

**Contesting Europe in Times of Politicization:
Europhile Mobilization and the Multidimensional
Politics of European Integration**

Inaugural dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Social Sciences in the
Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences at the
University of Mannheim

Submitted by

Milena Rapp

Dean of the School of Social Sciences, University of Mannheim
Dr. Julian Dierkes

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Anna-Sophie Kurella

Prof. Dr. Thomas Bräuninger

Examiners:

Prof. Dr. Anna-Sophie Kurella

Prof. Dr. Thomas Bräuninger

Prof. Dr. Hanspeter Kriesi

Date of Defense: 09 March 2026

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Why studying citizen and party dynamics in times of politicization? . . .	2
1.2	Theoretical background: the stepwise process of European integration and the dynamics of politicization	4
1.2.1	From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus	6
1.2.2	Sources of politicization	7
1.3	Central idea: from constraining to stimulating dissensus	10
1.3.1	Politicization and Europhile parties and citizens	11
1.3.2	Politicization and the differentiation of integration preferences .	12
1.4	Unknowns and research questions	14
1.4.1	Study 1	14
1.4.2	Study 2	15
1.4.3	Study 3	16
1.5	Summaries of the three studies	17
1.5.1	Study 1	18
1.5.2	Study 2	19
1.5.3	Study 3	20
1.6	Discussion	21
1.6.1	Summary of the findings and their implications	21
1.6.2	Limitations and outlook	24
2	How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization?	35
2.1	Introduction	36
2.2	Development of European integration	37
2.2.1	Politicization of the European integration process	38
2.2.2	The electoral salience of European integration in multidimensional policy spaces	40
2.2.3	Pro-European counter-reactions among Europhile parties and voters	41
2.3	<i>Stimulating</i> dissensus in the multiple crises period	43
2.4	Data, operationalization, and research design	45
2.4.1	Measuring voters' and parties' positions in national, multidimensional policy spaces	46
2.4.2	Estimation of electoral salience	48
2.5	Results	50

2.5.1	Does Europe matter to voters?	51
2.5.2	From constraining dissensus to stimulating dissensus? - Aggregated results	52
2.5.3	From constraining dissensus to stimulating dissensus? - Country level results	55
2.6	Conclusion	60
	Appendix	69
3	Ignorance, contagion, or pro-European backlash? - Europhile parties' strategies from 1999 to 2024	85
3.1	Introduction	86
3.2	The changing nature of European integration	87
3.2.1	European integration and the dimensionality of the political space	88
3.3	Europhile parties' strategies	90
3.3.1	Positional strategies	91
3.3.2	Saliency strategies	92
3.4	Different types of Europhile parties	93
3.5	Data, operationalization, and research design	97
3.6	Results	100
3.7	Conclusion	108
	Appendix	116
4	The (mis-)match of parties' and citizens' multidimensional preferences on European integration - Insights from the European Parliament Election 2024	131
4.1	Introduction	132
4.2	Enduring politicization and the differentiation of European integration preferences	133
4.2.1	The EU as an experimental polity	135
4.2.2	The embedding of European integration in national politics . . .	138
4.2.3	European integration preferences and ideology	140
4.2.4	Context dependency of citizens' multidimensional preference structures	142
4.3	Data, research design, and methods	143
4.4	Results	146
4.4.1	Party Level	146
4.4.2	Voter Level	150
4.4.3	Discussion of the findings	153
4.4.4	Country analyses	155

4.5 Conclusion 157
Appendix 166

List of Tables

2.1	Correlation of CHES party positions (2006-2019) in EU member states on economic issues	71
2.2	Eurosceptic radical right parties by country and data source	72
2.3	Results of multilevel conditional logit models without subgroups	73
2.4	Results of multilevel conditional logit models with subgroups for countries with a successful ESRRP (ES) and without a successful ESRRP (NES)	74
2.5	Results macro analysis: Effect of success of ESRRPs on relative electoral salience of European integration for pro-European voters	79
3.1	Descriptives on the dimensionality of the political space: Correlation of the (economic) ideological dimension and GALTAN dimension	116
3.2	Time models: Party fixed-effects regression based on CHES data	117
3.3	Eurosceptic radical right party success models: Two-way fixed-effects regression based on CHES data	118
3.4	Comparative overview of model fit for linear and non-linear models	123
3.5	CHES parties included in the main analyses	124
4.1	Items related to the European level used for factor analyses	145
4.2	Factor analysis of the party data, largest loadings printed in bold	148
4.3	Factor analysis of citizen data considering different aspects of European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold	151
4.4	Items related to the national level used for factor analyses	166
4.5	Results of suggested factors to extract based on different methods	166
4.6	Factor analysis of the party data only considering general support for European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold	167
4.7	Factor analysis of the citizen data only considering general support for European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold	167
4.8	Factor analysis of the party data, listwise deletion	168
4.9	Factor analysis of the voter data, listwise deletion	169
4.10	Factor analysis of the party data based on the same subset of countries as in the citizen data	170
4.11	Factor analysis Sweden	171
4.12	Factor analysis Finland	172
4.13	Factor analysis Austria	173
4.14	Factor analysis Belgium	174
4.15	Factor analysis Germany	175
4.16	Factor analysis France	176
4.17	Factor analysis Netherlands	177

4.18	Factor analysis Ireland	178
4.19	Factor analysis Greece	179
4.20	Factor analysis Spain	180
4.21	Factor analysis Portugal	181
4.22	Factor analysis Italy	182
4.23	Factor analysis Hungary	183
4.24	Factor analysis Latvia	184
4.25	Factor analysis Poland	185
4.26	Factor analysis Romania	186

List of Figures

1.1	Selected sources of politicization from 1999 - 2024 based on CHES data	3
1.2	Overview theoretical background and argument	10
2.1	Sources of politicization from 1999 - 2019 based on CHES Trendfile . .	39
2.2	Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4, EES 2014, ESS8, and EES 2019	51
2.3	Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup-specific estimates for countries with a successful ESRRP and countries without a successful ESRRP	53
2.4	Electoral salience of European integration at the country level	56
2.5	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in France 2008–2019	58
2.6	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in England 2008–2019	58
2.7	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in the Netherlands 2008–2019	59
2.8	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Hungary 2008– 2019	59
2.9	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Poland 2008–2019	60
2.10	Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Sweden 2008–2019	60
2.11	Exemplary voter distributions from EES 19 and party positions from CHES 19 in Germany	71
2.12	Subgroup sizes in countries with and without successful ESRRP in % of the total electorate	73
2.13	ESS4: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration is- sue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately	75
2.14	Voter Study 14: Estimates for electoral salience of the European inte- gration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately	76
2.15	ESS8: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration is- sue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately	77
2.16	Voter Study 2019: Estimates for electoral salience of the European inte- gration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately	78
2.17	Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP and with a successful ESRRP using cutoff-points from -0.4 to 0.4	80

2.18	Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP and with a successful ESRRP using cutoff-points from -0.6 to 0.6	81
2.19	Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4 matched with CHES 2006 and ESS8 matched with CHES 2019	82
2.20	Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP and with a successful ESRRP with alternative CHES matching	82
2.21	Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4 and ESS8 based on the same subset of countries (countries available in all data sources)	83
2.22	Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP and with a successful ESRRP based on countries available in all data sources	84
3.1	Europhile parties' possible strategies regarding position and salience . .	90
3.2	Europhile parties' positions on EU and GALTAN 1999-2024	101
3.3	Marginal effects of time on EU position and EU salience across GALTAN positions	102
3.4	Non-linear interaction of time and GALTAN	103
3.5	Marginal effects of Eurosceptic radical right party vote share on EU position and EU salience across GALTAN positions	104
3.6	Non-linear interaction of Eurosceptic radical right party vote share and GALTAN	105
3.7	Regional effects: Triple interaction of GALTAN position, region and time (Panel a and b) or Eurosceptic radical right party success (Panel c and d)	108
3.8	Distribution of GALTAN positions	116
3.9	Marginal effect plots for interaction of time and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience (1999-2024) based on CMP data	119
3.10	Marginal effect plots for interaction of Eurosceptic radical right party success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience (1999-2024) based on CMP data	120
3.11	Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience without lagged dependent variable	121
3.12	Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience for all parties except radical right parties	122

3.13	Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GAL-TAN position on EU position and EU salience for only pro-European parties	123
4.1	Loess trend lines with the ideological left-right dimension and F1, F2, F3 (grey areas display 95% confidence intervals)	149
4.2	Ideological left-right positions by party family based on data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024	150
4.3	Loess trend lines with the ideological left-right dimension and F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6 (grey areas display 95% confidence intervals)	153

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors and my dissertation committee. I like to express my gratitude to Anna-Sophie Kurella, whose constant feedback and encouragement have shaped this dissertation from the very beginning. From you I learned not only how to conduct research and write academic papers, but also how to navigate the academic world more broadly. Your door was always open, and I knew I could reach out at any time for advice and support. I am also grateful to Thomas Bräuninger for offering valuable feedback at various stages of this dissertation and for granting me the freedom to pursue my own research agenda, which allowed me to develop this project in ways that truly reflect my interests. A special thanks goes to Hanspeter Kriesi, for having me in the doctoral school in Lucerne and for hosting my stay at the European University Institute. The discussions we had during these periods greatly enriched both the substance and direction of my work.

My heartfelt thanks go to Klara and Pauline. The past four years would not have been nearly as enjoyable without your friendship, both within and beyond work. It is especially rewarding to know that, even as this dissertation comes to an end, our friendship is something that will last. Thank you, Klara, for sharing the office with me during the final stages of this project. With you even the final sprint was enjoyable, filled with laughter, a motivating atmosphere, and great conversations. Thank you, Pauline, for showing me that writing a dissertation does not have to be stressful and that maintaining a healthy balance is the most efficient and rewarding path. I also thank my MZES and CDSS friends and colleagues for the many conversations, lunches, and coffees we shared, as well as their feedback they provided to my work. These moments offered both everyday joy and intellectual inspiration.

My thanks go also to my family, who always radiated confidence that I was up to the task. I am especially grateful to Oma Inga, whose genuine interest in my research and politics reminded me of the practical relevance of my work. To Sarah: thank you for always being there, no matter the situation, and for offering fresh perspectives from outside academia. And finally, to Jonas: thank you for your unwavering support, for encouraging me in everything I do, and for always being by my side.

Funding

This work was supported by the University of Mannheim's Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences, by the German Research Foundation (DFG) project 'Issue Evolution in Multiparty Systems' (Project number 666557), and by the SOLID research project 'Policy Crisis and Crisis Politics, Sovereignty, Solidarity and Identity in the EU Post-2008' financed by the European Research Council, the European University Institute, the London School of Economics & Political Science, the University of Milan, and the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation.

1 Introduction

European integration has become politicized. What began as a technocratic, elite-led economic project supported by a broad but quiet ‘permissive consensus’ has, over time, expanded into cultural domains that provoked growing public resistance and party conflict - a period described as ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This transformation has been closely linked to the emergence of a new cultural conflict line, contrasting libertarian, progressive attitudes promoted by social-liberal and green parties with nationalist, authoritarian worldviews politicized by radical right parties (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kitschelt, 1988; Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008). The central claim of this dissertation is that the trajectory from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus has now entered a third stage: stimulating dissensus. As politicization persists, contestation over Europe is no longer expected to merely constrain further integration, but to become more full-fledged. In this stage, conflict is, first, expected to become two-sided: Not only Eurosceptic, but also Europhile parties and citizens engage more intensively with the issue of European integration. Second, contestation of European integration is expected to become issue-specific, shifting from a ‘more vs. less Europe’ divide to multidimensional preferences regarding particular aspects of integration, such as European solidarity, EU enlargement, or authority transfer to the European level. Both the rise of two-sided engagement and the growing differentiation of integration preferences are expected to be anchored in the new cultural conflict line, where left-libertarian parties drive pro-European engagement and support for specific aspects of integration follows cultural rather than economic considerations. Thus, this dissertation shifts the focus from the origins of politicization to its long-term consequences for how European integration is contested. Against this backdrop, the overarching research question guiding the dissertation is:

How is the nature of contestation over European integration transformed in the context of enduring politicization?

This cumulative dissertation is structured as follows. This frame chapter first outlines the relevance of this work, traces the evolution from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus and develops the concept of stimulating dissensus. From this theoretical foundation, two core implications are derived: the activation of Europhile actors and the differentiation of European preferences. Building on this framework, the chapter identifies unknowns and formulates the research questions addressed in the three empirical studies. Study 1 examines to what extent pro-European citizens incorporate European issues in their vote choice. Study 2 analyzes how different types of Europhile parties engage with European integration. Study 3 maps the multidimensional structure of cit-

izens' and parties' EU preferences and explores how these are embedded in national conflict structures. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings and their implications, a discussion of limitations and an outlook for future research. The three empirical studies then follow.

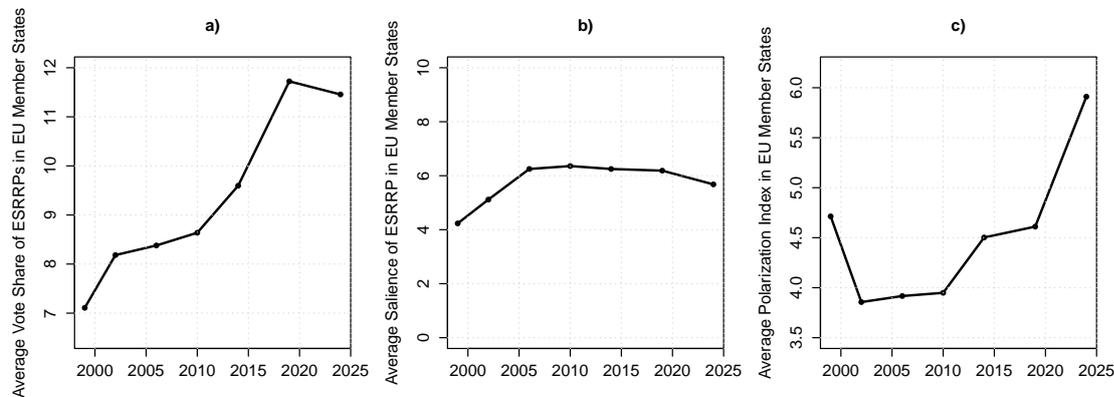
1.1 Why studying citizen and party dynamics in times of politicization?

The European Union has experienced a period of 'ongoing irreversible politicization' (Zeitlin et al., 2019, p. 23), driven by the rise of Eurosceptic radical right parties, major integration steps, and multiple European crises (e.g. Filip, 2021; Hoeglinger, 2016a; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019; Hutter et al., 2016; Zeitlin et al., 2019). Despite strong region and crisis-specific variation, politicization has substantially increased since the early 2000s (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019). Figure 1.1 illustrates the *enduring* politicization over the past decades.¹ Since 1999 the average vote share of Eurosceptic radical right parties in EU member states has risen sharply (Panel a), accompanied by a growing salience these parties attach to European integration in the early 2000s and persistently high salience thereafter (Panel b). Politicization is also reflected in an increasing polarization on the issue of European integration within national party systems (Panel c). Together, these trends indicate that politicization is a central feature of contemporary European politics.

