

**UNITED WE STAND?**  
**Examining Dissent within Political Parties on**  
**Issues of European Integration**

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European integration is the single most divisive issue within national political parties. The post-Maastricht movement of the European Union (EU) from the economic realm strongly into the political realm has provoked deep tensions inside major parties, thereby galvanizing entire political systems. While some may contend that such a statement is exaggerated and perhaps even alarmist, events leading up to the 2005 French and Dutch referendums on the European Constitution point to the disruptive potential of the EU issue for political parties. Indeed, what was most striking about both constitutional campaigns was not the debate incited among political parties, or even in the mass public for that matter, but rather the schisms ignited within political parties. So high was the level of discord in the French *Parti Socialiste* (PS) that not even an internal vote by members to decide the official party stance could quell overt dissent. The infighting, which pitted former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius (head of the No campaign) against PS Secretariat-General François Hollande (head of the Yes campaign), not only left left-wing voters without a clear signal as they stepped into the ballot box but also reactivated old debates among top-level elites about how to define the party's core ideology (Ivaldi, 2006: 51). The consequence of internal dissent for the Dutch *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD) was no less devastating, as Geert Wilders's outspoken opposition to the European project (and particularly Turkey's bid for EU membership) prompted his successful split from the VVD. His newly formed *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) gained nine seats in the November 2006 parliamentary elections, seats that presumably would have gone to the VVD had the party not lost part of its support base with the departure of Wilder.

Despite its clear substantive importance, the theme of intra-party dissent has managed to skirt scholarly attention. This is particularly true with regards to divisions over European integration. Studies have typically focused on national party positioning on EU issues and on conflicts *among* political parties on European matters, relegating dissent *within* parties to the backbenches of the academia. This is somewhat surprising given that the fiercest competition

often occurs inside parties, as they try to squash dissent on problematic issues such as the EU (Taggart, 1998; Mair, 2000; Hooghe et al., 2004).

This article fills a lacuna in the scholarly literature and refines previous work on party positioning by investigating the relatively unexplored issue of intra-party dissent. More specifically, I consider the following questions: what are the nature and causes of intra-party dissent on European issues, and how can we explain the variability of this dissent across countries and across parties? In addressing these questions, the study makes several key contributions. First, it compiles data from a series of expert surveys to develop a quantitative measure of dissent within political parties on EU-related matters spanning from 1984 to 2002 (Ray, 1999a; Marks and Steenbergen, 1999; Hooghe et al., 2006). Second, it demonstrates that there is large variation in intra-party dissent across parties and that this dissent has increased since the 1980s. And finally, the article provides a model to account for this variation. I conclude that three factors – type of electoral system, changes in party position on the EU, and a party’s historical legacies and programmatic commitments – all have a bearing on the degree of dissent that a political party is likely to experience.

The paper develops as follows. I begin in section two with a discussion of how to effectively quantify internal dissent at the party leadership level and proceed to introduce a cross-national measure of intra-party dissent on European integration spanning from 1984-2002. Next, I offer an overview of variation in intra-party dissent, demonstrating that there is considerable variation at the country and party levels. In the following step, I elaborate four plausible explanations of internal dissent. I present the data and statistical method used to analyse internal party dissent in section five, while the sixth step considers the results from the empirical analysis. Finally, I conclude by drawing out the implications of these findings for future research on the subject.

## MEASURING INTRA-PARTY DISSENT

Sources of quantitative data on internal party dissent over EU issues are rare. While the past several decades have been characterized by a flurry of studies on the issue positioning of political parties, the methods for data gathering most often used are not particularly amenable to determining dissent within parties. Consider, for example, the most prominent data source on the positioning of political parties – party manifestos (Budge et al., 2001). These texts are of little use in deciphering internal dissent, as parties are highly unlikely to “air their dirty laundry”, so to speak, in a strategic document designed to garner votes. Indeed, some parties may even choose to omit certain divisive issues from their manifestos altogether. In either case, party manifestos give us little purchase on intra-party dissent. They are useless.

Dimensional analysis of mass survey data and roll-call votes, two additional methods commonly employed to determine the positions of political parties, are also ineffective for scholars interested in dissent – at least at the party leadership level. With regard to the former, the most common survey design asks respondents to position themselves on a policy preference scale. While this information can be used to infer the mean position of the party’s electorate and consequently dissent within the electorate on an issue, it provides no information on the party leadership itself.

Similarly, though analysing the voting records of individual legislators would seem to provide an easy and straightforward measure of intra-party dissent, particularly since the information is readily available to the public, such votes are more a measure of lack of party discipline in the legislature than of disagreement amongst the party leadership. The institutional environment (i.e. the rules of the game) inside the legislature combined with the potential electoral costs of party disunity provide powerful incentives for individual members of parliament (MPs) to tow the party line. As Kitschelt notes, ‘the uniformity of legislative roll-call voting conduct among representatives of the same party...may be a matter of organisational coercion more than of programmatic commitment’ (2000: 859). Moreover, since not all votes

within a given national legislature are taken by role call, this method paints only a partial picture of MP voting behaviour.

