsistent conclusions about political effects. Franklin, Marsh and McLauren (1994) find evidence that voting behavior in the referenda on the Maastricht treaty is linked to support for incumbent parties. Siune, Svensson, and Tonsgaard reach the opposite conclusion about the Danish referenda of 1992 and 1993, arguing that party affiliation played little role in forming opinions. (1994)

Research outside of the context of referenda has also found contradictory results about party influence. Dutch and Taylor examine the link between support for incumbent governments and support for integration, and find no connection. Nonetheless, they conclude that "the trend in support for EU integration is a result of elite-driven diffusion." (1997; p. 75) Gabel (1998) finds significant effects for class partisanship and incumbent support, although the magnitude, and in one case, direction, of these effects change over time. One of the most recent works in the field clearly demonstrates the patterns of results and non-results often found. Investigating the determinants of EU support in seven nations, Anderson finds strong political influences in Denmark and France, weaker effects in Ireland and Portugal, and no effects in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. (Anderson 1998).

One troubling aspect of the literature on this topic is the wide variety of ways in which political effects have been conceptualized and measured. Some authors have used general ideological positions of parties as proxies for party positions on integration.<sup>1</sup> Others have assumed that governing parties are naturally sending pro integration cues to their voters by virtue of their incumbency.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars have obtained actual measures

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<sup>1</sup> See Gabel 1998a, Inglehart and Rabier 1978.

<sup>2</sup> See Duch and Taylor 1987, Anderson 1998, Worre 1994, Gabel 1998a.

of party positions from voter's perceptions, a practice which opens the door to rationalization effects.<sup>3</sup> Objective measures of party positions have been used far less frequently, notably by authors such as Wessels 1996, Steenbergen and Scott 1997, and Eijk and Franklin 1991.

### Hypotheses

This paper argues that the influence of political parties on public opinion is contingent on several factors, and the pattern of effects can be explained by cross party or cross national variation in these factors. The issue of European integration is an excellent case for testing this argument. The existence of the same political issue in multiple national contexts, with comparable cross national data, provides the conditions needed to empirically evaluate the influence of national context on the party-voter relationship.

Four "hypotheses" for the conditional nature of elite influence on public opinion can be derived from the literature. The lack of consistent political effects is alternately attributed to the low salience of the issue of integration, to internal party divisions, to a pro-integration elite consensus, or to the general mass consensus on European issues. These hypotheses are sometimes presented as ad hoc explanations for anomalous findings, and sometimes used to justify the omission of political variables. In no case have they been systematically tested.

The **party unity** hypothesis:

One of the prime suspects in much recent discussion of the weakness of party-voter linkages on the issue of European integration is internal party dissent. Internal divisions on European issues are often thought to be endemic in European parties. Scholars have often asserted that such internal splits are a product of the mismatch between the cleavage systems that gave rise to parties, and the new issue of European unification. (Bogdanor 1989, Franklin, Marsh and McLaren 1994, and Eijk and Franklin 1996) As Eijk and Franklin put it:

The party systems in European countries arose long before the process of European Unification began... The questions, however, which

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<sup>3</sup> See Wilgden and Feld 1976, Morgan and Gleiber 199x?.

currently are of central importance in the politics of the European Union cut across the divisions between national parties, with minorities even within nominally pro-European parties being often vociferously opposed to all things European (1996:370).

Disagreement within parties about the correct position to take on European integration can be expected to weaken the ability of a party to influence the opinions of its electorate. The presentation of contradictory messages by various party leaders will muddle the cues sent by the party to its supporters. Cues will be muffled as well if internal party divisions deter a party from public discussion of European issues. By stressing an issues on which the party is divided, party leaders risk an embarrassing display of public dissent at best and a debilitating party schism at worst.

The **issue salience** hypothesis:

Several theories of party competition posit that issues vary significantly in their importance across the political parties within a party system. According to the 'issue-ownership' hypothesis developed by Petrocik (1996), parties cannot credibly take positions on all possible political issues. The premise is that people who associate certain views with specific parties, are more receptive to messages that confirm these existing stereotypes. For this reason, during the electoral campaign, candidates (or parties) are likely to gain the most by advertising on those issues over which they can claim 'ownership.'