Such enduring politicization raises fundamental questions for both research and practice. From a scientific perspective, we know a lot about the main drivers of politicization, but far less about its consequences for, first, Europhile parties and citizens and, second, the structure of EU attitudes and their representation. This dissertation addresses these gaps by analyzing Europhile voter and party engagement and the differentiation of EU preferences. Studying these dynamics is essential for understanding the long-term implications of politicization on party competition, voter behavior, and representation.

¹The analyses of Figure 1.1 are based on data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trendfile (Jolly et al., 2022) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 (Rovny et al., 2025). Eurosceptic radical right parties are defined by having a value smaller than 4 on the Chapel Hill Expert survey eu_position item and belonging to the radical right party family. Salience is measured on a scale ranging from 0 (not important) to 10 (most important). The polarization index is based on the formula suggested by Dalton (2008) where 0 indicates that all parties have the same position and 10 that all parties are allocated between these two extremes.

Figure 1.1: Selected sources of politicization from 1999 - 2024 based on CHES data: a) Average vote shares of ESRRPs in EU member states; b) Average salience of European integration of ESRRPs in EU member states; c) Average polarization of party systems on European integration in EU member states



A further scientific contribution lies in advancing our understanding of how European integration is embedded within the broader structure of political conflict. The emergence of a new cultural conflict line, often described as Green/ Alternative/ Libertarian vs. Traditional/ Authoritarian/ Nationalist (GALTAN) (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), has reshaped party and voter dynamics across Europe. By analyzing how both general support for European integration and preferences for different types of integration relate to this conflict line, this dissertation sheds light on which actors are most likely to politicize them and how EU positions are bundled with other issues. This perspective suggests that pro-European orientations may increasingly align with cultural liberalism and cosmopolitanism, while opposition to integration is linked to conservatism and authoritarianism. Understanding this alignment is crucial, as it determines not only which parties take ownership of European issues but also how pro- and anti-European coalitions may look in the future. By this, the dissertation also contributes to broader debates on cleavage evolution, party system restructuring, and the transformation of political competition in contemporary Europe.

From a political perspective, the way enduring politicization affects public opinion and party strategies can have direct implications on the EU's capacity to act and, consequently, on the future trajectory of European integration. Understanding the dynamics of citizens' and parties' support for and opposition to integration is essential for assessing the potential to find European solutions during transnational crises, such as the climate crisis or the war in Ukraine. Public support is a central condition for governments' willingness to commit to collective solutions. Also parties' readiness to sharpen their pro-European profile depends on whether such positions can be mobilized among

their potential voters. At the same time, pro-European counter-mobilization has also the potential to intensify polarization. An increasing intertwining of European integration with the new cultural conflict line risks narrowing pro-European coalitions to progressive electorates, potentially alienating more traditional citizens who are not inherently opposed to integration. Finally, if citizens' differentiated preferences are not reflected in party competition, this can create representation gaps that could undermine the EU's legitimacy and lead to democratic dissatisfaction.

1.2 Theoretical background: the stepwise process of European integration and the dynamics of politicization

From its origins, European integration was intended to be a stepwise process. Emerging from the devastation of World War II, European integration was aimed to secure lasting peace through economic cooperation and mutual dependence among former enemies. The Treaty of Rome set the objective of creating 'an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe' ("The Treaty of Rome", 1957). This founding vision highlighted the aim of steadily building a more unified Europe. Since then, the integration project has expanded both in depth and scope. Geographically, the EU has enlarged to 27 member states, while institutionally it has broadened its competences far beyond its initial focus. The early period concentrated mainly on economic integration, evolving from a coal and steel community to a common market and, later, a monetary union. Moreover, over time, the EU has expanded its competences from the economic and agricultural domain to other policy areas traditionally tied to the national level. Nowadays, the EU holds competences in a broad range of policy areas such as asylum and immigration, justice, or foreign and security policy (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014; Treib, 2021). The EU's institutional powers have also grown, with the European Parliament acquiring stronger legislative powers and qualified majority voting becoming more prevalent in the Council (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014). As a result, the European project has shifted from a narrowly economic initiative to one that increasingly encompasses cultural issues and exerts direct influence on the politics of its member states.²

From a theoretical standpoint, scholars have explained European integration through different lenses. Neofunctionalism emphasizes the role of supranational institutions and transnational actors and regards integration as self-reinforcing, path-dependent process (e.g. Haas, 1958; Lindberg, 1970; Schmitter, 1969). Neofunctionalists identify a series of mutually reinforcing processes. Integration in one sector creates functional and

²In this dissertation, the term 'cultural issue' refers to aspects of European integration that concern identity, belonging, and values, as well as questions of authority and sovereignty, and thus encompasses both cultural and political integration.

political spillovers that generate pressures for further integration in adjacent fields. Integration in one policy area thus fosters integration in other ones, either by creating new opportunities for cooperation or by producing unforeseen tensions that can only be resolved through additional integration. The implementation of these policies increasingly relies on non-state actors and, although public opinion is not the central focus of neofunctionalism, it anticipates a gradual shift in citizens' attachments toward supranational institutions (Haas, 1958; Schmitter, 1969). Taken together, these dynamics foster a deeper exploitation of mostly economic benefits and, more generally, interdependence among member states. However, crises may retard integration, but path dependence ensures that earlier steps narrow the range of future options and push further integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2019). Politicization, if anticipated, was not perceived as a threat but as a mobilizing force capable of engaging mass publics in a way that support further integration (Kuhn, 2019; Schmitter, 2009).

From an intergovernmentalist perspective, European integration is the result of national governments seeking for mutually beneficial bargains (e.g. Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1998). Whereas neofunctionalists focused more on day-to-day policymaking, intergovernmentalists concentrated on major treaty negotiations (Peterson, 2001). Contrary to neofunctionalism, the central actors are national governments, not transnational actors, and integration is a functional solution to cooperation problems and not a self-reinforcing, path-dependent process. Nation states delegate authority only to the extent necessary to find their national interests fulfilled. Thus, the typical outcome are lowest common denominator solutions (Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1998). Public opinion is not a central aspect of neither classic (Hoffmann, 1966) nor liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 1998). If politicization occurs, it was not expected to mobilize mass public opinion, but to take place at the elite-level with some nation states turning to nationalist positions, as integration deepens (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

Besides their disagreements, both approaches attribute integration to the mismatch between efficiency and the existing distribution of authority. They also share that they regard preferences as economic with interest groups playing an important role in distributional bargaining. Neofunctionalism expects interest groups to operate at the national and supranational level. Economic integration is expected to take place in areas that face minimal opposition, which could potentially transform nation states in a European direction. Liberal intergovernmentalism traces national governments' integration preferences to the distribution of economic gains for nation states or interest groups operating at the national level (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

1.2.1 From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus

Both of these classic integration theories largely focus on elite control over integration with limited public involvement (Kuhn, 2019). They reflect integration in its early decades, where European integration was an elite driven project supported by a ‘permissive consensus’ (Lindberg, 1970), a broad but passive public backing that allowed leaders to pursue integration without major public opposition. This permissive consensus was the basis for economic and institutional integration in the postwar period. As long as integration stayed focused on technocratic, economic aspects, citizens paid little attention and largely trusted national elites to manage European politics (Gabel, 1998).

However, as integration has gradually expanded into areas that touch more on cultural aspects, this permissive consensus has eroded. What has emerged instead is a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), in which further integration is increasingly contested. Since the 1990s, contestation of Europe deepened as market integration advanced toward a monetary union and a political union came on the agenda (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009). In their postfunctionalist theory of integration, Hooghe and Marks (2009) argue that politicization is the key mechanism responsible for the increasing contestation of Europe, in which national identities are mobilized. Three interrelated developments have contributed to the mobilization of identity politics within the EU: first, the shift from a largely technocratic and isolated process into mass politics, where identity-based considerations became more important than purely rational, interest-driven calculations; second, the expansion of European integration into policy areas tied to core state powers, raising questions of national sovereignty and solidarity; third, the unequal and socially stratified engagement of citizens in transnational exchanges and exposure to European socialization (Kuhn, 2019). Contrary to the efficiency-seeking logic of economic actors highlighted by neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, postfunctionalism sees European integration as a conflictual process which has its origins in incompatible belief systems. Thus, the range of plausible outcomes of politicization does not only include punctuated reform or status quo, but also disintegration. However, if citizens’ preferences and identities change, they could alter the constraining consequences of politicization (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, 2019). Even though postfunctionalism shares with intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism that integration is activated by a mismatch between efficiency and the existing authoritative structure, it rejects the idea that integration necessarily follows these functional pressures. Instead, integration is shaped by political conflict rooted in identity, rather than by functional efficiency or material distribution (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

Politicization can manifest in three different settings: institutions, decision-making processes, and issues (De Wilde, 2011). This dissertation focuses on the politicization of the latter. Politicization can be defined as the widening of the extent of conflict within the political system, unfolding along three dimensions: issue salience, actor expansion, and actor polarization (e.g. De Wilde, 2011; De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Hutter & Grande, 2014; Schattschneider, 1960). Issue salience refers to the visibility of a topic in public debates. Only issues that are frequently raised by political actors can be politicized, since topics absent from the public sphere can hardly be politicized at all (Green-Pedersen, 2012; Hutter & Grande, 2014). Actor expansion captures the extent to which additional political actors become engaged with an issue. Expansion can occur across arenas, e.g. an increasing relevance of civil society actors in public discourse (e.g. Della Porta & Caiani, 2009) or within a given arena. In the electoral arena, where political parties compete for votes, expansion means that not only governing parties but also opposition parties actively address European integration (Hutter & Grande, 2014). The national electoral arena remains the most relevant space for politicizing European integration (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Kriesi et al., 2012), which is why this dissertation focuses on this level. Polarization denotes the extent to which political actors adopt diverging positions, thereby creating opposing camps. A broad and salient public debate does not necessarily reach its full politicizing potential unless it is accompanied by intense conflict among actors with clearly differing views (De Wilde, 2011; Hoeglinger, 2016b; Hutter & Grande, 2014).

Politicization is not limited to the party level but also extends to the public, a crucial addition to the neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist perspective. De Wilde (2011) highlights the role of ‘public resonance’, understood as the participation of the public in the debate (Trenz & Eder, 2004). Such participation can be direct, through elections or referenda, or indirect, e.g. via opinion polls, letters to newspapers, or online forums. If a conflict only takes place in an intergovernmental bargaining process or technocratic debate, it is not a politicized issue until it finds resonance in the public sphere (De Wilde, 2011). This perspective underscores the need to examine politicization on both the party and the citizen level.

1.2.2 Sources of politicization

The literature identifies several sources that drive the politicization of European integration. A first set of explanations points to historical events and critical junctures. Major integration steps, such as the creation of the single market, the introduction of the euro, decisions on EU enlargement, or national debates over EU membership, serve as focal points around which political conflict crystallizes (Grande & Hutter, 2016; Hutter &

Grande, 2014). Recent studies emphasize that also transnational crises, such as the Eurozone Crisis, the Migration Crisis, the Brexit referendum, the Covid-19 pandemic, or Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have contributed to the politicization of European integration by affecting public opinion and party positions, as well as amplifying the visibility of EU decision-making and its limitations (e.g. Eck & Michel, 2025; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019; Kriesi & Grande, 2016; Schimmelfennig, 2024; Unan & Klüver, 2024; Zeitlin et al., 2019).

A second source of politicization stresses the changing character of European integration from an economic to a cultural project (e.g. Hutter & Grande, 2014). As Hooghe and Marks (2009) argue, the shift from economic to identity related or cultural integration, is a decisive factor to explain the shift from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus (Hutter & Grande, 2014). In contrast to event-related or crisis-driven explanations of politicization, the cultural change perspective emphasizes a gradual reconfiguration of political conflict over time, whereby European integration becomes part of a deeper divide opposing universalism, diversity, and cosmopolitanism to nationalism, traditionalism, and authoritarianism (e.g. De Vries, 2018; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kriesi et al., 2008). This line of reasoning resonates with cleavage theory (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967), which highlights how structural and value-based transformations reshape the lines of political conflict. European politics have long been structured by two dominant cleavages: the traditional conflict over the role of the state in the economy and the historical church–state divide (e.g. Bornschier, 2010; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997; Rovny & Polk, 2019; Thomassen, 2012). These cleavages continue to shape much of the political conflict on economic and moral issues. However, from the late 1960s onward, new social movements introduced new value-oriented issues, such as environmental protection, gender equality, peace, and immigration (e.g. Ford & Jennings, 2020; Inglehart, 1990). Seminal works demonstrate that parties increasingly align their positions on these new cultural issues with those on the traditional cultural divide (e.g. Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006). Postfunctionalism builds on this transformation, arguing that European integration reinforces this new cultural, GALTAN dimension (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

As European integration has expanded to non-economic aspects, it has become increasingly contested by Eurosceptic nationalist, TAN parties (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), which portray themselves as defenders of the nation state and embedding opposition to integration within a wider nationalist and identity-based ideology (De Wilde, 2025; Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020). Thus, politicization is not merely the result of institutional milestones, crisis situations, and long-term cultural transformations, but also of political actors and their mobilization strategies. Radical right parties stand out as the actors most likely to drive politicization (e.g. Filip, 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter &

Grande, 2014). They primarily reject European integration in cultural terms, as a threat to identity and national sovereignty, whereas Eurosceptic radical left parties focus more on economic concerns, such as the EU's neoliberal orientation and its consequences for national welfare states (Braun et al., 2019; Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Radical left Euroscepticism typically manifests as softer opposition, targeting specific EU policies rather than the integration project as a whole. By contrast, radical right parties are better described as hard Eurosceptics, since they fundamentally reject the EU itself (Treib, 2014). This distinction suggests that politicization through radical right parties is likely to be more forceful, as they criticize European integration in a much more extensive and fundamental way. Their impact is further amplified by their growing electoral success and relevance across Europe (Filip, 2021; Treib, 2021), and their tendency to radicalize in response to successive European crises (Braun et al., 2019).