Given the limitations of party manifestos, mass survey data, and roll-call votes, expert surveys provide a useful method for determining dissent within political parties at the leadership level. Expert surveys are an increasingly popular mechanism for measuring policy positions of political parties (Castles and Mair, 1984; Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Laver and Hunt, 1992; Ray, 1999a; Marks and Steenbergen, 1999; Benoit and Laver, 2006). And the unique virtues of this method makes it particularly well suited for assessing levels of internal party dissent. In their cross-validation study of party positioning on European integration, Marks et al. (2007: 26) point to three strengths of expert surveys: direct quantification (experts make evaluations using a structured scale), flexibility (researchers are able to gather information on any topic, not merely those appearing in party manifestos), and validity (experts employ a variety of sources of information – party behaviour, MP opinions, official documents). The latter two are most important with regard to uncovering dissent, as they make it possible for researchers to ask the tough questions and to elicit accurate responses. The flexibility of the expert survey methodology enables researchers to inquire about some of the more unseemly topics, such as dissent, that are unlikely to appear in formal party documents. Moreover, the array of information that experts bring to bear when making judgments, i.e. the fact that they consider not only what party leaders say but also what they do (Mair, 2001), allows them more fully to ascertain what is really going on *within* political parties, thereby increasing the validity of their assessments. In other words, expert surveys are more likely to yield an accurate measure of the phenomenon of intra-party dissent because it is considerably more difficult for party leaders to hide their skeletons when experts are rummaging through *all* of the closets.

This paper brings together data stemming from three rounds of expert surveys carried out in 1996, 1999, and 2002 by researchers at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill (Ray, 1999a; Marks and Steenbergen, 1999; Hooghe et al., 2002).<sup>1</sup> All three data projects entailed

expert surveys on the orientations of national political parties towards European integration and tapped dissent within political parties on EU issues. Given the high congruence among the three questionnaires, I am able to merge the data into one series with six time-points – 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999, and 2002.

I measure intra-party dissent by relying on two questions asking country experts to evaluate the overall level of dissent on European integration within national political parties on a five-point (for 1984-99) and a ten-point (for 2002) scale.<sup>2</sup> To ease comparison over time, I have converted all responses to a ten-point scale. Thus, internal dissent is operationalised as the mean expert score along a ten-point scale with lower scores indicating minor levels of dissent and higher scores indicating greater levels of dissent.<sup>3</sup> The standard deviation of the expert judgments allows us to assess the reliability of the data. These standard deviations range from 1.12 in 1988 to 1.61 in 2002, which is comparable to the levels of expert agreements reported in other expert surveys (e.g. Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Laver and Hunt, 1992).

Figure 1 provides the overall distribution of political parties by intra-party dissent from 1984-2002.<sup>4</sup> The bottom line charts the percentage of political parties experiencing high levels of dissent (defined as above 4.00 on a 10-point scale), while the top line indicates the percentage registering low levels (defined as below 4.01 on a 10-point scale). As the figure suggests, levels of internal dissent on EU matters are generally rather low, with the majority of parties at each time point displaying lower levels of dissent. This observation should not be surprising. For reasons suggested below, political parties have strong incentives to avoid (or at the least to mask) divisions. Moreover, this observation should not diminish the importance of internal dissent. Political parties in the post-Maastricht era appear to be experiencing greater levels of internal disagreement. Starting in 1992, the percentage of parties registering significant dissent (above 4.01) begins to climb. This increase in divisions over EU matters coincides with two other important phenomena. Since the early 1990s, Europe has witnessed low levels of public support for the integration project (Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993, 2003; Anderson and Kaltenthaler,

1996; Franklin et al., 1994) coupled with greater opportunities for the public to express their concerns, paving the way for what some scholars suggest is a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe and Marks, 1999; Hix, 1999; van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996).

#### INSERT FIGURE 1

Does intra-party dissent vary and, if so, how is this variation structured? The box-plot in figure 2 offers answers to these questions, demonstrating that internal party dissent varies both across and within countries. Interpreting the box-plot is relatively straightforward. The dark bands represent the median scores for each country. The lines of the first and the third quartiles form the upper and lower bounds of the boxes, which represent the inter-quartile ranges and correspond to fifty percent of the observations within each country. The whiskers jutting from the boxes extend to the minimum and maximum scores. Finally, the circles represent outliers (observations that are more than 1.5 box lengths from the upper or lower end of the boxes). What the figure brings into sharp relief is that although there is some degree of cross-national variation, internal party dissent varies considerably more within than across countries, i.e. most of the variation is at the party level.

#### INSERT FIGURE 2

### **EXPLAINING INTRA-PARTY DISSENT**

How can we explain intra-party dissent over European integration? Aside from in-depth case studies of particular national parties (e.g. Garry, 1995; Baker et al., 1993; Cowley, 2002; Whiteley and Seyd, 1999), there has been little to no research on dissent within political parties arising from issues of European integration. The hypotheses explicated in this section draw on four key theoretical perspectives. Though none speaks directly to the issue, each has transparent implications for internal party dissent.

## **Electoral System**

The institutional environment can be a powerful shaper of intra-party politics. Institutional arrangements, notably electoral systems, presidentialism versus parliamentarism, parliamentary procedures, and intra-party decisional arrangements, provide strong incentives for party leaders to either compete or cooperate with their fellow party leaders. The institutional setting, therefore, has a direct impact on intra-party dynamics.