'Directional theory' presumes that issues represent a choice between two sides of a question and that party competition takes place on the basis of centrifugal forces Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989), Listhaug et al. (1990), Macdonald et al. (1991, 1998). Voters evaluate the party signaling the strongest stand in their ideological direction as the party 'best' situated on that dimension. The 'saliency theory' of party competition also claims that political parties build their electoral coalitions around those issues where they have the support of a majority of the electorate. Parties stress these issues, while downplaying or ignoring issues where their opponents hold the majority view. Budge and Farlie (1983). All three of these theories suggest that the salience of an issue is an important variable, and one that will vary across parties.

We expect that the importance of the issue of European integration will condition the ability of a political party to influence the opinions of its electorate. The positions of parties that are strongly associated with this issue will exercise a greater pull on the orientations of the electorate. Parties that stress other issues will have a correspondingly lower effect on voter orientations.

The **elite consensus** hypothesis:

It has been suggested that parties avoid stressing the issue of integration because it is simply not a useful issue for differentiating between parties (Lange and Davidson Schmidt n.d.). The argument has generally been used in the context of elections to the European Parliament. "The lack of inter-party policy differences on European matters makes it difficult for parties to fight [European] elections on European issues"(Eijk and Franklin 1996:369). Duch and Taylor cite consensus as the culprit behind the absence of incumbency effects (1997 p.78).

Martin Slater noted the politicization of European issues in the "new" member states of the 1970's. He attributed this to the activity of counter elites who broke with the prevailing pro EU consensus. (1982).

The **mass consensus** hypothesis:

As mentioned earlier, some of the earliest research on public support concluded that there was little evidence of a political structure to public opinion about European integration. Some scholars attributed this to a "permissive consensus" within the European public. Authors such as Lindberg and Schiengold argued that there was broad, if shallow support for integration. (Lindberg and Schiengold 1970) The implication was that mass consensus reduced the potential for politicization of the European issue. This served to weaken the connection between public opinion and elite actions, giving political leaders greater latitude to pursue integration without actually pushing them to do so.

## **Data and Measurement**



These hypotheses about the conditional nature of partisan influences will be tested empirically using public opinion data drawn from the Eurobarometer opinion polls, and party level data collected through an expert survey. The data and operationalization of each hypothesis are described below.

#### Measuring support for European Integration

Several questions have been used on various Eurobarometer surveys as measures of a respondent's attitude toward European Integration. Unfortunately, few of these have been used consistently over long periods of time. The two most consistently used questions ask for a respondent's evaluations of "efforts to unify Western Europe" and ask whether membership in the EC/EU is a "good thing" or a "bad thing."

These questions are sometimes thought to measure different aspects of public support for integration. However, there is little agreement on how many dimension of opinion exist, or which questions tap into which dimension. Wilgden and Feld (1976) argued that opinion was structured along two dimensions, "a dimension described by evaluation of Community performance and another described by attitudes toward institutional growth." (1976:34) Inglehart and Rabier draw upon Easton's systems theory when they argue that support can be categorized as "affective" or "utilitarian." (Inglehart and Rabier 1978). Evidence that there are multiple underlying dimensions is mixed. (Hewstone 1986; Gabel 1998b).

Not surprisingly, scholars disagree about which question measures which dimension. The question on support for efforts to unify Western Europe is generally regarded as a measure of attitudes toward integration in general, although this interpretation is questioned by Gabel (1998b). There is far less agreement on the meaning of the second question. This question about whether your nation's membership is a good or bad thing has been used as a measure of "affective" support by David Handley (1981), a measure of "utilitarian" support by Matthew (Cited in Hewstone 1986), and a measure of evaluations of Community performance by Wildgen and Feld (1976). Given this confusion about the structure of public opinion, recent research on support for integration has often used a combined index of these two commonly asked

questions (see Wessels 1995; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Fraser, Nelsen and Guth 1997; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998a). By using two indicators for one underlying concept, problems of measurement error associated with either of the indicators can be mitigated.

I follow this conventional practice of measuring public support as an additive index of responses to the questions on EU membership and on support for European unification. The resulting index of support ranges from -1 (strong opposition to integration) to +1 (strong support for integration). Question wording and details of index construction are presented in Appendix A.