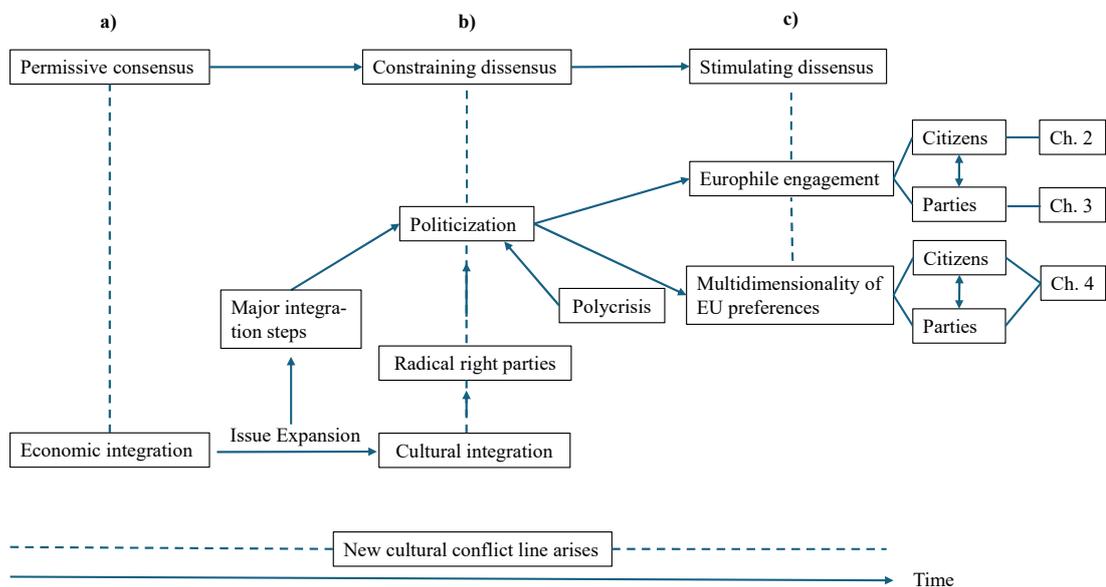
Postfunctionalism therefore expects the link between European integration and the new cultural conflict line to be particularly strong among parties on the TAN side, while being weaker for GAL-parties. Although green parties can consider European integration as a vehicle for promoting progressive and multicultural values, particularly left GAL parties face problems to reconcile their cultural policy agenda with market liberalism. The connection of European integration with new cultural issues, also poses a challenge for mainstream parties primarily competing on economic issues, which have long tried to depoliticize European integration, as it raises issues that cross-cut the economic left-right dimension (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

Although there is broad agreement that politicization has taken place since the mid-1980s/early 1990s (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kriesi, 2009; Schmitter, 2009), its scope and intensity remain contested. Since party competition mainly takes place in the national context, this arena is still the primary place, in which the politicization of European integration unfolds (Kriesi, 2016). The national dynamics of the politicization of Eurosceptic parties and the (former) depoliticization of Europhile mainstream parties (Börzel & Risse, 2018; Green-Pedersen, 2019) foster an intermittent pattern of politicization, varying over time and national contexts (Grande & Kriesi, 2016; Kriesi, 2016). Moreover, the recent crisis period has highlighted that patterns of politicization are embedded in regional conflict structures, shaped both by region-specific political legacies and by the distinct ways crises were experienced (Kriesi, 2016).

1.3 Central idea: from constraining to stimulating dissensus

The main argument of this dissertation is that politicization, captured by the shift from a permissive consensus to a constraining dissensus (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), has evolved into a form of *stimulating* dissensus (see Figure 1.2). As outlined above, European integration has become politicized as it expanded to cultural domains, but also by historical milestones, successive crises, and the mobilization strategies of radical right parties. What this dissertation focuses on is not *initial* politicization, but the consequences of *enduring* politicization. Against this backdrop, stimulating dissensus describes the intensification and diversification of contestation of European integration in response to different sources of politicization, involving a broader range of actors and positions. It thus represents a more full-fledged form of politicization, which is two-sided and issue-specific. Unlike in earlier phases, contestation is then not only driven by Eurosceptic actors but also by pro-European ones, and it no longer concerns merely the general idea of integration but also specific aspects of it. This trajectory is assumed to unfold alongside the new cultural conflict line. Accordingly, this chapter develops a theoretical argument regarding, first, how Europhile parties and citizens behave in politicized environments and, second, how preferences toward specific aspects of European integration are structured and embedded in the context of enduring politicization.

Figure 1.2: Overview theoretical background and argument



1.3.1 Politicization and Europhile parties and citizens

I argue that the persistent politicization of European integration triggers counter-reactions among pro-European parties and citizens.³ In other words, I expect that the pro-European camp has been ‘awakened’ as their vision of Europe has become increasingly contested. This stands in contrast to earlier characterizations of the EU as a second-order issue (Reif & Schmitt, 1980), peripheral to mainstream political competition, and detached from the voters’ concerns. Instead, enduring politicization should imply that European integration becomes a relevant issue for not only the Eurosceptic but also the pro-European side. This connects to the argument made by Statham and Trenz (2015) that research should go beyond the pessimistic normative view on the consequences of politicization primarily focusing on the rise of radical right parties, instead broadening the perspective to the full range of actors, including anti- and pro-European ones.

There is indeed growing evidence of such a pro-European activation. Europhile parties increasingly pursue adversarial strategies, adopting more explicit pro-European positions and increasing the salience they attach to European integration (e.g. Adam et al., 2017; Carrieri, 2021). At the citizen level, studies document renewed public EU support (Jones et al., 2021) and a notably high degree of solidarity among Europeans in recent years (Ferrera & Burelli, 2019; Gerhards et al., 2019), as well as rising fears of disintegration triggered by Brexit (De Vries, 2018; Malet & Walter, 2024). Citizens favoring EU integration differ systematically from those opposing the EU, underscoring the importance of analyzing the pro-European camp separately (Reinl & Braun, 2023). Politicization during the multiple crises period has also prompted Europhile voters to place greater weight on EU issues in their voting decisions (Carrieri, 2023). Additional evidence shows that Europhile parties reinforced their support for integration in response to the Brexit referendum (Hunter, 2024), and that the rise of Eurosceptic challengers can prompt Europhile parties to move toward more supportive stances (Adendorf & Gross, 2024; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2021).

The evidence of such a pro-European backlash highlights that politicization not only constrains integration, as postfunctionalism suggests, but can also stimulate supportive dynamics, which is more in line with neofunctionalist expectations. This tension becomes particularly visible in the recent crisis period, illustrating how the neofunctionalist notion of ‘integration through crises’ has been both confirmed and challenged. On the one hand, the EU proved surprising resilient, with several crises fostering deeper integration (Ferrara & Kriesi, 2022). On the other hand, the period was characterized

³In this dissertation, I use the term pro-European in a narrow sense, referring specifically to favorable positions toward the European Union, rather than toward Europe as a broader geographical or cultural concept. I use the term pro-European and Europhile interchangeably.

by growing political fragmentation and an increasing success of radical right parties (Zeitlin et al., 2019), in line with postfunctionalist expectations of the disintegrative effects of politicization.

While postfunctionalism anticipates actor expansion and polarization, it primarily conceptualizes this process as driven by Eurosceptic mobilization on the TAN side, while being more vague regarding the consequences for the pro-European camp: ‘The association between gal/tan attitudes and attitudes towards European integration is weaker on the gal side.’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, p. 17). This dissertation builds on and extends this postfunctionalist perspective by theorizing the long-term consequences of enduring politicization, in which both pro- and anti-Europeans are expected to be mobilized along the new cultural conflict line. In this view, actor expansion is not understood narrowly as the entry of opposition, mostly radical right TAN parties into the arena of EU contestation (e.g. Hutter & Grande, 2014). Rather, it refers to a broader understanding in which also Europhile actors become more active and visible in promoting pro-European positions. The same logic applies to actor polarization. In most postfunctionalist accounts, polarization is characterized by the promotion of Eurosceptic positions by radical right, and to some extent radical left parties, with the remaining party spectrum often implicitly treated as Europhile. I extend this notion by arguing that enduring politicization fosters polarization in both directions: not only through intensified Euroscepticism but also through more explicit pro-European stances. From this perspective, enduring politicization may not only constrain integration but also generate new opportunities by potentially stimulating more pronounced pro-Europeanism among Europhiles. This argument also contributes to the broader debate on the limited explanatory power of single integration theories and the need to integrate insights from neofunctionalism, postfunctionalism, and other approaches in order to understand European integration in recent times (e.g. Ferrara & Kriesi, 2022; Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018; Hooghe & Marks, 2019; Jones et al., 2021; Schimmelfennig, 2018).

1.3.2 Politicization and the differentiation of integration preferences

The idea of a stimulating dissensus not only captures the mobilizing effect on the pro-European camp but also implies a growing differentiation of attitudes toward European integration. As politicization persists, European issues become more salient, a broader range of parties actively compete on them, and positions polarize. Enhanced Europhile party engagement, as discussed in the previous section, is expected to also contribute to a more pluralized contestation, moving beyond earlier patterns of depoliticization by mainstream parties and one-sided politicization driven by radical right parties. In such an environment, EU issues are debated more intensely and citizens are exposed to com-

peting frames that reflect distinct visions of the EU's future.

One intuitive consequence from such a persistent politicization is that preferences crystallize in more fine-grained ways. At the citizen level, growing knowledge about the EU and an increasing tendency to base voting decisions on European rather than second-order cues such as satisfaction with domestic governments (Goldberg et al., 2021; Hobolt, 2007) can form the basis for attitude differentiation, where support for one dimension of integration no longer necessarily implies support for others (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022; Van den Hoogen et al., 2022). For instance, citizens may endorse stronger EU authority over border control while opposing financial solidarity or further enlargement. This pattern reflects the EU's experimental and stepwise polity building process: As integration has expanded incrementally into areas tied to sovereignty, solidarity, and identity, contestation has become more segmented and multidimensional (Ferrera, 2023; Kriesi et al., 2021).

The growing success of radical right parties also contributes to this development of differentiation, by undermining the EU's capacity to find unified positions on issues such as immigration, climate change, or responses to Russia (Hobolt et al., 2025). Moreover, as the EU nowadays regulates a wide range of policies (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014), parties face divergent incentives to advocate specific forms of integration. For example, left-leaning parties tend to support deeper social and cultural integration, while right-leaning parties often favor economic integration but oppose further cultural or political unification (Braun et al., 2019; Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019). Even radical right parties, though generally Eurosceptic, have increasingly framed their nationalist agendas through a European lens (Beaudonnet & Hoyo Prohuber, 2024), trying to use the EU as an arena to advance their preferred policies, such as restrictive immigration regulations, rather than rejecting it outright. This exemplifies how the expansion of integration into a broad range of policy areas has blurred the boundary between national and European politics (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Marks et al., 2002). As a result, European integration becomes more contested and complex, pushing debates away from *how much* integration toward competing visions of *what kind* of integration (Ferrera, 2017; Pellegata & Visconti, 2022). Enduring politicization is therefore expected to not only foster pro-European engagement but also to stimulate a more nuanced and differentiated debate about further integration at the party and citizen level.

1.4 Unknowns and research questions

As already stated in the introduction, this dissertation is guided by the following overarching research question:

How is contestation over European integration transformed in the context of enduring politicization?

While existing research provided valuable insights into the drivers of politicization (e.g. Grande & Hutter, 2016; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019; Hutter et al., 2016), we know comparatively little about its long-term consequences for Europhile actors and the structure of EU preferences. The three studies of this dissertation address these gaps from complementary angles (see Figure 1.2). Studies 1 and 2 focus on the activation of the pro-European camp, examining the salience of European integration among pro-European voters (Study 1) and engagement of Europhile parties with European issues (Study 2). Study 3 analyzes the structure of citizens' and parties' EU preferences in a context of enduring politicization. This dissertation also contributes to research on the new cultural conflict line. Rather than concentrating primarily on the TAN-side of this divide and its relation to opposition toward European integration (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009), it explores how the GAL-side is linked to support for integration (Study 2). Moreover, it extends existing research that connects *general* EU support to the new cultural conflict line (e.g. Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020) by exploring how *specific* aspects of integration relate to this divide (Study 3). In the following, I discuss in more detail the specific gaps addressed by each study.

1.4.1 Study 1

Study 1 focuses on how important European integration is for pro-European voters in their voting decisions. By this, it connects to the EU issue voting literature (e.g. De Vries, 2007; De Vries & Tillman, 2010) and builds on existing literature explicitly focusing on pro-European voters (e.g. Carrieri, 2023; Carrieri et al., 2023, 2025). The idea of EU issue voting relies on spatial voting (Downs, 1957), using the distance of voters' and parties' positions on European integration to predict vote choice. The resulting spatial coefficients measure electoral salience (Ansolabehere & Puy, 2018), capturing the relative importance voters assign to European integration in their voting decisions. Existing research shows that Europhile parties have increasingly benefited from mobilizing on European integration in recent years (Carrieri, 2023; Carrieri et al., 2023), with these gains being particularly strong the more pronounced they promote their pro-Europeanism (Carrieri et al., 2025).

Beyond single points in time

Study 1 contributes to this literature by examining Europhile issue voting from 2008 to 2019, thereby significantly extending the time period covered by existing studies. This longer perspective makes it possible to track the development of EU issue voting across a period marked by considerable politicization through multiple crises, the growing success of radical right parties, and increasing polarization of party positions on European integration (see Figure 1.1).

Beyond isolated effects

Moreover, this study uses reasonable reference points to evaluate the *extent* of Europhile issue voting. First, I explicitly consider the multidimensional character of European policy spaces (e.g. De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; Hellwig, 2014). Voters are not only confronted with European integration in isolation but with multiple other issues, ranging from economic policies to immigration or environmental protection. Consequently, electoral behavior takes place within multidimensional policy spaces, where European integration is one of several factors that can shape voting decisions. Second, I examine whether pro-European voters differ from Eurosceptic and more neutral voters in the extent to which they take European integration into account when casting their ballots. This comparison serves as an important benchmark: It allows to assess whether pro-European issue voting reflects a broader trend in which all voters are becoming more responsive to European issues or whether pro-Europeans are uniquely stimulated in a period of enduring politicization. In addition, it investigates whether this effect is context-dependent, specifically whether pro-European voters become more responsive in politicized environments, i.e. in cases with successful Eurosceptic radical right parties. Against this background, the study poses the following research question:

RQ 1: How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization?

1.4.2 Study 2

Study 2 shifts the focus from the demand to the supply side and investigates how Europhile parties position themselves on European integration and adjust the salience of the issue over time and in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. Even though there is plenty of research focusing on Europhile parties' strategies, findings are far from conclusive. Some studies suggest that Europhile parties have increasingly downplayed integration (e.g. Malet & Thiebaut, 2024; Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2015), while others find evidence of parties actively highlighting European issues (e.g. Adam et al., 2017; Carrieri, 2021). Similarly, research on positional strategies

points in different directions: Some find ignorance strategies (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2016) or contagion effects from Eurosceptic challengers (e.g Braun et al., 2019; Filip, 2021; Meijers, 2017), whereas others support the idea of a pro-European backlash, showing that Europhile parties have adopted stronger EU supportive stances (e.g Adendorf & Gross, 2024; Carrieri, 2021; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2021). Much of this literature shares the implicit assumption that Europhile parties form a homogeneous bloc, defined primarily by the absence of Euroscepticism, even though they are found across all party families apart from the radical right (Jolly et al., 2022).

Beyond homogeneous effects

This study contributes to resolving these seemingly contradictory findings by differentiating between different types of Europhile parties. Rather than treating them as a homogeneous bloc, I distinguish between Europhile parties that adopt progressive stances on the new cultural conflict line (Europhile GAL parties) and Europhile parties that hold more traditional positions on cultural questions (Europhile TAN parties), by this considering the growing structuring role of the new cultural conflict line in European party competition (Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020). This distinction is crucial because the incentives for engaging with European integration should differ across these party types. While Europhile GAL parties can integrate a more pronounced pro-Europeanism into their broader progressive cultural agenda, Europhile TAN parties face stronger constraints due to their conservative positions on cultural issues and their spatial proximity to radical right competitors. This study focuses on the stimulating effect of enduring politicization on different types of Europhile parties, considering temporal dynamics and direct responses to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. Accordingly, it addresses the following research question:

RQ 2: How do different types of Europhile parties adjust their strategies over time and in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties?