The literature on party discipline points to the importance of the electoral system as a particular factor affecting differing levels of parliamentary unity (Katz, 1980; Harmel and Janda, 1982; Bowler et al., 1999; Boueck, 2001). Here, a distinction is drawn between plurality and proportional representation (PR) systems. The expectation is that there should be higher levels of intra-party dissent in plurality systems than in PR systems. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the electoral system influences exit costs, which in turn influences the level of conflict within parties. In plurality systems, the logic of two-party competition acts as a disincentive for politicians to exit. Since the start-up costs for dissenters and independents wanting to set up new parties is exceedingly high, politicians have little alternative but to remain where they are. The end result is greater heterogeneity of preferences and higher internal conflict. In PR systems, by contrast, parties face a much lower penalty if they split, which they tend to do with comparative regularity. Thus, while conflict tends to be internalized within parties in plurality systems, in PR systems conflict is largely externalized.

Second, the electoral system has a bearing on the number of parties in competition, which in turn affects the level of partisanship and intra-party competition in a party system (Duverger, 1954). Single-member plurality systems tend to reduce the number of parties, compressing the number of viable government parties towards two. To compete in such a system, parties must widen their electorate base. As a result, plurality systems tend to breed broad, diffuse (and therefore conflict ridden) parties. PR systems, by contrast, foster multi-party



systems. Parties emanating from PR systems tend to be smaller and to have narrower, more homogeneous constituencies. They are therefore less prone to dissent.

This leads to the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 1:** Political parties competing in plurality or majority electoral systems are more likely to exhibit internal dissent than those competing in proportional representation systems (PR).*

### **Strategic Competition**

A second explanation of intra-party dissent relates to the strategic actions of political parties and pits mainstream parties against minor, peripheral parties (Budge et al., 1987; Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989). Three hypotheses seem plausible. First, parties located on the extremes on the left/right dimension of party competition should be less prone to internal dissent. Unlike mainstream parties that attempt to protect the status quo by suppressing the salience of new issues that cut across existing dimensions of party competition, parties on the periphery have strategic incentives to “shake up” the existing party system (Riker, 1982; Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989). Marginalized on the main left/right axis of contention, these parties look for new, tangential issues on which to compete, and the EU provides just such an issue. Such a strategy, however, is only likely to work if the party has a unified and coherent voice. Apart from this strategic incentive, extreme parties might be less prone to divisions simply because they are more ideologically coherent.

Second, one can approach strategic competition from the perspective of party size. For the reasons set out in the previous section on electoral systems, the expectation is that parties winning a larger share of the vote will experience higher levels of dissent. These parties must appeal to a broader spectrum of interests and are consequently more likely to be divided on particular issues.

Finally, one would expect governing parties to exhibit lower levels of internal dissent. The reason is three-fold. First, parties in government have historically been more pro-European,

as these parties have been the driving force behind the integration process (Marks and Wilson, 2000). Second, research suggests that parties ridden with internal dissent are unable to effectively cue their supporters on European issues (Ray, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Gabel and Scheve, 2007) and often suffer electorally (Evans, 1998, 2002). Thus, governing parties are under particular pressure to present a united front, lest they lose their position of power. Lastly, governing parties have a functional need to be united, since they must travel to Brussels and negotiate with a coherent voice on specific EU policy issues.

These three hypotheses are summarized below:

***Hypothesis 2:*** *Political parties located on the extremes of the left/right political spectrum should experience less internal dissent than those situated in the centre.*

***Hypothesis 3:*** *There is a positive relationship between the size of a political party (i.e. the percentage of the vote share a party receives) and the level in intra-party dissent.*

***Hypothesis 4:*** *Governing political parties should experience lower levels of internal dissent than parties that have not participated in government.*

### **Party Position Change**

The third line of argumentation is motivated by research on the dynamics of parties' policy positions and explains internal party dissent as a response to changes in parties' EU positions (Stimson et al., 1995; Erikson et al., 2002; Adams et al., 2004). A number of factors are likely to influence where parties position themselves in a policy space and, in particular, why parties relocate their positions on an issue. Though a rigorous explanation of shifts in party positions is beyond the scope of this study, it is worthwhile to briefly consider what factors might induce such change. Economic conditions (Pennings, 1998), linkages with socioeconomic groups (Esping-Andersen, 1985; Hillebrand and Irwin, 1999), characteristics of the welfare system

(Esping-Andersen, 1990), type of electoral system (Cox, 1990; Powell, 2000; Dow, 2001), number of parties in the system (Cox, 1990; Merrill and Adams, 2002), and party elites' expectations concerning post-election bargaining over the governing coalition are all plausible sources of position change. Particularly interesting in the case of European integration are the role that public opinion plays in eliciting party position change and the divergent preferences of candidates, party activists, and party members and how this impacts policy dynamics (Aldrich, 1983; McGann, 2002; Miller and Schofield, 2003).