#### Independent Variables:

The analysis in this paper predicts individual opinions about European integration using the positions taken by the political party supported by that individual. In order to assign party positions to individual respondents, one must first assign respondents to parties. This is done using responses to the Eurobarometer question "If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for." There are two benefits of using this contemporary measure of party preference over the alternative retrospective vote question. First, the retrospective question will not accurately reflect the current party preference of the voter if she has, for any reason, changed party allegiances since the last national election. Second, the congruence between current and past party preferences will decrease as the time elapsed since the last national election increases. Because this time since the last election varies considerably across European nations, the retrospective question introduces unnecessary nation specific error into the analysis.

#### Data on Party Positions:

The data on party positions are drawn from an expert survey on party orientations towards European integration. (Ray 1999) In this survey, country experts were asked to evaluate the positions of each political party in their country on three dimensions. These were overall position on the issue of integration, extent of internal dissent, and importance of the issue to the party. The questions asked of experts are reproduced in Appendix B.

Party positions on European integration are measured on a seven point scale ranging from 1 = strong opposition to 7=strong support. The summary statistics for this variable are presented in Table 1.

The importance of the issue of integration to the party is measured on a five point scale running from 1 = "issue of no importance" to 5 = "the most important issue." As Table 1. indicates, there is a gradual trend of increasing salience of the issue of integration, with a spike in salience in 1992. Internal party unity is measured on a five point scale running from 1 = majority opposition to the leadership's position, to 5 = complete unity. As Table 1. indicates, there has been a gradual downward trend in internal dissent over the issue of European integration, with a dip at the time of the referenda on Maastricht in 1992.

In order to test the elite consensus hypothesis, we need a measure of the extent of cross party agreement on the issue of European integration. National variation in party positions is indicated by the standard deviation of party positions. Summary statistics for this variable are reported in Table 1. The data suggest that the diversity of party positions has been relatively stable, with a small increase 1996. However, most of this apparent increase is due to the inclusion of the three newest member states in the dataset for 1996.

Likewise, one must measure national variation in public opinion. This characteristic of the national context is indicated by the standard deviation of public support for European integration. (As measured by the additive index described in Appendix I). Summary statistics for this indicator are also reported in Table 1. The results are similar to those for the elite consensus; relative stability from 1984 to 1992, with an increase in 1996 due to the addition of three relatively euroskeptical member states.

### **Analyses and Results**

OLS regression analysis was used to gauge the influence of party positions on individual attitudes towards European integration. The index of EU support was regressed on the position on the EU taken by the political party supported by each individual. In order to model the effect of contextual factors on this individual level relationship, four interaction terms are added to the regression model.

Two interactions are added to capture the influence of party characteristics. Party position is multiplied by the measure of issue importance extracted from the expert survey. This term should reflect the greater impact party position will have when the issue of integration is an important one for the political party the voter supports. A significant positive parameter for this interaction term will indicate that party influence is contingent on issue importance.

The second interaction involves the measure of internal party dissent. Party unity is expected to reinforce the influence of party cues, while internal dissent will blur cues and diminish the impact of party positions. For this analysis, a measure for party unity is derived from the indicator of internal dissent.<sup>4</sup> The interaction term used here is party position multiplied by the measure of party unity. Again, a positive parameter for this term indicates the role party unity plays in reinforcing the influence of party positions.

Two more interaction terms are included in the analysis to indicate the influence of national level characteristics on the party-voter relationship. The first of these contextual factors is the variation in party positions. Consensus among parties should reduce the impact of party positions on individual opinion by decreasing the distinctiveness of party cues, and by stifling political debate on the issue. Variation in party positions is indicated by the standard deviation in party positions. This standard deviation is multiplied by party positions to create an interaction term reflecting the additional impact party positions have on individual opinion when parties disagree on an issue. Like the other interactions, this one is expected to be positive.

The second contextual factor included in the model is the variation in electorate opinion. The preceding analyses have demonstrated that partisan differences are greatest where the variation in individual opinion is largest. The interaction term that reflects this contextual factor is the product of party position and of the standard deviation in national opinion.