1.4.3 Study 3

Study 3 focuses on the multidimensionality of EU preferences and their relation to national conflict structures in a context of enduring politicization. It builds on the argument that citizens and parties develop distinct standpoints on specific aspects of European integration, as politicization endures and European issues gain prominence in the public debate.

Beyond public opinion

While it is well established that citizens' views on European integration are not captured by a single 'more vs. less' divide (Baute et al., 2018; Boomgaarden et al., 2011; De Vreese et al., 2019; Goldberg et al., 2021; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022), far less is known about whether parties' standpoints are structured in a similar multidimensional way and to what extent parties manage to represent citizens' fine-grained preferences. This study therefore moves beyond the citizen level and analyzes the structure of preferences on both sides as well as their relationship to one another.

Beyond the European level

Moreover, this study goes beyond a European level focus by situating European issues within national preference structures. The deepening of European integration has blurred the line between national and European politics, as authority has gradually shifted from national governments to the EU across a wide range of policy areas. This connects to the Europeanization literature, describing the impact of European structures created through integration on domestic politics (e.g. Caramani, 2015; Jordan et al., 2004; Ladrech, 2014). Processes of Europeanization imply that European and national politics are no longer separate spheres, but interact continuously (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014; Ladrech, 2002; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002; Risse et al., 2001; Wilson & Hobolt, 2015). This highlights the necessity to analyze them in relation to each other rather than in isolation. While there is evidence that general support for European integration has become increasingly intertwined with the new cultural conflict line (e.g. Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020), little is known how specific aspects of European integration relate to citizens' and parties' positions on cultural issues within their domestic contexts. Specifically, the study addresses the following three interrelated research questions:

RQ 3a: How do citizens and parties structure their attitudes toward different aspects of European integration?

RQ 3b: How do these attitudes relate to preferences structures on national issues?

RQ 3c: To what extent do parties represent citizens' multidimensional preferences?

1.5 Summaries of the three studies

The three studies focus on the two-key implications of the stimulating dissensus argument: the activation of the pro-European camp and the differentiation of European preferences. The data strategy is guided by the aim of achieving broad temporal and geographical coverage while enabling analyses for both parties and citizens. Studies 1 and 2 focus on pro-European engagement under conditions of politicization, therefore relying on data sources that allow observation over an extended time period and across

a wide range of EU member states. Study 1 thus combines cross-sectional surveys - the European Social Survey (ESS) and the Voter Studies from the European Election Studies (EES) - with party positions from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). These data provide consistent indicators of support for European integration alongside issue positions on the economy, the environment, and immigration over time, something that long-term citizen panel data cannot offer for a wide range of EU member states.

Study 2 relies on two widely used data sources for party positions and salience which cover long time periods, the CHES and the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). The CHES is considered to be a data source which yield valid and reliable estimates of party positions (Hooghe et al., 2010; Ray, 2007), but has limited possibilities to assess the relative salience parties attach to specific issues. Contrary, the CMP is not originally designed to derive positions on specific issues (Dinas & Gemenis, 2010), may be less precise for smaller parties (Marks et al., 2007), and focuses more on parties' strategic communication efforts (Ecker et al., 2022). Still, it is a strong source for measuring issue emphasis and therefore offers an important complementary perspective on party behavior and issue prioritization.

Study 3 pursues a different objective, examining the multidimensional structure and ideological embedding of EU preferences among both citizens and parties. A long-term design would be desirable but is not feasible due to the lack of comparable data across time. The study draws on highly detailed datasets collected in 2024 that uniquely provide directly comparable measures for parties and citizens on a wide range of specific aspects of European integration and domestic issues. This allows to analyze potential mismatches of party and citizen preferences that other datasets cannot provide. The 2024 data capture a moment in which politicization has become an integral part of European politics, providing a valuable snapshot within a context of enduring politicization, even if temporal dynamics cannot be observed. The party dataset, based on expert evaluations from the euandi project, is comparable in design and reliability to established measures of party positions such as CHES (Ferreira da Silva et al., 2023).

1.5.1 Study 1

Objective:

This study examines the extent to which pro-European voters consider European integration in their voting decisions between 2008 and 2019. This period was marked by the politicization of European integration, driven by successive crises and by increasingly successful Eurosceptic radical right parties. Against this backdrop, the study assesses the relevance of pro-European issue voting in a context of enduring politicization.

Method:

The study uses (multilevel) conditional logit models to examine the importance of European integration for pro-European voters. It estimates electoral salience based on party-voter proximity using spatial vote models with four issue dimensions - European integration, the economy, immigration, and the environment - across a wide range of EU member states.

Result:

The analysis shows that voters increasingly consider European integration in their voting decisions over time, particularly after the Brexit referendum. Even though European integration remains most salient for Eurosceptic voters, pro-European voters also increasingly consider it in their vote calculus, especially in countries with successful Eurosceptic radical right parties. However, the overall level of salience among Europhile voters remains modest and varies by country.

Conclusion:

These findings suggest that politicization not only constrains European integration but also stimulates engagement among its supporters. Although Europhile voters remain less engaged than Eurosceptic ones, the trend toward greater engagement can open new opportunities for Europhile parties to mobilize their electorates on European issues.

1.5.2 Study 2**Objective:**

This study investigates how different types of Europhile parties adapt their issue positions and emphasis on European integration in response to the politicization of the issue. It argues that Europhile parties' strategies differ systematically: Europhile GAL parties are expected to reinforce their pro-Europeanism, while Europhile TAN parties may quietly moderate their support to avoid reputational costs. The study looks at Europhile parties responses to two sources of politicization: first, the expansion of European integration to cultural issues over time, second the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties (ESRRPs).

Method:

Using CHES data from 1999 to 2024, the study estimates fixed-effects panel regressions for Europhile parties in all EU member states, modeling, first, parties' EU positions and, second, EU salience as dependent variables. Key predictors are a linear time trend and ESRRP vote share, each interacted with a Europhile party's GALTAN placement. Ro-

business checks include non-parametric generalized additive models and replications with CMP data.

Result:

Over time, Europhile GAL parties have become significantly more pro-European, while Europhile TAN parties tend to become less pro-European. All Europhile parties have decreased salience over time, though this decline is more pronounced for Europhile TAN parties. There is only limited evidence that either party type changes positions or salience in direct response to the success of ESRRPs.

Conclusion:

Europhile parties' strategies are less driven by contagion from ESRRPs, but more by a long-term restructuring of party competition on European integration along the new cultural divide. Europhile GAL parties practice a form of 'silent pro-Europeanism' by strengthening their support without raising the salience. Europhile TAN parties pursue a strategy of 'silent critical Europeanism' by subtly distancing themselves while avoiding open Euroscepticism. These patterns underscore the growing association between pro-Europeanism and cultural progressivism, which is particularly evident in North-Western Europe.

1.5.3 Study 3

Objective:

This study examines whether the EU's incremental, experimental polity building process is reflected in multidimensional EU standpoints. It analyzes, first, how citizens' and parties' preferences regarding European integration are structured, second, how they are embedded in national economic, cultural, and ideological conflict structures, and, third, whether parties represent citizen preferences.

Method:

The study uses exploratory factor analysis with oblimin rotation to uncover underlying preference structures in North-Western, Southern, and Central-Eastern EU member states in 2024. Ideological embedding is visualized with locally estimated scatterplot smoothing (LOESS).

Result:

Overall, parties and citizens structure their EU preferences along three dimensions: (i) competence expansion to the EU level (binding), (ii) external borders/ foreign, security, defense (bounding), and (iii) European solidarity (bonding). Binding and most bound-

ing aspects align with national cultural issues, financial solidarity is more economically embedded. However, representation gaps exist. Right-leaning citizens favor a common European foreign, security, and defense policy, while right-leaning parties oppose European efforts in this area. Left-wing parties are more critical towards the EU in general, and support for Ukraine in particular, as compared to ideologically similar voters. Moreover, the results suggest that the well-known U-curve with ideological extreme actors being more Eurosceptic is outdated for several specific aspects of European integration.

Conclusion:

The study reveals parties' and citizens' multidimensional EU preferences and a close intertwining of those with national conflict structures. There is evidence that preferences toward specific aspects of European integration mostly unfold along the new cultural divide, underscoring its prominence in structuring contemporary European politics.

1.6 Discussion

1.6.1 Summary of the findings and their implications

The three studies of this dissertation highlight that politicization not only constrains European integration but has also the potential to stimulate new forms of contestation. This supports the notion of a stimulating dissensus, defined as a more full-fledged politicization as in earlier phases, which is two-sided and issue-specific. This is largely consistent with the core expectations of postfunctionalism, as European integration has become a contentious issue and part of mass public opinion. Concretely, this is reflected in three developments: First, European integration increasingly matters for electoral choices, among both Eurosceptic and Europhile voters (Study 1). Second, there is an increasing polarization of party positions regarding European integration along the new cultural conflict line, with particularly Europhile GAL parties have become more pro-European over time (Study 2). This complements the finding from Study 1, suggesting a growing congruence between party strategies and voters' concerns on the Europhile side. Finally, Study 3 extends the insights from Studies 1 and 2 by showing that citizens and parties hold nuanced and differentiated views on European issues, suggesting that they are neither indifferent nor uninformed. These findings represent a clear departure from early neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist expectations, that public opinion can be largely ignored because of their missing knowledge or interest (e.g. Haas, 1958).

Moreover, the findings underscore the central role of the new cultural conflict line in structuring contestation over European integration, as anticipated by postfunctionalism. Party competition on European integration increasingly unfolds along this cultural axis, linking pro-Europeanism to cosmopolitan and progressive values, and more scepti-

cal stances towards European integration with nationalist and traditionalist orientations (Study 2). Cultural aspects also play an important role in structuring more specific aspects of European integration. Competence transfer to the European level and European enlargement are clearly more culturally embedded at the party and citizen level (Study 3). Such an alignment with the new cultural conflict line implies that contestation over European integration is increasingly driven by actors located at the opposing ends of the GALTAN spectrum, who take ownership of European issues as part of their broader cultural policy agendas. Consequently, the new cultural conflict line is likely to play a lasting role in structuring party competition not only on domestic cultural issues, but also on European ones.

However, the findings of this dissertation also refine postfunctionalist expectations. While postfunctionalism convincingly explains the constraining consequences of politicization through Eurosceptic radical right parties and the mobilization of public Euroscepticism, the evidence from this dissertation also suggests that the implications of politicization may not be exclusively constraining in the long-term. As politicization endures, it can also stimulate Europhile citizens and parties by becoming increasingly engaged with European issues. Postfunctionalism defines actor expansion and polarization as central features of politicization, yet it primarily conceptualizes these dynamics for the Eurosceptic TAN side (see Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This dissertation extends this logic by demonstrating that similar processes occur on the pro-European side, manifesting in a growing salience of European integration for pro-European voters (Study 1) and the activation of Europhile parties within the GAL camp (Study 2). In this respect, the findings partially resonate with the neofunctionalist expectation that political and societal pressures can generate positive feedback for European integration (e.g Schmitter, 2009), though now under conditions of mass contestation rather than permissive consensus. The coexistence of stimulating and constraining effects underscores that politicization is not a linear process but a dynamic, reciprocal one, with the potential both to challenge and to support the European project. In this sense, politicization does not solely constrain integration, but rather reflects its transformation into a more full-fledged and multidimensional process.

Along these lines, stimulating dissensus does not imply an inevitable deepening of integration. It remains an open question whether the activation of pro-European actors ultimately fosters further integration or primarily leads to deeper conflict. The term ‘stimulating’ refers to the intensification and diversification of contestation, reflected in a broader range of actors engaging with European issues and the plurality of positions they promote. The consequences of this development depend on the balance and composition of the pro- and anti-European camps, particularly on whether pro-European

forces can build majorities strong enough to counter Eurosceptic pressures. Over time, shifts in public attitudes may also affect the strength of pro-European coalitions. As Hooghe and Marks (2009, p.22) note, '[t]he consequences of politicization would, of course, be transformed if the underlying preferences of citizens were to change. Identities change slowly, but they are far from fixed, and the way they constrain attitudes over European integration depends on party cues.' The findings of this dissertation suggest that pro-European voters increasingly care about European integration (Study 1) and they are potentially cued by pro-European parties ideologically rooted in cosmopolitan and progressive values (Study 2). However, at the same time citizens and parties articulate distinct and sometimes competing visions of European integration (Study 3), adding complexity to the task of adequately representing citizens' EU preferences. Moreover, if radical right parties gain more influence over EU policy-making, GAL parties may find fewer of their envisioned issues advanced at the European level, thus raising questions about whether the EU will continue to be perceived as culturally progressive project. Ultimately, enduring politicization leads to highly ambiguous consequences by introducing uncertainty about the future trajectory of European integration. Its direction increasingly depends on mobilization efforts of competing actors and strategic political decisions (Grande & Kriesi, 2016).

While politicization can deepen political conflict, the findings of this dissertation also resonate with arguments that politicization can have normatively positive effects by strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU (e.g. Börzel & Risse, 2009; Statham & Trezz, 2015). A more intense public discourse has an important democratizing function: It can foster the legitimacy of the integration process by involving broader parts of the civil society, making political decisions more visible, and fostering feedback on policy choices (Statham & Trezz, 2015). Moreover, recent research suggests that a certain degree of polarization can enhance citizens' support for democratic principles by feeling more democratically involved and represented (Gessler & Wunsch, 2025; Janssen & Turkenburg, 2025). These developments also question the mostly constraining consequences of politicization advanced by postfunctionalism. Taken together, the findings of this dissertation support the notion that no single integration theory can fully capture the complex dynamics of European integration. Instead, they are better understood as 'flexible bodies of thought' (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p. 1113).

Beyond these broader theoretical contributions and links to European integration theories, the individual studies also reveal important nuances. While the findings overall support the idea of a stimulating dissensus, they also underscore the importance of avoiding overgeneralization. Study 1 demonstrates the importance of meaningful reference points. Although pro-European voters increasingly take European integration

into account in their vote choices, this effect remains notably weaker than for Eurosceptic voters. Moreover, acknowledging the multidimensional nature of European policy spaces is essential: European integration coexists and competes with other political issues, meaning that EU salience should be assessed relative to meaningful reference points rather than in isolation. Study 2 underlines the need to differentiate between different types of Europhile parties and to consider both positional and salience strategies. While Europhile GAL parties clearly sharpen their pro-European stance in positional terms, the evidence for a corresponding rise in issue salience is limited, indicating that issue emphasis does not automatically follow from stronger support. Study 3 highlights the importance of moving beyond general support for European integration. Focusing on specific aspects of integration leads to a more encompassing understanding of the way European issues are contested. It also underscores the value of analyzing party and citizen levels separately to identify (in-)congruences, recognizing that the preference structure on one level does not automatically mirror that on the other.