For the purposes of the present analysis, however, I am not interested in *why* parties amend their positions but in *how* this change induces internal dissent. I contend that parties that experience a sharp change in position on an issue are likely to experience internal divisions over the matter. Why might this be the case? The literature on activists and partisan realignments in the US context offers at least one possible explanation. Activists and party leaders tend to have differing goals (Schlesinger, 1994; Aldrich, 1983, 1995). While the former play the role of 'ambitious office seekers', whose chief focus is 'to become the party-in-government by appealing to the electorate', the latter give primacy to ideology and seek to prevent the leaders of the party from "selling out" (Aldrich, 1995: 183). But what happens when a segment of the leadership does "sell out" and the party's position is altered, either to reap an electoral dividend or to maintain the peace in an existing governing coalition? And worse yet, what happens if the planned position shift fails to pay off? The result is likely internal dissent.<sup>5</sup>

I therefore expect the following:

***Hypothesis 5:*** *There is a positive relationship between party position change on European integration and level of intra-party dissent; i.e. the greater the shift in a party's position on European integration, the greater the extent of internal dissent the party is likely to exhibit.*

## **Cleavage Theory**

According to cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; also see Zuckerman, 1982; Kriesi, 1998), party ideologies in Western Europe have formed around historically rooted cleavages based on class, religion, center/periphery, and, in recent decades, new politics (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Mair, 1997; Inglehart, 1990; Kitschelt, 1994). These cleavages and their historical interactions constitute institutional frameworks that shape and constrain political parties' responses to European integration. The final explanation elaborated here draws on Lipset and Rokkan's seminal theory and on its application to party positioning on European integration (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Marks et al., 2002) to suggest that the ease with which political parties are able to assimilate European integration depends on the extent to which the EU activates pre-existing cleavages within party families.<sup>6</sup>

This notion makes sense from an institutionalist perspective; organizations filter new issues through existing frameworks (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Thelen, 1999). Political parties are organizations with embedded ideologies and long-standing programmatic guarantees that engender intense loyalty on the parts of leaders and activists. Over time, they develop elaborate party organizations, build up constituency ties, and establish reputations for particular programs and policies (Budge et al., 1987). Given the immense costs of abandoning such structures and commitments, political parties cannot simply reinvent themselves with each new challenge or electoral cycle, but instead interpret new issues in light of their historically-rooted orientations. As Marks and Wilson note, 'a political party has its own "bounded rationality" that shapes the way in which it comes to terms with new challenges and uncertainties' (2000: 434).

The logic of cleavage theory is generalisable across issues, but the dual nature of European integration, as both an economic enterprise with considerable distributional implications and a political project in which the sovereignty of nations is pooled and constrained (Hooghe and Marks, 2001), makes it particularly problematic for parties. Cleavage theory has been applied to the case of European integration to demonstrate that political cleavages provide

powerful tools for explaining how political parties respond to these two components of European integration (Marks and Wilson, 2000; also see Hix and Lord, 1997; Hix, 1999). The last explanation of dissent extends this line of reasoning, arguing that if one wants to understand dissent within political parties, one must again turn to their distinctive historical experiences and more specifically the extent to which the dual nature of the EU activates pre-existing cleavages within political families.

Consider as an example the conservative party family. Conservative parties should be particularly susceptible to internal strife over European integration because of the long-standing tension between neoliberal and national conservatism (see also, Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2004). Historically, conservative parties have combined two different groups: neoliberals, who support free markets and minimal state intervention, and nationalists, who reject the importance of class to political issues (Marks and Wilson 2000). The double nature of European integration touches directly upon this pre-existing fissure. For neoliberals, the European project of economic integration is largely an extension of their fundamental political-economic ideals. They are therefore in favor of European integration to the extent that it enhances regime competition and leads to a more integrated market. Though neoliberals believe that the focus of European integration should be economic, they acknowledge that some supranational political structures may be needed to realize the goal of market integration and are therefore willing to cede some national autonomy if it leads to enhanced economic integration. This stands in stark opposition to nationalists who reject any dilution of national control. As defenders of national culture, language, community, and above all national sovereignty, nationalists are hostile to European integration in any form. The endemic tension between neoliberals and nationalists suggests that conservative parties should be particularly vulnerable to internal strife over European integration (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2004).

Generalizing from this, I assert that the facility with which political parties are able to assimilate the issue of European integration is influenced by the legacy of past political conflicts

and the degree to which the two-pronged nature of the EU triggers pre-existing cleavages within political families. This leads to a final hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 6:** *The level of intra-party dissent over European integration is influenced by the historical experiences and programmatic commitments of political parties as summarized by the party families that have arisen from them.*

## DATA AND METHOD

In order to examine the hypotheses outlined above, I analyse intra-party dissent within fourteen Western European member states by incorporating expert survey data into a random coefficients model. In this section, I operationalise the key theoretical factors influencing internal party dissent and briefly comment on the statistical approach that I employ.

The first set of hypotheses relate to the electoral context in which parties must compete, specifically the *electoral system*. Here, a distinction is made between plurality or majority systems (value of 1) and proportional representation systems (value of 0). The category of PR systems includes list PR systems with and without thresholds, mixed member PR systems, and Greece's system of reinforced PR. The category of plurality/majority systems includes first-past-the-post, the single transferable vote, and the two-round system that is used in French legislative elections.