The regression analysis of individual opinion also includes dummy variables for nationality in order to control for the well known influence of nationality on individual

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<sup>4</sup> The measure of party unity is simply six minus the measure of internal party dissent. This transformation of the measure of party dissent is employed so that all of the parameters associated with the interaction terms will be expected to be positive.

opinion. This regression equation was estimated separately for 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996. The results are presented in Table 2.<sup>5</sup>

The interpretation of the parameters in these regression equations is difficult because of the inclusion of four interaction terms. The direction and significance of the interaction terms indicate the influence of the contextual factors on the impact party positions have on the opinions of party supporters. The baseline effect of party positions represents the influence party positions would have on individual opinions if the interaction effects were all zero. This parameter is, by itself, rather meaningless.

The significance and direction of the interaction terms indicates that three of the interactions have the predicted effect on the strength of party cues. Party positions exert a stronger effect on individual opinion when parties are unified, when there is variation in party positions, and when there is variation in individual opinion. The term for issue importance suggests an unexpected negative relationship between issue importance and the influence of party cues. Party cues appear to exert a weaker influence over individuals when the issue of integration is an important one for the voter's preferred party. This effect does, however, vanish by 1992.

The substantive interpretation of the magnitude of the baseline and interaction effects is easier if we consider specific hypothetical cases. For any given individual, the influence of party position on the opinions of that individual is given by the baseline parameter for party positions, plus the parameters associated with the interaction effects multiplied by the contextual variables used to construct these interactions. I refer to the overall influence of party position under specific conditions as the "meta parameter" for party position.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The general regression equation presented in Table 2. is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SUPPORT} = & \text{INTERCEPT} + \beta_1 \text{ POSITION} + \beta_2 (\text{IMPORT} \times \text{POSITION}) + \beta_3 (\text{UNITY} \times \text{POSITION}) \\ & + \beta_4 (\text{PARTYVAR} \times \text{POSITION}) + \beta_5 (\text{OPINVAR} \times \text{POSITION}) \\ & + \beta_6 \text{ DENMARK} + \beta_7 \text{ GERMANY} + \beta_8 \text{ GREECE} + \beta_9 \text{ SPAIN} + \beta_{10} \text{ FRANCE} \\ & + \beta_{11} \text{ IRELAND} + \beta_{12} \text{ ITALY} + \beta_{13} \text{ LUXEMBOURG} + \beta_{14} \text{ NETHERLANDS} \\ & + \beta_{15} \text{ BRITAIN} + \beta_{16} \text{ PORTUGAL} + \beta_{17} \text{ SWEDEN} + \beta_{18} \text{ FINLAND} + \beta_{19} \text{ AUSTRIA} \\ & + \beta_{20} \text{ ERROR} \end{aligned}$$

<sup>6</sup> The "meta parameter" for party position is given by:

$$\beta_1 + (\beta_2 \times \text{IMPORT}) + (\beta_3 \times \text{UNITY}) + (\beta_4 \times \text{PARTYVAR}) + (\beta_5 \times \text{OPINVAR}).$$

The value of this "meta parameter" will vary according to the values of the contextual factors used to construct the interaction terms. The substantive impact of the contextual variables can be determined by computing the "meta parameter" associated with various values on that contextual factor, while setting all other contextual factors to their mean values. The mean values of these contextual variables, as well as their maximum and minimum values were presented in Table 1. These values were used to calculate the strength of the relationship between party position and individual opinion for hypothetical individuals given various combinations of contextual variables. Table 3 presents the value of this "meta parameter" associated with various values on each of the contextual factors given mean values on all other contextual variables.

An analysis of the substantive effects of contextual variables indicates that the national context plays the largest role in conditioning the effect of party cues. For 1996, a shift from the lowest to the highest value on variation in party positions would increase the effect of party cues by around .08, while a similar shift in the indicator of variation in public opinion would increase the effect of party cues by about .03. The party specific characteristics have smaller effects. A change from low to high party unity enhances party influence by .02, while a corresponding increase in issue importance appears to decrease party influence by about .01.