Across all three studies, one consistent lesson emerges: Despite overarching patterns, considerable country- and region-specific variation persists. These differences illustrate that a stimulating dissensus manifests in diverse ways across Europe, reflecting distinct political cultures, party systems, and historical experiences. However, even if the intensity of politicization may continue to fluctuate by showing region-, country-, time-, and crisis-specific ups and downs, the results underscore the notion that politicization is ‘here to stay’ (Treib, 2021), as it has become a full-fledged feature of European politics.

1.6.2 Limitations and outlook

The findings of this dissertation should be interpreted in light of several limitations, which help to mark out the scope and boundaries of the results.

A first limitation concerns causal inference. While all three studies reveal important empirical patterns, most analyses, particularly in Studies 1 and 3, remain descriptive in nature. While Study 1 identifies pro-European voter engagement as an empirical reality, the data do not permit causal identification of the mechanisms driving it, such as Eurosceptic mobilization, Europhile party strategies, or effects of specific crises. This reflects an inherent trade-off: Examining a long time span and a broad set of countries provides valuable comparative insights into the overall scope of pro-European salience, but panel data that allows causal testing is, if at all, only available for very limited cases and periods. Similarly, Study 3 draws on very detailed data that allow to map the multidimensional structure of EU preferences, but cannot explain why citizens and parties organize their attitudes in particular ways or how the party and citizen structure interact

with each other. Future research should thus collect and employ panel data to disentangle the interplay between party strategies, citizen attitudes, and diverse sources of politicization over time. Relatedly, all three studies reveal considerable regional and country-specific variation in the patterns of engagement with European integration. Examining these differences more closely, would help to further improve our understanding of the long-term consequences of politicization across contexts.

A second limitation concerns the granularity of the available data. While Study 3 demonstrates the multidimensional nature of EU preferences, comparable indicators are lacking for the longer time spans analyzed in Studies 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the findings of Study 3 highlight the value of incorporating such multidimensional measures in future research, as this would provide a more nuanced understanding of how issue voting and party strategies evolve across specific aspects of integration over time.

Third, while this dissertation focuses on salience and polarization among parties and citizens, it pays less attention to the third component of politicization: actor expansion beyond the party level. Future research should therefore examine how social movements, civil society organizations, and the media contribute to amplifying or dampening a full-fledged politicization. For instance, despite rising public support for the EU in recent years (e.g. Jones et al., 2021; Malet & Walter, 2024) and increasing salience of European integration among Europhile voters (Rapp, 2025), the pro-European movement Pulse of Europe had only a brief momentum, and the pan-European party Volt has only achieved very limited electoral success. One promising direction lies in (social) media-based analyses. The mass media serve as crucial arena through which citizens encounter information about the EU. While media analyses have been widely used to study politicization in general (e.g. Hoeglinger, 2016a; Hutter et al., 2016), they have not been applied to examine pro-European mobilization. Understanding whether and how the growing relevance of European integration among pro-European citizens and parties is reflected in media discourse is crucial for assessing the depth, endurance, and visibility of a stimulating dissensus in the public sphere.

Fourth, while this dissertation documents growing engagement with European integration among pro-European voters and parties, as well as its multidimensional character, it does not focus on the consequences of these developments. Future research should therefore examine whether greater engagement with European issues is electorally rewarding for pro-European parties and to what extent representation gaps on specific aspects of integration affect voter satisfaction. It would also be valuable to investigate which parts of society favor specific types of integration and whether these visions are picked up by their preferred parties. Addressing these questions is essential for un-

derstanding whether and under what conditions parties are truly incentivized to engage more deeply with European integration and its various facets.

Fifth, more broadly, the politicization of European integration is part of a wider process that unbundles national boundaries and reconfigures the lines of political conflict (e.g. Kriesi et al., 2006). Extending the analysis to other issues along the new cultural conflict line, such as immigration or environmental policies, would allow a comparison of whether similar counter-mobilizations and differentiation processes emerge on these topics. This could reveal whether stimulating dissensus is a phenomenon uniquely attributed to the European integration process or a broader pattern of contemporary issue contestation.

Finally, tracking these dynamics over time remains essential. The EU is a moving object: Each new crisis, enlargement, policy initiative, or European Parliament election may shift how integration is debated and perceived. Monitoring how parties and citizens respond to future challenges will be crucial to evaluate whether the stimulating dissensus identified in this dissertation remains stable, deepens, or transforms once more. In sum, while the analyses presented here have limitations in scope and causal identification, they provide a foundation for understanding how contestation over European integration is reshaped in a context of enduring politicization. Future research, drawing on richer data, new arenas, and cross-issue comparisons, can further clarify whether stimulating dissensus represents a lasting phenomenon or merely another stage in the evolving European integration process.

References

- Adam, S., Antl-Wittenberg, E.-M., Eugster, B., Leidecker-Sandmann, M., Maier, M., & Schmidt, F. (2017). Strategies of pro-European parties in the face of a Eurosceptic challenge. *European Union Politics*, 18(2), 260–282.
- Adendorf, A., & Gross, M. (2024). Under pressure? How regional dominant parties shift their EU positions when challenged by Euroskeptical parties. *Journal of European Integration*, 1–25.
- Ansolabehere, S., & Puy, S. (2018). Measuring issue-salience in voters' preferences. *Electoral Studies*, 51, 103–114.
- Baute, S., Meuleman, B., Abts, K., & Swyngedouw, M. (2018). Measuring attitudes towards Social Europe: A multidimensional approach. *Social Indicators Research*, 137(1), 353–378.
- Beaudonnet, L., & Hoyo Prohuber, H. (2024). Being European, the nationalist way: Europe in the discourse of radical right parties. *Party Politics*, 30(3), 519–530.
- Boomgaarden, H. G., Schuck, A. R., Elenbaas, M., & De Vreese, C. H. (2011). Mapping EU attitudes: Conceptual and empirical dimensions of Euroscepticism and EU support. *European Union Politics*, 12(2), 241–266.
- Bornschier, S. (2010). The New Cultural Divide and the Two-Dimensional Political Space in Western Europe. *West European Politics*, 33(3), 419–444.
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2009). Revisiting the nature of the beast—politicization, European identity, and postfunctionalism: a comment on Hooghe and Marks. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 217–220.
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2018). From the euro to the Schengen crises: European integration theories, politicization, and identity politics. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(1), 83–108.
- Braun, D., Popa, S. A., & Schmitt, H. (2019). Responding to the crisis: Eurosceptic parties of the left and right and their changing position towards the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(3), 797–819.
- Caramani, D. (2015). *The Europeanization of politics: The formation of a European electorate and party system in historical perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carrieri, L. (2021). *The impact of European integration on West European politics: Committed pro-Europeans strike back*. Springer Nature.
- Carrieri, L. (2023). Awakening the Europhile Giant: EU Issue Voting in Western and Central-Eastern Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1–23.
- Carrieri, L., Conti, N., & Loveless, M. (2025). EU issue voting in European member states: the return of the pro-EU voter. *West European Politics*, 48(3), 479–506.

- Carrieri, L., Conti, N., & Morini, M. (2023). Electoral mobilization, party support and EU issue voting: an analysis of five countries. *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 1–19.
- Dalton, R. J. (2008). The quantity and the quality of party systems: Party system polarization, its measurement, and its consequences. *Comparative political studies*, 41(7), 899–920.
- De Vreese, C. H., Azrout, R., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2019). One size fits all? Testing the dimensional structure of EU attitudes in 21 countries. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 31(2), 195–219.
- De Vries, C. E. (2007). Sleeping giant: Fact or Fairytale? How European Integration Affects National Elections. *European Union Politics*, 8(3), 363–385.
- De Vries, C. E. (2018). The cosmopolitan-parochial divide: changing patterns of party and electoral competition in the Netherlands and beyond. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(11), 1541–1565.
- De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2012). When dimensions collide: The electoral success of issue entrepreneurs. *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 246–268.
- De Vries, C. E., & Tillman, E. R. (2010). European Union issue voting in East and West Europe: The role of political context. *Comparative European Politics*, 9(1), 1–17.
- De Wilde, P. (2011). No polity for old politics? A framework for analyzing the politicization of European integration. *Journal of European integration*, 33(5), 559–575.
- De Wilde, P. (2025). Centers, Boundaries, Politicization and Cleavages: A Political Sociology of Europe.
- De Wilde, P., & Zürn, M. (2012). Can the politicization of European integration be reversed? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50, 137–153.
- Della Porta, D., & Caiani, M. (2009). *Social movements and Europeanization*. Oxford University Press.
- Dinas, E., & Gemenis, K. (2010). Measuring Parties' Ideological Positions With Manifesto Data - A Critical Evaluation of the Competing Methods. *Party Politics*, 16(4), 427–450.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper; Row.
- Eck, B., & Michel, E. (2025). Breaking the stalemate: Europeans' preferences to expand, cut, or sustain support to Ukraine. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–28.
- Ecker, A., Jenny, M., Müller, W. C., & Praprotnik, K. (2022). How and why party position estimates from manifestos, expert, and party elite surveys diverge: A comparative analysis of the 'left–right' and the 'European integration' dimensions. *Party politics*, 28(3), 528–540.

- Ferrara, F. M., & Kriesi, H. (2022). Crisis pressures and European integration. *Journal of European public policy*, 29(9), 1351–1373.
- Ferreira da Silva, F., Reiljan, A., Cicchi, L., Trechsel, A. H., & Garzia, D. (2023). Three sides of the same coin? comparing party positions in VAAs, expert surveys and manifesto data. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(1), 150–173.
- Ferrera, M. (2017). The Stein Rokkan lecture 2016 mission impossible? Reconciling economic and social Europe after the euro crisis and Brexit. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(1), 3–22.
- Ferrera, M. (2023). The European Union and cross-national solidarity: safeguarding ‘togetherness’ in hard times. *Review of Social Economy*, 81(1), 105–129.
- Ferrera, M., & Burelli, C. (2019). Cross-national solidarity and political sustainability in the EU after the Crisis. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57(1), 94–110.
- Filip, A. (2021). The Evolution and Trends of Eurosceptic Success. In A. Filip (Ed.), *Eurosceptic Contagion: The Influence of Eurosceptic Parties in West-European Party Systems* (pp. 65–87). Springer.
- Ford, R., & Jennings, W. (2020). The changing cleavage politics of Western Europe. *Annual review of political science*, 23(1), 295–314.
- Gabel, M. J. (1998). Economic integration and mass politics: Market liberalization and public attitudes in the European Union. *American Journal of Political Science*, 936–953.
- Genschel, P., & Jachtenfuchs, M. (2018). From market integration to core state powers: The Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and integration theory. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(1), 178–196.
- Gerhards, J., Lengfeld, H., Ignácz, Z., Kley, F., & Priem, M. (2019). *European solidarity in times of crisis: Insights from a thirteen-country survey*. Routledge.
- Gessler, T., & Wunsch, N. (2025). A new regime divide? Democratic backsliding, attitudes towards democracy and affective polarization. *European Journal of Political Research*, 1593–1617.
- Goldberg, A. C., van Elsas, E. J., & De Vreese, C. H. (2021). Eurovisions: An exploration and explanation of public preferences for future EU scenarios. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(2), 222–241.
- Grande, E., & Hutter, S. (2016). The politicisation of Europe in public debates on major integration steps. In S. Hutter, E. Grande, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *Politicising Europe: Integration and mass politics* (pp. 63–89). Cambridge University Press.
- Grande, E., & Kriesi, H. (2016). Conclusions: the postfunctionalists were (almost) right. In S. Hutter, E. Grande, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *Politicising Europe* (pp. 279–300). Cambridge University Press.

- Green-Pedersen, C. (2012). A giant fast asleep? Party incentives and the politicisation of European integration. *Political Studies*, 60(1), 115–130.
- Green-Pedersen, C. (2019). *The reshaping of West European party politics: agenda-setting and party competition in comparative perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Haas, E. (1958). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950 – 1957*. London: Stevens; Sons.
- Hellwig, T. (2014). The structure of issue voting in postindustrial democracies. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 55(4), 596–624.
- Hobolt, S. B., Popa, S. A., & van der Brug, W. (2025). European democracy in action? The 2024 European Parliament elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–16.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Tilley, J. (2014). *Blaming Europe?: Responsibility without accountability in the European union*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2007). Taking cues on Europe? Voter competence and party endorsements in referendums on European integration. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(2), 151–182.
- Hoegliger, D. (2016a). The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns. *West European Politics*, 39(1), 44–63.
- Hoegliger, D. (2016b). *Politicizing European integration: Struggling with the awakening giant*. Springer.
- Hoffmann, S. (1966). Obstinate or obsolete? The fate of the nation-state and the case of Western Europe. *Daedalus*, 862–915.
- Hooghe, L., Bakker, R., Brigeovich, A., De Vries, C. E., Edwards, E., Marks, G., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. (2010). Reliability and validity of the 2002 and 2006 Chapel Hill expert surveys on party positioning. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(5), 687–703.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British journal of political science*, 39(1), 1–23.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2019). Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(8), 1113–1133.
- Hunter, T. (2024). Disintegration and party competition: evidence from parliamentary speeches on Brexit. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–24.
- Hutter, S., & Grande, E. (2014). Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5), 1002–1018.
- Hutter, S., Grande, E., & Kriesi, H. (2016). *Politicising Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

- Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (2019). Politicizing Europe in times of crisis. *Journal of European public policy*, 26(7), 996–1017.
- Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton University Press.
- Janssen, L., & Turkenburg, E. (2025). Breaking free from linear assumptions: Unravelling the relationship between affective polarization and democratic support. *European Journal of Political Research*, 64(3), 1465–1479.
- Jolly, S., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2019. *Electoral Studies*, 75.
- Jones, E., Kelemen, R. D., & Meunier, S. (2021). Failing forward? Crises and patterns of European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1519–1536.
- Jordan, A., Liefferink, D., & Fairbrass, J. (2004). The Europeanization of national environmental policy: A comparative analysis 1. In J. Barry, B. Baxter, & R. Dunphy (Eds.), *Europe, Globalization and Sustainable Development* (pp. 130–151). Routledge.
- Kitschelt, H. (1988). Left-libertarian parties: Explaining innovation in competitive party systems. *World Politics*, 40(2), 194–234.
- Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kitschelt, H., & McGann, A. J. (1997). *The radical right in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*. University of Michigan Press.
- Kriesi, H. (2009). Rejoinder to Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, ‘A postfunctional theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining disensus’. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 221–224.
- Kriesi, H. (2016). The politicization of European integration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54, 32–47.
- Kriesi, H., Ferrera, M., & Schelkle, W. (2021). The theoretical framework of SOLID: A research agenda. *Working Paper Series*.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921–956.
- Kriesi, H., & Grande, E. (2016). The euro crisis: a boost to the politicisation of European integration. In S. Hutter, E. Grande, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *Politicising Europe: Integration and mass politics* (pp. 240–276). Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Dolezal, M., Helbling, M., Höglinger, D., Hutter, S., & Wüest, B. (2012). *Political Conflict in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2008). *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kuhn, T. (2019). Grand theories of European integration revisited: does identity politics shape the course of European integration? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(8), 1213–1230.
- Ladrech, R. (2002). Europeanization and political parties: towards a framework for analysis. *Party politics*, 8(4), 389–403.
- Ladrech, R. (2014). Rethinking the Relationship between Europeanization and European Integration. In R. Coman, T. Kostera, & L. Tomini (Eds.), *Europeanization and European Integration: From Incremental to Structural Change* (pp. 15–28). Springer.
- Lindberg, L. N. (1970). *Europe's Would-Be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community*. Prentice-Hall.
- Lipset, S. M., & Rokkan, S. (1967). Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments. An Introduction. In S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan (Eds.), *Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (pp. 1–64). Collier-Macmillan.
- Malet, G., & Thiebaut, C. (2024). Silent responsiveness: How public opinion affects party discourse on wedge issues. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(4), 1491–1514.
- Malet, G., & Walter, S. (2024). The reverberations of British Brexit politics abroad. *European Union Politics*, 25(1), 63–85.
- Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Steenbergen, M. R., & Bakker, R. (2007). Crossvalidating data on party positioning on European integration. *Electoral Studies*, 26(1), 23–38.
- Marks, G., & Steenbergen, M. (2002). Understanding political contestation in the European Union. *Comparative political studies*, 35(8), 879–892.
- Marks, G., Wilson, C. J., & Ray, L. (2002). National political parties and European integration. *American Journal of Political Science*, 585–594.
- Meijers, M. J. (2017). Contagious Euroscepticism: The impact of Eurosceptic support on mainstream party positions on European integration. *Party Politics*, 23(4), 413–423.
- Moravcsik, A. (1998). *The choice for Europe: Social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht*. Routledge.
- Pellegata, A., & Visconti, F. (2022). Voting for a social Europe? European solidarity and voting behaviour in the 2019 European elections. *European Union Politics*, 23(1), 79–99.
- Peterson, J. (2001). The choice for EU theorists: Establishing a common framework for analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 39(3), 289–318.