The next group of variables are utilized to test the strategic competition argument. Given my expectation that extreme parties are less likely to exhibit internal dissent, I include a dichotomous variable that captures *left/right extremism*. Parties that are one standard deviation below or above the mean left/right ideological position of all parties in a country in a given year are coded as extreme (value of 1). *Party size* refers to the vote share that a political party receives in the national legislative election for the lower house in the year of or the year prior to the time point in question. Finally, *government participation* is a dummy variable with 1 indicating that a political party was in government in the year under investigation and 0 indicating that a party was in opposition.

Data on EU party position is gleaned from the Ray and Chapel Hill expert surveys described above. Country experts were asked to evaluate the position of each national political party along a seven-point scale ranging from ‘strongly opposed to European integration’ to ‘strongly in favour of European integration’. *Party position change* is operationalised as the absolute value of the difference in EU party position between two successive time points.

Finally, the cleavage explanation asserts that the ease with which political parties are able to incorporate European integration depends on the extent to which the dual nature of the EU activates pre-existing cleavages within political families. To investigate the impact of political cleavages, I include dummy variables for ten party families – radical right, conservative, liberal, Christian democratic, social democratic, green, radical left, regionalist, Protestant, and agrarian – in my model. In line with Lipset and Rokkan (1967), I make distinctions between liberal and agrarian parties and between Christian democratic parties with Catholic roots and Protestant parties.<sup>7</sup>

#### INSERT TABLE 1

I analyse intra-party dissent over European integration by incorporating the variables described above into a hierarchical or random coefficients model.<sup>8</sup> I choose to employ a random effects model versus a fixed effect model for two reasons. First, given that the presence of time invariant and rarely changing variables precludes the estimation of unit fixed effects, random effects serve as a good second best option (Plümper et al., 2005). And second, results of the Hausman specification test comparing the fixed versus random effects suggest that the latter is more appropriate (Hausman, 1978). The variance components were estimated using maximum likelihood. And all estimations were conducted in Stata version 9.

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

What are the sources of internal party division over European integration? The results of the statistical analysis are included in Table 2 and provide support for three of the broad sets of hypotheses under investigation – electoral system, party position change, and political cleavages.

### INSERT TABLE 2

First, the type of electoral system appears to influence the level of dissent within parties. The strong and statistically significant effect of the *electoral system* variable indicates that parties competing in plurality or majority systems, such as the United Kingdom or France, are more prone to divisions. Second, shifts in parties' positions on European integration seem to be strongly related to internal party dissent. *Party position change* is positively and significantly associated with internal party dissent, suggesting that divisions may be a response to changes in parties' policy positions.<sup>9</sup> Though the current analysis cannot determine what compels political parties to alter their position on the EU, it is clear from the results presented here that such a move is likely to disrupt the delicate balance within parties. Finally, the expectations regarding political cleavages are also born out in the data. Party family accounts for fourteen percent of the variance of dissent within parties. Moreover, the coefficients for several of the categorical variables are strong and statistically significant. These coefficients represent the difference between the mean of a particular party family and the mean of the omitted family. Here, radical right serves as the reference category. Since this family displays relatively low levels of dissent, any party family similarly located on the low end of the dissent spectrum will have a small and statistically insignificant coefficient. Overall, the findings suggest that the legacies of past political conflicts influence the extent to which political parties are able to assimilate the EU issue.

While the empirical analysis strongly confirms the hypotheses drawn from the electoral system, position change, and cleavage theory arguments, the expectations regarding strategic



competition fail to withstand scrutiny. Beginning with *left/right extremism*, there is no evidence that minor, peripheral parties are less apt to experience divisions. The effect is not only insignificant but is signed in the opposite direction than that hypothesized. The *vote* variable does reach statistical significance and is in the expected positive direction, but the effect of party size is quite small. Finally, the results provide no indication that parties in government are less prone to dissent, as the *government participation* variable is both insignificant and incorrectly signed.

Lastly, the analysis suggests that intra-party dissent is influenced by the nature of the times, as the results show a positive and significant period effect for 1992 and 1996. The process of European integration is dynamic and the changes that have occurred, such as the inclusion of new member states and the expansion of policy-making authority in Brussels, are bound to have changed the nature of internal party dissent. The fall-out from the Maastricht Treaty put a definite end to permissive consensus so that one should expect parties to become more responsive to their constituencies – possibly by changing their policy position and consequently eliciting dissent.

## CONCLUSION

European integration engenders conflict. While this has been true since the launching of the project in the 1950s, the evolution of the EU from a technocratic, economic organization to a supranational political body over the past decade has created new and reactivated old uncertainties over the nature and future of European integration. The result has been even greater contestation over Europe (see Marks and Steenbergen, 2001). To date, the analytical lens of most party and EU scholars has focused on mapping the positions of political parties on the EU issue and on uncovering and explaining divisions *among* parties on this issue. The present study redirects attention to what occurs *within* political parties by exploring the character and causes of intra-party dissent on European integration.