The meta parameters and the overall predictive power of the regression equations also tell us something about the influence of partisanship in "ordinary time" vs. during periods of political activity at the European level. The "meta parameter" associated with an individual who is at the mean value on all of the contextual variables is .063 for 1984, .046 for 1988, .060 for 1992, and .080 for 1996. The results for this hypothetical "typical" case indicate substantial variation over time in the change in individual opinion associated with a shift in party positions. The two years that are presumed to be the most marked by "European" events, 1984 and 1992, show moderate levels of party influence over public opinion. In 1988, a year which features neither European elections, nor referenda, the effect of party positions is about 30% smaller. The results for 1996 appear to indicate an increase in the effect of party positions, however, most of this increase is due to the inclusion of the 3 newest member states. When the mean values for the EU 12

are used, the "meta parameter" for a typical case drops to .063, equivalent to its value for 1984.

These annual variations in overall predictive power present a cleared distinction between "ordinary time" and years marked by "european" events such as referenda and EP elections. Party positions (and national dummies) predict about twice the variance in public opinion in 1984 and 1992 than in the "off years" of 1992 and 1996.

### **Conclusions**

This research indicates that the positions taken by political parties on the issue of European integration do matter. The position taken by a party does act as a cue for supporters of that party. However, the strength of this effect varies significantly according to characteristics of the party, and of the national context.

Internal party unity does increase the effect of party cues. This finding appears to support the contention in the literature that internal party divisions are to blame for the weak influence of partisanship. However, we must note that internal party unity appears to be the norm, and dissent over European issues is the exception. The relative rarity of intra party dissent means that this factor alone cannot account for much of the observed variation in the influence of partisanship on individual opinions.

Issue salience does not have the expected effect on partisan cues. This may be because parties are not in complete control of their agendas. There is evidence that parties react to the agendas of other parties in their national systems (Ray 1998). There is also evidence that external events may shape the salience of an issue with such clear international implications as European integration. The 1992 referendum in France, and the concomitant politicization of European matters would have been far less likely without the Danish no to Maastricht in 1992. Likewise, attempts by the Norwegian political parties to keep EU membership off of the political agenda were overtaken by the decision by Sweden to apply for membership (Ray 1998 Hjelseth 1996). Issue ownership and differential salience is not the answer to the puzzle of variation in partisan effects.

Instead, most of the variation in the strength of party cues stems from the national political context. The distinctiveness of party positions increases the strength of party cues. Elite consensus can effectively impede partisan influence over individual opinions.

Likewise, public consensus on the integration removes the potential for electoral advantage by stressing the issue, and greatly attenuates the link between party positions and voter opinion.

The importance of party cues also appears to respond to the broader European political context. The overall predictive power of party cues is highest in years which coincide with elections to the European Parliament, or with high profile European events such as referenda. During "off years" between EP elections opinion is not as strongly structured by party positions.

The implications of these findings for the future of European integration are contingent on developments in the party systems of Europe. However, the results presage a gradual increase in the strength of party-electorate links. The past 15 years have witnessed a slow increase in party unity over European issues, and in the variation in positions taken by parties. During the 1990's, the variation in public opinion on this issue has also increased. These trends, if continued, would steadily increase the politicization of European integration. The positions taken by political parties will not only affect public opinion on this issue, but also affect how much influence the parties themselves can exercise.



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**Table 1. Mean Values on Party and Contextual Variables.**

Variable	Year	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Importance of Issue to Party	1984	3.09	1.00	4.20
	1988	3.13	1.00	4.25
	1992	3.35	1.75	5.00
	1996	3.18	1.75	5.00
Internal Party Unity	1984	4.15	2.80	5.00
	1988	4.19	2.75	5.00
	1992	3.96	2.19	5.00
	1996	4.22	2.00	5.00
Variation in Party Positions	1984	1.81	.93	2.50
	1988	1.76	.97	2.44
	1992	1.77	1.08	2.60
	1996	1.90	1.12	2.85
Variation in National Opinion	1984	.51	.40	.67
	1988	.49	.36	.67
	1992	.52	.45	.64
	1996	.57	.40	.70

**Table 2. Regressing Public Support for Integration on Party Positions Interacted with Party Characteristics and National Context.**