- Prosser, C. (2016). Dimensionality, ideology and party positions towards European integration. *West European Politics*, 39(4), 731–754.
- Rapp, M. (2025). How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization? *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 66(3), 545–573.
- Ray, L. (2007). Validity of measured party positions on European integration: Assumptions, approaches, and a comparison of alternative measures. *Electoral studies*, 26(1), 11–22.
- Reif, K., & Schmitt, H. (1980). Nine second-order national elections—a conceptual framework for the analysis of European Election results. *European journal of political research*, 8(1), 3–44.
- Reinl, A.-K., & Braun, D. (2023). Who holds the union together? Citizens’ preferences for European Union cohesion in challenging times. *European Union Politics*, 24(2), 390–409.
- Risse, T., Cowles, M. G., Caporaso, J., et al. (2001). Europeanization and domestic change: Introduction. In M. Green Cowles, J. Caporaso, & T. Risse (Eds.), *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and domestic change* (pp. 1–20). Cornell University Press Ithaca, NY.
- Rohrschneider, R., & Whitefield, S. (2016). Responding to growing European Union-skepticism? The stances of political parties toward European integration in Western and Eastern Europe following the financial crisis. *European Union Politics*, 17(1), 138–161.
- Rovny, J., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Marks, G., Polk, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. (2025). 25 Years of Political Party Positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill Expert Survey, 1999-2024. *Working Paper*.
- Rovny, J., & Polk, J. (2019). New wine in old bottles: Explaining the dimensional structure of European party systems. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 12–24.
- Schäfer, C., Popa, S. A., Braun, D., & Schmitt, H. (2020). The reshaping of political conflict over Europe: from pre-Maastricht to post-‘Euro crisis’. *West European Politics*, 44(3), 531–557.
- Schattschneider, E. E. (1960). *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2018). Liberal intergovernmentalism and the crises of the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(7), 1578–1594.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2024). The Brexit puzzle: Polity attack and external rebordering. *West European Politics*, 47(5), 1021–1044.
- Schmitter, P. C. (1969). Three neo-functional hypotheses about international integration. *International organization*, 23(1), 161–166.
- Schmitter, P. C. (2009). On the way to a post-functionalist theory of European integration. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 211–215.

- Statham, P., & Trez, H.-J. (2015). Understanding the mechanisms of EU politicization: Lessons from the Eurozone crisis. *Comparative European Politics*, 13(3), 287–306.
- Thomassen, J. (2012). The Blind Corner of Political Representation. *Representation*, 48(1), 13–27.
- Toshkov, D., & Krouwel, A. (2022). Beyond the U-curve: Citizen preferences on European integration in multidimensional political space. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 462–488.
- The Treaty of Rome. (1957).
- Treib, O. (2014). The voter says no, but nobody listens: causes and consequences of the Eurosceptic vote in the 2014 European elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10), 1541–1554.
- Treib, O. (2021). Euroscepticism is here to stay: what cleavage theory can teach us about the 2019 European Parliament elections. *Journal of European public policy*, 28(2), 174–189.
- Trenz, H.-J., & Eder, K. (2004). The democratizing dynamics of a European public sphere: Towards a theory of democratic functionalism. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(1), 5–25.
- Turnbull-Dugarte, S. J. (2021). A new hope for europhiles? The 2017 German federal elections and the revenge of the pro-European mainstream. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(7), 815–840.
- Unan, A., & Klüver, H. (2024). Europeans' attitudes toward the EU following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1–6.
- Van den Hoogen, E., Daenekindt, S., de Koster, W., & van der Waal, J. (2022). Support for European Union membership comes in various guises: Evidence from a correlational class analysis of novel dutch survey data. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 489–508.
- Whitefield, S., & Rohrschneider, R. (2015). The salience of European integration to party competition: Western and Eastern Europe compared. *East European Politics and Societies*, 29(1), 12–39.
- Whitefield, S., & Rohrschneider, R. (2019). Embedding integration: How European integration splits mainstream parties. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 25–35.
- Wilson, T. L., & Hobolt, S. B. (2015). Allocating responsibility in multilevel government systems: Voter and expert attributions in the European Union. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 102–113.
- Zeitlin, J., Nicolli, F., & Laffan, B. (2019). Introduction: The European Union beyond the polycrisis? Integration and politicization in an age of shifting cleavages. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(7), 963–976.

2 How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization?

Abstract The increasing success of Eurosceptic parties and multiple European crises have fostered the politicization of European integration. However, we know little about how *pro*-European voters behave in this politicized environment. How important is European integration for pro-European voters? Do they care more about European integration when their vision of Europe is increasingly contested? The past 15 years have been characterized by persistent politicization of Eurosceptic parties and an increasing willingness of Europhile parties to engage with European topics. Moreover, European crises illustrated potential consequences of political disintegration. I expect these developments to be reflected in an increasing salience of European integration among pro-European voters. I derive salience estimates from spatial vote models encompassing four issue dimensions to track the development of salience. I use data from the European Social Survey, the European Election Studies, and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, which cover many EU member states between 2008 and 2019. The results show that the salience of the European integration issue is most pronounced among Eurosceptic voters, while it is less pronounced among pro-European voters. However, in countries with a successful Eurosceptic party, it is more likely that the European integration issue also matters to pro-European voters. Moreover, there has been an increasing trend over time that European integration is not only important for anti- but also for pro-European voters across Europe.

Keywords: salience, European integration, politicization, pro-Europeanism

Published at *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*. Apart from minor formatting and stylistic adjustments, this version is identical to the published one.

2.1 Introduction

European integration has been considerably politicized over the past 15 years. Eurosceptic parties have become increasingly successful all over Europe (Filip, 2021; Treib, 2021) and have responded to multiple European crises by becoming even more Eurosceptic (Braun et al., 2019). Moreover, pro-European mainstream parties have reacted to the politicization efforts of Eurosceptic parties. They are no longer trying to depoliticize the European integration issue but have started engaging more intensively with it, especially since 2014 (Adam et al., 2017; Carrieri, 2021). Also multiple European crises have fostered the politicization of European integration (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019). However, we know little about how pro-European voters behave in this politicized environment. How important is European integration for pro-European voters? Are pro-European voters more aware of their preferences regarding European integration when their vision of Europe is contested?

Some empirical examples indeed suggest that the pro-European camp of voters care about Europe. For instance, in the 2023 parliamentary election in Poland, the progressive, pro-European camp won the political majority. Also Emmanuel Macron was very successful with his pro-European election campaign in France in 2017 (Bouza García & Oleart, 2022). This paper investigates the development of voters' salience of European integration between 2008 and 2019, a time period which was characterized by increasing success of Eurosceptic parties all over Europe and multiple European crises. I am interested in *electoral* salience, which captures the relative weight voters give to a specific issue in their vote calculus (Ansolabehere & Puy, 2018). Investigating the extent to which voters consider European integration in their vote calculus, is particularly relevant since European countries have recently faced serious transnational challenges, such as the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and migration flows. The ability to cope with these crises is also linked to the further course of European integration. The willingness of governments to cooperate with other EU members states relies on public support for further integration and the extent to which parties can succeed with pro-European election campaigns within their countries.

This paper includes two analytical steps. First, as the literature provides mixed results as to whether the European integration issue has an impact on vote choice at the national level at all (De Vries, 2007; De Vries & Hobolt, 2016; Schoen, 2019), I investigate whether it generally matters to voters. To gain a better understanding of the *extent* to which European integration matters to voters, I compare the salience of this issue to the salience of other issues, thus explicitly considering the multidimensionality of European policy spaces (e.g. De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; König et al., 2017; Kriesi et al., 2006).

Second, I investigate how pronounced the salience of the European integration issue is among different subgroups of voters: pro-European, moderate, and Eurosceptic voters. I test whether the salience among pro-European voters is more pronounced in contexts of high domestic politicization by presenting salience estimates for countries with and without successful Eurosceptic parties.

To estimate electoral salience, I use spatial vote models that encompass four issue dimensions: European integration, the economy, immigration, and the environment. The models enable a comparison of the electoral salience of European integration with other relevant issues. Measuring issue salience in the electoral context has the advantage of capturing it in a situation in which it also affects party competition. Moreover, this strategy circumvents problems associated with other common measures of issue salience among voters, such as ‘most important problem’ questions (Wlezien, 2005). I use data from the European Social Survey (ESS), the Voter Studies of the European Election Studies (EES), and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), encompassing a wide range of European Union (EU) member states between 2008 and 2019.

The results show that, in the period studied, the European integration issue mattered to voters, especially in 2019, when the issue was almost as important as economic issues. The salience of the European integration issue is still the most pronounced among Eurosceptic voters. However, in countries with a successful Eurosceptic party, it is more likely that the issue matters to pro-European voters as well. Moreover, in an increasing number of EU member states I find significant salience estimates for the pro-European camp of voters over time. Nevertheless, the results do not indicate a sharp increase of salience of European integration among pro-European voters. Yet, the country-specific results for France and the Netherlands support the notion that even a small increase in the salience of this issue among pro-European voters may open up windows of opportunities for Europhile parties to succeed with strikingly pro-European campaigns.

The paper proceeds as follows: After this brief introduction, I discuss the relevant literature, introduce my argument, and derive my hypotheses. I then present my research design, data, and operationalization. Following that, I report the results. I conclude with a summary and an outlook for future research.

2.2 Development of European integration

This paper builds on the literature on the politicization of the European integration process (e.g. Hoeglinger, 2016; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019), the literature on EU issue voting (e.g. De Vries, 2007; De Vries & Hobolt, 2016; De Vries &

Tillman, 2010), and recently published work on pro-European counter-reactions among parties and voters (e.g. Carrieri, 2021; Jones et al., 2021; Malet & Walter, 2024).

2.2.1 Politicization of the European integration process

In their seminal work, Hooghe and Marks (2009) present a postfunctionalist theory of European integration. They state that a new political conflict line is emerging, which no longer follows the established economic left–right dimension. Rather, the conflict runs along a cultural dimension ranging from green-alternative-libertarian to traditional-authoritarian-nationalist values. The politicization of the European integration process is at the heart of this conflict. This is characterized by a mobilization of public opinion about European integration, which Hooghe and Marks (2009) describe as a shift from ‘permissive consensus’ to ‘constraining dissensus’. In the early years of European integration, political elites could more or less rely on tacit public support for further integration steps. However, since European integration increasingly touches areas of state sovereignty and national identity, the domestic salience of the EU increases, thus creating losers of economic and cultural integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kriesi et al., 2006; Schimmelfennig, 2018). While center-left and center-right mainstream parties primarily compete on the established economic left–right dimension, left-libertarian and right-nationalist parties compete with extreme positions on new cultural issues, such as immigration, the environment, and European integration. The politicization of the European integration issue is mostly driven by left and right Eurosceptic parties (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019), who act as issue entrepreneurs, while mainstream parties have failed to depoliticize this issue (Hobolt & Rodon, 2020). Even if the issue of European integration obviously relates to the European level, the nation states are the decisive arena in which politicization occurs, as party competition still mainly takes place in the national context (Kriesi, 2016).

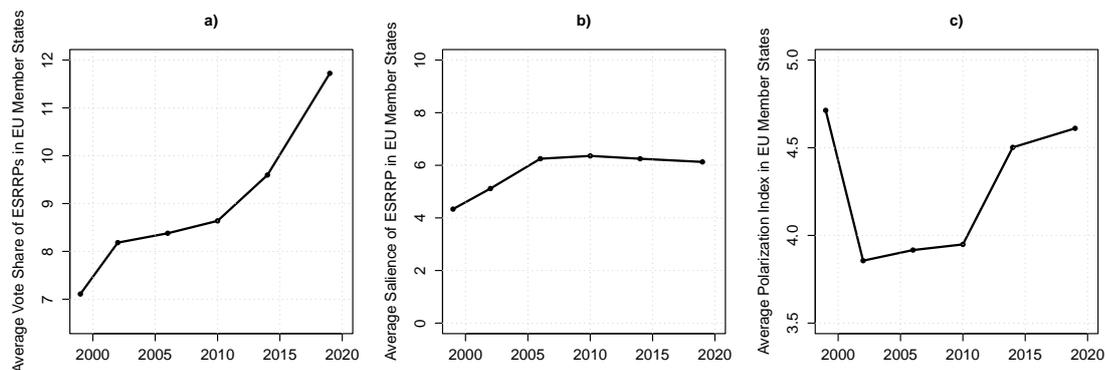
In general terms, politicization encompasses the process of the expansion of the publicly visible conflict regarding European integration (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019), which is accompanied by increasing issue salience, actor polarization, and actor expansion (De Wilde et al., 2016; Kriesi, 2016). Politicization is not restricted to the party level (Hoeglinger, 2016) but also becomes visible at the voter level (De Wilde, 2011). Still, the literature on politicization focuses primarily on the party level.