This article presents evidence that internal dissent on EU issues exists and, perhaps equally as important for social scientists, can be measured using expert survey data; that this dissent varies considerably across parties and has increased since the 1980s; and finally, that the causes of internal dissent are multiple. The type of electoral system in which a party competes, changes in a party's position on European integration, and the party family to which a party belongs all influence a party's level of internal dissent.

The findings of my analysis carry weight. From the perspective of research design, the analysis provides one of the only cross-national quantitative studies employing intra-party dissent as a dependent variable. By and large, the limited previous work on intra-party dissent over European integration has applied a qualitative case study approach focusing on a single party or a subset of parties. This type of approach is useful in illuminating causal processes, but it limits generalisability. At the theoretical level, the article offers a useful foray into analysing the causal paths leading to internal party dissent over European integration.

The study also hints at future avenues of research. Paramount is the need to develop a more refined measure of the historical tendencies and programmatic commitments of party families (see XXXX 2006). Second, the analysis only begins to consider dissent in dynamic terms. What prompts these changes in party position? While the present analysis provides evidence that changes in party positions lead to dissent, what happens when the causal arrow is reversed? In other words, does intra-party dissent induce change in a party's position on European integration? Finally, what are the larger-scale implications of internal party dissent on the EU issue for national party systems? Consistent with Van der Eijk and Franklin's (2004) sleeping giant hypothesis, there is a growing evidence of a so-called 'electoral connection' in EU politics whereby electorate attitudes play a roll in shaping and constraining party stances on European integration (Carrubba, 2000; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Along a similar vein, there is an expanding literature indicating that public mobilization over the EU project might alter the landscapes of national political competition by influencing national vote choice (Evans, 1998,

2002; Gabel 2000; Tillman, 2004; de Vries, 2007). How does intra-party dissent factor into these scenarios?

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<sup>1</sup> The three data sets are described and evaluated in detail elsewhere. See, for example, Ray (1999b); Steenbergen and Marks (2007), and Marks et al. (2006).

<sup>2</sup> The exact question wording is provided in Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> There are two potential problems with pooling this data: 1) the question wording and the response scale changed between the 1984-99 surveys and the 2002 survey (see Appendix A), and 2) three time points (1984, 1988, and 1992) were obtained by asking 1996 expert survey respondents to retrospect about dissent. To ensure that the measure is not overstating the stability of dissent (particularly in the 1984-96 period) and to obtain estimates of reliability, I ran a Wiley-Wiley analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Appendices B and C provides descriptive statistics as well as more detailed data on the distribution of parties by internal dissent.

<sup>5</sup> There is, of course, a possible endogeneity problem related to this relationship. In other words, it is possible that position shifts are the result of internal divisions rather than being their cause. Imagine that a party has taken a consistent liberal stance that is failing to pay dividend. Inside the party a group of dissenters arises, people who feel the party's position is problematic and who create internal dissent by calling this position openly into question. If they become sufficiently powerful, then the position may actually shift. Indeed, this is the story of the Democratic Leadership Council in the Democratic Party.

<sup>6</sup> Substantive hypotheses linking particular party families to varying levels of internal party dissent are elaborated in XXXX (2006).

<sup>7</sup> This operationalisation coincides with previous studies on cleavage theory and party positioning on European integration (see Marks et al., 2002).

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<sup>8</sup> The model does not contain a lagged dependent variable. Apart from the fact that the use of lagged dependent variables has come under attack in recent years (Achen, 2000), the lags in the current data are too large to be meaningful.

<sup>9</sup> I am aware that the causal arrow may, in fact, flow in both directions. Untangling this reciprocal causality knot is beyond the prevue of this article, but is currently being investigated in a related article.

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TABLE 1: Variable description

Variables	Description
Intra-party dissent	Degree of dissent within a party on European integration as measured using the following expert survey items: For 1984-99, “[What is] the degree of dissent within the party over the party leadership’s position?” (1=complete unity; 5=leadership position opposed by a majority of party activists). For 2002, “How much internal dissent has there been in the various parties in [COUNTRY] over European integration over the course of 2002?” (1=party is completely united; 10=party is extremely divided). To facilitate comparison over time, all responses are converted to a 10-point scale with lower scores indicating minor dissent and higher scores representing major dissent. <i>Source:</i> Ray (1999a), Marks and Steenbergen (1999), Hooghe et al. (2002).
Electoral system	A dummy variable indicating the type of electoral system a country employs. 1=proportional representation (PR with or without thresholds, mixed member PR, Greece’s reinforced PR), 0=plurality/majority (first-past-the-post, single transferable vote, France’s two round system)
Left/right extremism	A dummy variable indicating that a party is one standard deviation above or below the mean left/right ideological position of all parties in a given year. <i>Source:</i> Ray (1999a), Marks and Steenbergen (1999), Hooghe et al. (2002).
Vote	Vote share that a party received in national legislative election to the lower house in the year of or the year prior to the time point of evaluation.
Government participation	A dummy variable indicating that a party was in government at the time point of evaluation.
Party position change	Absolute value of the difference in EU party position at $t$ and $t-1$ . EU party position is the mean expert score obtained using the following question: “[What is] the overall orientation of the party leadership toward European integration?” (1=strongly opposed to integration; 7=strongly in favour of integration). <i>Source:</i> Ray (1999a), Marks and Steenbergen (1999), Hooghe et al. (2002).
Party family	Series of dummy variables indicating whether a party is a member of a particular party family. <i>Source:</i> Hooghe et al., 2002.