Independent Variables used to Predict Individual Level EU Support	1984	1988	1992	1996
Baseline Effect of Party Position	-.483**	-.461**	-.416**	-.076**
Interactions				
With Issue Importance to Party	-.021**	-.015*	.000	-.003
With Party Unity (6 - Party Dissent)	.056**	.035**	.041**	.005**
With Variation in Party Positions	.025**	.029**	.040**	.048**
With Variation in Electorate Opinion	.649**	.728**	.463**	.094**
National Controls (Belgium = reference)				
Denmark	-.652**	-.351**	-.598**	-.360**
Germany	-.128**	-.172**	-.276**	-.316**
Greece	-.154**	.098**	-.093**	-.204**
Spain	-.007	.075**	.050*	.183**
France	.108**	-.053*	.051*	-.150**
Ireland	-.222**	.137**	-.110**	.400**
Italy	.154**	.158**	.124**	.340**
Luxembourg	.116**	.013	-.034	.102
Netherlands	.067**	.053	-.077**	.199**
United Kingdom	-.259**	-.235**	-.361**	-.166**
Portugal	.141**	.218**	.029	.042
Sweden	-	-	-	-.461**
Finland	-	-	-	-.450**
Austria	-	-	-	-.715**
Intercept	.513**	.472**	.575**	.047
Adjusted R Square	.22	.10	.18	.12
Number of Observations	17991	21270	19850	36728

\* = p < .01      \*\* = p < .001



**Table 3. Influence of Party Position on Individual Opinion (for Levels of Contextual and Partisan Variables.)**

Variable	Value	1984	1988	1992	1996
<b>Party Characteristics</b>					
Unity of Party	5	.154	.075	.102	.084
	4	.054	.040	.061	.079
	3	-.002	.005	.020	.074
	2	-.059†	-.030	-.021	.069
	1	-.114†	-.065	-.062	.064
Importance of Issue to Party	5	.022	.018	.058	.075
	4	.043	.033	.059	.078
	3	.064	.048	.059	.081
	2	.085	.063	.059	.084
	1	.106	.078	.059	.087
<b>National Context</b>					
Deviation of Party Positions	max	.078	.066	.092	.126
	mean	.063	.046	.060	.080
	min	.040	.024	.031	.043
Deviation of Public Opinion	max	.165	.178	.114	.093
	mean	.063	.046	.060	.080
	min	-.010	-.048	.027	.064

## Appendix A

The two questions used were as follows:

"Is your country's membership of the EU a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?"

"good thing" = 1

"neither good nor bad" = 0

"bad thing" = -1

"Are you in favor of efforts to unify Western Europe?"

"very much in favor" = 2

"in favor" = 1

"against" = -1

"very much against" = -2

Responses on these two questions were summed, and divided by 3 to yield an index of support ranging from -1 (extreme opposition) to 1 (extreme support).

## Appendix B

### Instructions to Experts

Please use the form attached to evaluate the positions taken by political parties on the issue of European Integration. Please evaluate the parties using the following scales.

A. The overall orientation of the party leadership toward European integration:

- 1 = Strongly opposed to European integration
- 2 = Opposed to European integration
- 3 = Somewhat opposed to European integration
- 4 = Neutral, no stance on the issue of European integration
- 5 = Somewhat in favor of European integration
- 6 = In favor of European integration.
- 7 = Strongly in favor of European Integration

B. The relative importance of this issue in the party's public stance:

- 1 = European Integration is of no importance, never mentioned by the party
- 2 = European Integration is a minor issue for the party
- 3 = European Integration is an important issue for the party
- 4 = European Integration is one of the most important issues for the party
- 5 = European Integration is the most important issue for the party

C. The degree of dissent within the party over the party leadership's position:

- 1 = Complete unity
- 2 = Minor dissent
- 3 = Significant dissent
- 4 = Party evenly split on issue
- 5 = Leadership position opposed by a majority of party activists

Please rate each party on all three of these dimensions. Evaluate these parties for each of the following years; 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996. Given the important changes in the European Community/Union over the last decade, a dynamic analysis of party positions is particularly important. If possible, specify the approximate timing of any major shifts in the orientation of specific parties.

However, I understand that it may be difficult to evaluate the positions taken by parties some 12 years ago. If you feel uncomfortable about your judgments of party positions in the 1980's, feel free to restrict your evaluations to the more recent periods. A partial response is certainly more useful than a non-response.

If you would like to obtain an advance copy of the dataset, please return the dataset request form indicating the format which you would find most convenient.