There is widespread agreement that some kind of politicization of the European integration issue has taken place since the mid-1980s (e.g. Schmitter, 2009), leading to an increasing mobilization of public opinion about European integration. This politicization is reflected in a new conflict, in which anti-European nationalism and pro-European

transnationalism confront each other (e.g. De Vries, 2018). However, the extent, intensity, and course of the politicization process are subject to scholarly debate. Some authors show that it has steadily increased over time (Rauh & Zürn, 2016), while others point to significant variation in the extent of politicization of the European integration issue over time, across different countries, and political arenas (e.g. De Wilde et al., 2016).

Figure 2.1 shows some descriptive evidence to illustrate the development of politicization from 1999-2019. Panel a) shows the average vote shares of Eurosceptic radical right parties in the EU member states which have risen steadily over time, most pronounced from 2010 onward. Panel b) shows the average salience Eurosceptic radical right parties attach to the European integration issue. Its salience increased from 1999 to 2006 and remained at a stable, high level until 2019. The polarization of the party systems on European integration also increased from 2002 to 2019 (Panel c)).⁴ Overall, these descriptive results show a politicized environment in the period under study (2008-2019).

Figure 2.1: Sources of politicization from 1999 - 2019 based on CHES Trendfile: a) Average vote shares of Eurosceptic radical right parties in EU member states; b) Average salience of European integration of Eurosceptic radical right parties in EU member states; c) Average polarization of party systems on European integration in EU member states



⁴Eurosceptic radical right parties are categorized by having a value smaller than 4 on the CHES eu_position item and belonging to the radical right party family. The polarization index is calculated following the formula presented by Dalton (2008) where 0 indicates that all parties have the same position and 10 that all parties are allocated between these two extremes.

2.2.2 The electoral salience of European integration in multidimensional policy spaces

As illustrated above, the conceptualization of politicization focuses mostly on the party level by looking at parties' issue salience, actor polarization, and actor expansion (e.g. De Wilde et al., 2016; Hutter & Grande, 2014). There has been less research linking politicization at the party level with the individual level. If parties polarize their positions and raise the salience of European integration, they form two visible, opposing political camps. Carrieri (2021) argues that a full-fledged politicization of an issue only occurs, if such an altering policy offer by parties matches the voter demand. Thus, this paper focuses on the development of the weight voters attach to the European integration issue at a time of intense politicization at the party level. A party should have even more incentive to politicize an issue if it is salient among the electorate, more precisely among a party's potential voters. Even though parties have the power to restructure party competition through repositioning and selective emphasis, it is ultimately the voters who decide which issue they consider in their voting decision. Still, causality probably runs in both directions. Parties shape voters' issue perception by partisan cuing (e.g. Brader et al., 2020; Slothuus & De Vreese, 2010), but they also respond to voters' issue preferences and priorities (e.g. Adams et al., 2004; Klüver & Sagarzazu, 2016; Klüver & Spoon, 2016). Opinion formation concerning EU issues also runs in both directions, with party elites listening to voters and vice versa (Malet & Thiebaut, 2024; Sanders & Toka, 2013; Steenbergen et al., 2007).

One approach focusing on the importance of public opinion in the context of the politicization of the European integration issue is presented by the literature on EU issue voting, which investigates whether EU issues have an impact on vote choice in national elections (De Vries, 2007). In the EU issue voting literature, there is mixed evidence on whether European integration plays a relevant role in individuals' voting decisions (e.g. De Vries & Hobolt, 2016; Schoen, 2019). For example, De Vries (2007) finds that, in the 1990s and early 2000s, the issue was not salient for voters in the Netherlands and Germany, but that it was for the electorate in Denmark and the United Kingdom. Schoen (2019) shows that European integration was not an electoral issue in the 2017 German election. According to De Vries and Tillman (2010), EU issue voting was more pronounced in Central Eastern Europe than in Western Europe in 2004. Furthermore, De Vries and Hobolt (2016) find that the extent of EU issue voting in national elections was greater in 2009; it was present in all EU member states except in Belgium-Wallonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Overall, the results of the politicization as well as the EU issue voting literature point to a 'punctuated politicization' (Grande & Kriesi, 2016) of the European integration issue at the level of parties

and voters, indicated by significant variation over time and across countries. This could be due to the conflict between politicization efforts of Eurosceptic parties and (former) depoliticization efforts of pro-European mainstream parties (e.g. Börzel & Risse, 2018; Green-Pedersen, 2019).

Most of the EU issue voting literature relies on spatial vote models (Downs, 1957) that use the policy distance between voters' and parties' issue positions on European integration to predict vote choice (e.g. De Vries, 2007; Hobolt & Rodon, 2020). The resulting spatial coefficients can then be used as unbiased proxies for electoral salience (Ansolabehere & Puy, 2018) and capture the relative weight voters attach to a specific policy issue in their vote calculus. Thus, I use the term 'electoral salience' to describe issue salience at the level of the voters with respect to their voting decision. To gain a better understanding of the *extent* to which European integration plays a role in the voting decision, I compare it to the electoral salience of other issues. In doing so, I examine the salience of the European integration issue by explicitly considering the multidimensional character of European policy spaces (e.g. De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; Hellwig, 2014; König et al., 2017; Kriesi et al., 2006). Voters are confronted not only with the European integration issue, but with many other issues, thus voting in a multidimensional policy space. This has also been brought forward by Toshkov and Krouwel (2022): The European integration issue cannot be regarded as bundled with other cultural issues, so it should be examined how it relates to other issue dimensions.

2.2.3 Pro-European counter-reactions among Europhile parties and voters

So far, we have seen that the European integration process is no longer characterized by tacit support but is being contested by Eurosceptic issue entrepreneurs. But why should we expect Europhile voters to become more aware of their preferences regarding European integration in times of politicization?

The literature on EU issue entrepreneurship shows that Eurosceptic parties have successfully introduced the European integration issue into the policy space by competing with extreme anti-EU standpoints and raising the salience of this issue (e.g. De Vries & Hobolt, 2012, 2020; Hobolt & De Vries, 2015). It is rather intuitive that once an issue has been successfully politicized by an issue entrepreneurial party, parties with opposing standpoints on this issue cannot ignore it forever but are in a way 'forced' to deal with that issue. This is in line with the work of Meguid (2005, 2008), who argues that party competition is not limited to the interaction between ideologically directly neighboring parties. In response to niche party entry, mainstream parties have three options: ignore, move towards, or move away from the niche party's issue. The results regard-

ing pro-European parties' reactions are mixed, reflecting the opposing pressures they are confronted with (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2016): Due to increasing public Euroscepticism (Ejrnæs & Jensen, 2019), they have an incentive to adapt more Eurosceptic positions to stay competitive from a spatial viewpoint. However, they potentially face reputational costs, because European integration is largely a product of Europhile mainstream parties' behavior over the last decades (Vasilopoulou, 2023).

Some findings support the notion that Euroscepticism is *contagious*. For the period between the 1980s and 2010, research shows that Eurosceptic parties have provoked shifts in mainstream parties' positions on European integration towards more sceptical standpoints (Meijers, 2017) and that parties have responded to Eurosceptic attitudes by taking a more Eurosceptic position (Spoon & Williams, 2017). However, a study analyzing more recent data from 2006 to 2017 shows that pro-European parties engage more and more in an adversarial strategy by taking stronger Europhile positions and raising the salience of the issue, which was particularly pronounced in 2017 (Carrieri, 2021). Also Adam et al. (2017) show that in 2014 pro-European parties did not differ (any longer) from Eurosceptic parties in their willingness to emphasize the European integration issue, especially when they were internally united on it. However, Malet and Thiebaut (2024) show that Europhile mainstream parties are not generally willing to emphasize European integration more strongly. They raise the salience if the public becomes more supportive for European integration, but decrease the salience if citizens become more sceptical. Literature on party cuing regarding attitudes towards the EU shows that changes in parties' strategies regarding the salience of and position on European integration indeed affect public opinion (e.g. Down & Wilson, 2010; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Stoeckel & Kuhn, 2018). Thus, it is plausible that changes in Eurosceptic and Europhile parties' strategies should be reflected in changes in voters' salience.

Moving from the party to the voter level, research shows a revival of public support for the EU (Jones et al., 2021) and a notably high extent of European solidarity among Europeans (Ferrera & Burelli, 2019; Gerhards et al., 2019) in recent years. The United Kingdom's exit from the EU has raised public fears about potential threats of political disintegration (De Vries, 2018), not only in the UK but also in other EU member states (Malet & Walter, 2024). The importance of looking at the pro-European camp separately is also illustrated by Reinl and Braun (2023), who show that people in favor and against EU cohesion constitute two clearly different classes with distinct characteristics.

Moreover, the increasing politicization of European integration has fostered a pro-European backlash, with pro-European mainstream parties benefiting from EU issue voting, especially in the context of the Migration Crisis and the Brexit referendum (Carrieri,

2021, 2023). This connects to the recent literature looking at the period of multiple European crises (Zeitlin et al., 2019), starting with the Eurozone Crisis (starting in December 2009) and followed by the Migration Crisis (2015/2016), the Brexit Crisis (starting in 2016), and the COVID-19 crisis (starting in 2020), to name some of the most far-reaching ones. Ferrara and Kriesi (2022) show that only the Migration Crisis led to a constraining dissensus, while to some extent the Eurozone Crisis, but more clearly the Brexit and the COVID-19 Crisis fostered European integration. This suggests that politicization does not only produce negative feedback, as claimed by postfunctionalists (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, 2018), but can also lead to deeper integration.

2.3 *Stimulating* dissensus in the multiple crises period

I argue that the postfunctionalist claim that there has been a shift from a ‘permissive consensus’ to a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009) has the potential to further develop into a *stimulating* dissensus. As illustrated above, European integration was backed by a wide-ranging public consensus about further (economic) integration steps in the earlier years of the integration process. This permissive consensus developed into a constraining dissensus because European integration increasingly touched more cultural issues, such as national identity. Increasing Euroscepticism among voters and parties constrained the possibilities for further integration endeavors. I argue that in the recent crises period, this constraining dissensus developed into a stimulating dissensus. But what do I mean by that?

I agree with the existing literature that ‘Euroscepticism is here to stay’ (Treib, 2021). However, I argue that this does not necessarily imply constraining consequences for European integration. Rather, persistent politicization should awaken the pro-European side in the long run. I argue that pro-European voters become more aware of their preferences regarding European integration because their concept or vision of Europe is increasingly contested. I am well aware that Euroscepticism is not a phenomenon that is specific to the period of multiple crises of the past 15 years. However, what is characteristic for the multiple crises period is the *extent* of politicization through Eurosceptic actors, for example due to an increasing polarization of parties’ positions on European integration (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019), an increasing success of Eurosceptic parties in elections (Filip, 2021), and an increasing scepticism of Eurosceptic parties towards European integration in response to the numerous European crises (Braun et al., 2019). The more the European project is attacked by Eurosceptic parties, the less European unification is a matter of course and the more pro-European voters should become aware of their preferences for a united Europe.

I expect that Eurosceptic radical right parties (ESRRP) in particular have driven this politicization during the multiple crises period. ESRRPs discuss European integration with regard to identity and national sovereignty. Eurosceptic left parties are more concerned with economic issues, such as the neoliberal character of the EU and its consequences for the national welfare state (Braun et al., 2019; Hooghe & Marks, 2009). I expect cultural issues to play a much more important role than economic considerations in this period of multiple crises, especially during the Migration and the Brexit Crises. Additionally, the distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is insightful in this regard (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008). Euroscepticism of left parties tends to manifest in soft Eurosceptic stances, indicated by the opposition to certain EU policies. Eurosceptic radical right parties are better described as hard Euroscepticists because they oppose the EU as such (Treib, 2014). Thus, ESRRPs politicization efforts should lead to a stronger politicization because they criticize the European project much more extensively and fundamentally.

Moreover, there has been an increasing politicization not only through Eurosceptic radical right parties, but also through two other sources in the multiple crises period. First, the literature shows that in recent years Europhile parties have increasingly focused on the European integration issue (Adam et al., 2017; Carrieri, 2021). They are no longer trying to depoliticize it but are beginning to compete on it in response to Euroscepticism, which should also cue voters who support European integration. Second, multiple European crises have occurred since 2009. I argue that these crises have led to some sort of exogenous politicization across the EU, which is not specific to national party systems. Especially Brexit and the subsequent negotiations explicitly illustrated the consequences of political disintegration (De Vries, 2018; Malet & Walter, 2024). Moreover, multiple European crises illustrated the dependency on other European countries to find solutions for transnational problems (e.g. during the Migration Crisis).

Taken together, I expect that politicization during the multiple crises period has not only produced negative feedback, as claimed by postfunctionalists (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, 2018), but could potentially open up (new) opportunities for integration by awakening the pro-European camp of voters. This argument is more in line with the neofunctionalist expectation that politicization in times of crises can lead to positive feedback, fostering deeper integration (Pierson, 1996; Schimmelfennig, 2018).⁵ If voters in favor

⁵This also ties in with the recent debate about the limited explanatory power of single European integration theories — mostly liberal intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism, and postfunctionalism (Ferrara & Kriesi, 2022; Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018; Jones et al., 2021; Schimmelfennig, 2018). Since none of these existing theories can explain all facets of European (dis-)integration, it is necessary to combine them to understand European integration during the multiple crises period.

of Europe give more weight to European integration in their vote calculus, this public support can open up new ground for pro-European parties to find majorities to pursue further integration steps.

This argument has three implications. First, I expect that, overall, the voters' salience of the European integration issue has increased in the past 15 years due to increasing politicization, not only by Eurosceptic but also by pro-European actors (especially from 2014) and by European crises.

H1: The electoral salience of the European integration issue has increased over time as compared to the electoral salience of other issues.

Second, I expect that Eurosceptic voters still attach the greatest weight to this issue in their voting decisions. The politicization efforts of Eurosceptic parties are originally targeted at voters opposing European integration, and Eurosceptic parties encountered a demand for more nationally oriented policies. This leads to Hypothesis 2a:

H2a: The electoral salience of the European integration issue is most pronounced among Eurosceptic voters.

Third, I expect that the salience of the European integration issue is more pronounced among pro-European voters in countries with a successful Eurosceptic radical right party because these parties are a primary source of politicization at the national level (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Moreover, I also expect that in countries with a successful Eurosceptic radical right party, it is more likely that also Europhile parties respond to the ESRRPs' strategies and engage with the European integration issue, which should intensify politicization.

H2b: In countries with a successful Eurosceptic radical right party, the electoral salience of the European integration issue among Europhile voters is more pronounced than in countries without a successful Eurosceptic radical right party.