TABLE 2: Analysis of intra-party dissent over European integration

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Errors
<i>Electoral system</i>	0.790**	0.392
<i>Left/right extremism</i>	0.120	0.208
<i>Vote</i>	0.014*	0.009
<i>Government participation</i>	0.006	0.177
<i>Party position change</i>	1.237***	0.215
<i>Party family</i>		
Conservative	1.123**	0.413
Liberal	0.017	0.409
Christen democratic	-.007	0.447
Social democratic	1.137**	0.417
Green	1.070**	0.430
Radical left	0.860**	0.393
Regionalist	0.560	0.511
Protestant	1.622**	0.672
Agrarian	1.580***	0.486
<i>Year</i>		
1992	0.482**	0.271
1996	0.588**	0.256
1999	-.137	0.269
2002	0.111	0.258
<i>Constant</i>	1.933***	0.486
$\sigma^2_u$	0.515	
$\sigma^2_e$	1.375	
<i>P</i>	0.123	
<i>N</i>	340	

Note: Table entries are ML random effects panel estimates and their estimated standard errors. Reference values: 1988 (year), radical right (party family). \*p<0.10 \*\*p<0.05 \*\*\*p<0.01 (one-tailed).

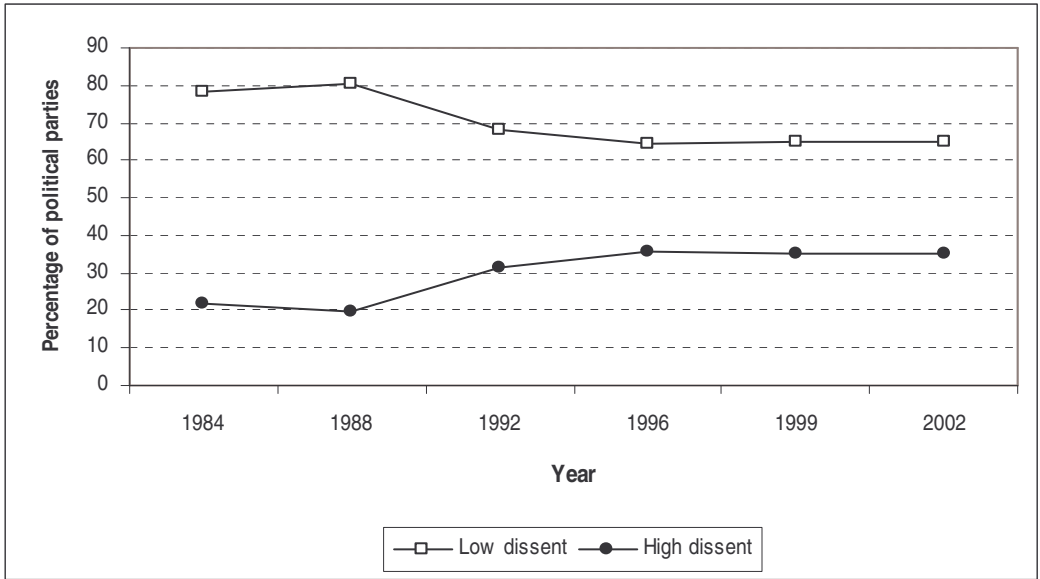


FIGURE 1: Distribution of parties by intra-party dissent over European integration, 1984-2002

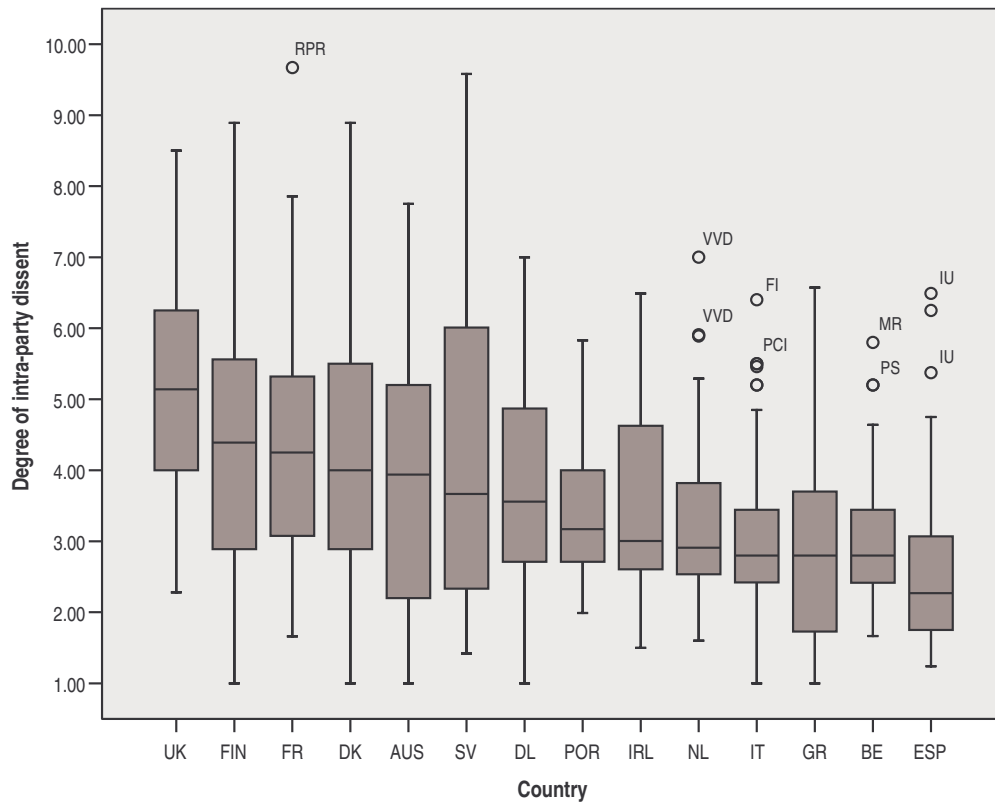


FIGURE 2: Variation in intra-party dissent, 1984-2002





APPENDIX B: Mean and standard deviation of intra-party dissent, 1984-2002

Country	1984		1988		1992		1996		1999		2002		1984-2002	
	mean	sd	Mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
Austria	-		-		-		3.16	2.19	3.52	1.30	4.44	2.44	3.65	1.91
							(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=14)	
Belgium	2.58	0.78	2.86	0.84	3.27	0.95	3.42	0.87	2.43	0.53	3.49	1.12	3.03	0.93
	(N=8)		(N=8)		(N=10)		(N=10)		(N=10)		(N=10)		(N=56)	
Denmark	3.90	1.93	4.06	1.96	5.03	2.36	5.15	2.61	3.94	2.35	3.79	1.29	4.32	2.09
	(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=6)		(N=41)	
Finland	-		-		-		4.76	2.55	4.00	1.77	4.08	1.42	4.28	1.90
							(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=21)	
France	3.94	1.53	3.69	1.94	4.94	3.10	4.58	2.07	4.36	2.02	4.12	1.30	4.29	1.93
	(N=4)		(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=6)		(N=6)		(N=6)		(N=32)	
Germany	2.89	1.72	2.99	1.91	4.09	1.99	4.38	1.91	3.96	1.41	3.44	0.53	3.65	1.60
	(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=6)		(N=6)		(N=6)		(N=33)	
Greece	2.60	1.65	2.30	0.75	3.20	0.46	2.86	1.17	3.24	2.34	3.12	1.30	2.93	1.38
	(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=23)	
Ireland	3.56	1.74	3.39	1.06	3.60	1.79	3.48	1.41	2.88	1.25	3.59	1.50	3.43	1.36
	(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=6)		(N=28)	
Italy	2.84	1.41	2.84	1.41	2.86	0.80	3.24	1.55	4.00	1.12	3.00	1.14	3.09	1.24
	(N=6)		(N=6)		(N=7)		(N=8)		(N=5)		(N=11)		(N=43)	
Netherlands	2.70	0.80	2.51	0.68	3.83	1.42	3.81	1.82	3.65	1.45	3.45	1.25	3.35	1.30
	(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=5)		(N=6)		(N=7)		(N=31)	
Portugal	-		3.38	1.05	3.60	1.39	3.33	0.81	3.25	1.02	3.81	1.40	3.47	1.05
			(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=21)	
Spain	-		2.49	1.44	2.76	2.06	3.24	2.25	2.84	1.72	3.00	1.15	2.84	1.61
			(N=5)		(N=5)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=4)		(N=22)	
Sweden	-		-		-		4.81	3.19	4.38	2.52	4.07	1.45	4.42	2.38
							(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=7)		(N=21)	
UK	5.38	1.21	5.13	1.13	5.63	1.92	5.88	2.34	5.06	1.88	4.80	2.74	5.31	1.68
	(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=3)		(N=18)	
<b>EU-14</b>	3.27	1.53	3.22	1.46	3.81	1.84	4.00	2.03	3.63	1.71	3.65	1.36	3.66	1.69
	(N=46)		(N=56)		(N=57)		(N=81)		(N=79)		(N=85)		(N=404)	

**APPENDIX C: Distribution of parties by intra-party dissent over European integration, 1984-2002**

<b>Extent of Intra-Party Dissent</b>		<b>1984</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>Range</b>	<b>Definition</b>	N=46 <i>(in %)</i>	N=56 <i>(in %)</i>	N=57 <i>(in %)</i>	N=81 <i>(in %)</i>	N=80 <i>(in %)</i>	N=86 <i>(in %)</i>
1 to 2	Party is completely united	23.9	23.2	15.8	13.6	21.2	8.1
2.01 to 4		54.3	57.1	52.6	50.6	43.7	57.0
4.01 to 6		15.3	14.3	19.3	18.5	25.0	31.4
6.01 to 8		6.5	5.4	8.8	9.9	8.8	3.5
8.01 to 10	Party is extremely divided	0.0	0.0	3.5	7.4	1.3	0.0

Note: Table only includes political parties receiving at least 3 percent of the vote. *Source:* Ray (1999), Steenbergen and Marks (2007), Hooghe et al. (2006).