2.4 Data, operationalization, and research design

I use spatial vote models to estimate electoral salience in multidimensional policy spaces. For this purpose, voters' and parties' issue positions on the same issue dimensions are required. I base my analyses on data from the European Social Survey (ESS), waves 4 (ESS, 2018) and 8 (ESS, 2020), and the Voter Studies of the European Elections Studies (EES) 2014 (Schmitt et al., 2016) and 2019 (Schmitt et al., 2022) to obtain

measures of voters' attitudes on several issues.^{6,7} I combine these data with party positions on the respective issue dimensions from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Jolly et al., 2022). Concerning the question of which issues to consider, most of the literature agrees in finding an established economic issue dimension and distinct issue dimensions encompassing new cultural issues, such as the environment (Crawley et al., 2022; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997; Knutsen, 2018), gender (Dalton, 2017), or immigration (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup, 2008; Henjak, 2010; Van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009). Besides European integration, I include the established economic dimension, as well as immigration and environmental issues in my analyses. This is reasonable since the economic left–right dimension is most visible to voters. Immigration and environmental issues are both picked up by an issue-owning party, radical right and green parties, respectively. By this, I ensure that I compare the electoral salience of European integration to other politicized and visible issues.

The analyses cover EU member states from Central, Southern, Northern, and Eastern Europe.⁸ The fieldwork period of ESS wave 4 took place between 25 August 2008 and 12 March 2010,⁹ ESS wave 8 between 22 August 2016 and 28 December 2017. The 2014 and 2019 Voter Studies were conducted after the European Parliament Elections: between 30 May 2014 and 27 June 2014 and between 14 June 2019 and 7 November 2019 respectively.

2.4.1 Measuring voters' and parties' positions in national, multidimensional policy spaces

To measure voter preferences within multidimensional national policy spaces, I use suitable items addressing four broad policy areas: European integration, the economy, the environment, and immigration. Voters' preferences regarding European integration are measured with the question of whether European integration has already gone too far or should be pushed further. This item captures voters' preferences regarding the European project as such, not regarding specific policy outputs. By this, it measures hard Eu-

⁶The selection of data sources is due to data availability. The main difference between the ESS and the EES is that the latter is collected after the European Parliament elections, where the visibility of European topics is likely to be greater than in the ESS, which is collected independently of any elections. Still, both data sources contain an item regarding the intended or recalled voting behavior at the national level. This allows me to measure the weight voters attach to European integration in national elections.

⁷Due to the limited availability of data on voters' positions on various issues, the study is purely observational. Only cross-sectional data covering a wide range of EU member states over a longer time period is available.

⁸The countries are selected based on data availability. For an overview, see Table 2 in the Appendix. Due to the different data sources, the country selection differs over time points. I performed robustness checks by running the models only on the same subset of countries available in all four data sources. The results are presented in the Appendix in Figures 2.21 and 2.22; the overall pattern persists.

⁹All countries except Ireland were fielded between 2008 and 2009, before the outbreak of the Eurozone Crisis.

roscepticism on the one side of the voter distribution and committed pro-Europeanism, which goes beyond preserving the status quo, on the other. Thus, this is a rather strict measure of pro-Europeanism. Voters can indeed be pro-European in the sense that they appreciate the current benefits of European integration, but are more reluctant towards *deeper* integration. Items capturing economic, immigration, and environmental preferences vary between surveys.¹⁰

I combine these voter preference data with party positions on the same latent policy issue dimensions by using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2010 to 2019 (Jolly et al., 2022). For party positions on the European integration dimension, I use the question on the general EU position of a party; for the economic dimension, I build an index using the CHES items on deregulation, redistribution, economic intervention, and improving social services; for the immigration dimension, I build an index based on multiculturalism and immigration policy; and for the environmental dimension, I use the single available question on environmental sustainability.

Estimating electoral salience in multidimensional policy spaces to obtain meaningful comparisons of the *extent* of salience is not an easy task, as it requires voter and party positions on multiple issues. The gold standard would be to rely on voters' perceptions of parties on different issue dimensions since then individual and party positions have been measured on the same scale. Unfortunately, this type of data is scarce and often only available for the ideological left–right dimension. To the best of my knowledge, there exists no data source covering a wide range of EU member states over time with voters' own policy positions as well as their perceived positions of parties on various specific issue scales. The second-best option is to use expert survey data, which is generally considered to be of very good quality (Hooghe et al., 2010; Marks et al., 2007) and is also used as an alternative in the literature if perceived party positions are not available (e.g. Carrieri, 2023; Rosset & Stecker, 2019). In a comparative study, Kurella and Rapp (2024) show that party positions based on expert surveys can serve as proxies if perceived party positions are not available.

The first step to bring party and voter positions measured on different scales onto the same scale is to rescale them to the same interval. I choose the interval of $[-1, 1]$, where negative values represent left/libertarian and positive values right/authoritarian standpoints. Still, some other problems persist. One problem with linking voter data with external party positions is that the question wordings in both data sources often are not

¹⁰When several items per issue dimension are available, I build weighted indices based on factor analyses to obtain a more fine-grained measure for voters' issue positions. The detailed list of survey items included in my analysis and the procedure for building the indices are presented in Appendix A.

exactly the same. However, slightly differing question wordings are unlikely to bias the results since party positions on concrete issues capturing the same underlying policy dimension are highly correlated. As an example, this is shown for parties' positions on the economic dimension in the Appendix in Table 2.1. All available questions on concrete economic policy issues in the CHES, such as parties' positions on deregulation, redistribution, and tax reduction, are at least correlated with 0.92. Moreover, this is also illustrated by Figure 2.11 in the Appendix, which displays all CHES issue items used for the respective issue indices and shows that they are highly correlated within one policy dimension.

Another challenge is that the labels of the endpoints of the scales may not match. For example, in some cases, I find a strong skewness in the voter distribution, which I attribute to the fact that the labels of the endpoints of the voter scales do not always correspond to the extreme points in the national discourse on the topic. I address this issue by rescaling the voter preferences such that the first and 99th percentiles of the voter distribution mark the end points of the issue scale. This procedure ensures that the end points of the rescaled scale represent the most left and right position among the voters. Assuming that experts also consider the national discourse on a topic by aligning their party placement on the left and right extreme points in the electorate, compatibility is ensured. Another problem is that both ESS waves were not collected in the same year as the CHES. In these cases, I perform robustness checks with an alternative matching based on the second closest CHES wave.¹¹ Exemplary for Germany 2019, I present the voter distribution and the CHES party positions in Figure 2.11 in the Appendix to see how both scales relate to each other.

2.4.2 Estimation of electoral salience

Issue salience has been operationalized in many different ways in the literature. While many rely on 'most important problem' questions, I focus on the extent to which voters take policy proximity into account in their individual vote calculus by estimating issue salience based on a Downsian proximity model of vote choice (Downs, 1957). The distance between voters' issue positions and parties' issue positions is used to predict vote choice. The resulting spatial coefficients capture the relative weight voters attach to a policy dimension in their vote calculus. The spatial coefficients of these vote models can

¹¹For the main analyses, I match the ESS4 with the CHES 2010, the Voter Study 2014 and the ESS8 with the CHES 2014 (the only exceptions are Nowoczesna and Kukiz'15 in Poland, and EKRE in Estonia, for which I use the party positions from the CHES 2019, as they were not included in the CHES 2014.), and the Voter Study 2019 with the CHES 2019. For the robustness checks, I match the ESS4 with the CHES 2006 (except parties' positions on the environment, since they are only available from 2010 onward), and the ESS8 with the CHES 2019. The results remain stable and are presented in the Appendix in Figures 2.19 and 2.20.

be used as unbiased proxies for electoral salience (Ansolabehere & Puy, 2018). Estimating salience directly based on the voter function has the advantage of circumventing the problems associated with ‘most important problem’ questions¹² and of capturing the importance voters attach to an issue in their vote calculus in a situation in which it also becomes relevant to party competition.

I set up conditional logit models of vote choice, in which I combine the four policy distance terms with party intercepts to account for non-policy-related factors of vote choice. The dependent variable is vote choice.¹³ The model is described by the following formula:

$$Pr(y_{i,j} = 1|X_{i,j}) = \frac{e^{\beta X_{i,j}}}{1 + e^{\beta X_{i,j}}},$$

where the linear predictor

$$\beta X_{i,j} = \lambda_j - \beta_1(x_{1,i} - z_{1,j})^2 - \dots - \beta_k(x_{k,i} - z_{k,j})^2 + \varepsilon_{i,j}$$

combines policy distance terms $(x_{k,i} - z_{k,j})^2$ on multiple policy issues, k , with a valence term, λ_j for each party j and an idiosyncratic error term $\varepsilon_{i,j}$. The policy distance terms are calculated using the squared city block distance between the ideal point x of voter i on policy issue k and the corresponding party positions z . The β -parameters indicate the decision weight - or electoral salience - of each policy issue.

To detect heterogeneity in issue salience between extreme pro-European, anti-European, and moderate voters on the various issue dimensions, I follow the approach of Kurella and Rosset (2017) and estimate issue salience for each group separately. I construct these pro- and anti-European voter groups by using a cutoff point of -0.5 on the left and 0.5 on the right side of the voter distribution on a $[-1, 1]$ scale, resulting in left, moderate, and right subgroups on all four issue dimensions.¹⁴

In the next sections, I conduct three analytical steps. First, I estimate multilevel conditional logit models with random intercepts on the party level for each data set without separate effects for the subgroups to address the general question of how salient the Eu-

¹²It is quite common to measure salience among voters with ‘most important problem’ questions. However, Wlezien (2005) shows that this measurement strategy is problematic because the *importance* and the extent to which voters regard an issue as a *problem* are two different aspects.

¹³In the ESS 4 and 8, as well as in the Voter Study 2019, I use the recall vote question. In the Voter Study 2014, I use the question: If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for? Item selection due to availability.

¹⁴I conduct robustness checks with cutoff points ranging from (-)0.4 to (-)0.6. The results remain stable and are presented in the Appendix in Figures 2.17 and 2.18.

ropean integration issue is compared to the other three issue dimensions.¹⁵

Second, I estimate multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup-specific effects to test whether pro-European voters care more about European integration in a politicized context. To do so, I estimate the models separately for countries with and without successful Eurosceptic radical right parties for each point in time. As suggested in the literature (Meijers, 2017; Ray, 2007), all parties with a value smaller than 4 (on a seven-point scale) on the CHES eu_position item are classified as Eurosceptic. Since I expect that the politicization of the European integration issue is particularly driven by Eurosceptic radical right parties, I only consider parties that are categorized in the CHES as belonging to the radical right party family. I classify an ESRRP as successful if it received more than 5% of the votes in the last parliamentary election before the respective fieldwork period. In most countries, parties enter parliament if they reach at least 5% of the votes, which should increase their visibility and their leeway to politicize remarkably.¹⁶ Thus, the existence of a successful ESRRP serves as proxy for the politicization of European integration at the national level.¹⁷

Third, I estimate conditional logit models with party-specific intercepts for each country and point in time separately to obtain a more nuanced picture of electoral salience over time.¹⁸

2.5 Results

The results section encompasses two analytical steps. First, I focus on how pronounced the electoral salience of the European integration issue is compared to other issues. The aim of the first section is to gain a better understanding of the *extent* of its salience at the voter level over time. Second, I address the question of how important European integration is for pro-European voters and whether they are more aware of their preferences regarding European integration in politicized environments.

¹⁵The multilevel models are estimated by using the mclogit command (mclogit Version 0.6.1; Elff, 2018) in R.

¹⁶For an overview of all Eurosceptic radical right parties, see Table 2.2 in the Appendix.

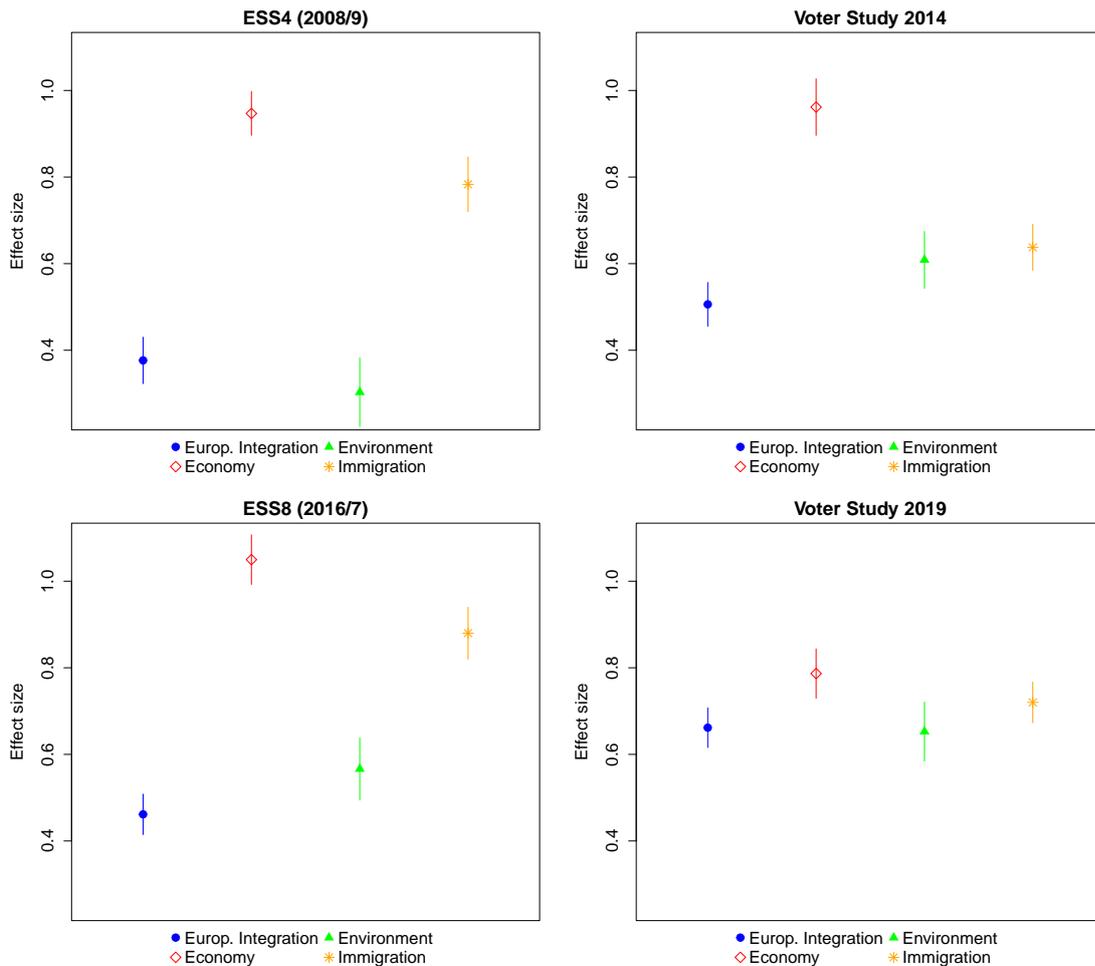
¹⁷Still, one could criticize that 5% of the vote share is an arbitrary threshold. Thus, I additionally perform a macro analysis as a robustness check, in which I regress the relative salience of European integration for pro-European voters on vote share of Eurosceptic radical right parties. The concrete procedure is described in the Appendix in section G. The results (see Table 2.5) support the expectation that increasing ESRRP success is associated with larger salience of European integration for pro-European voters.

¹⁸The models are estimated using the clogit command within the survival package in R (survival Version 3.3-1; Therneau, 2022). I estimate separate models for Wallonia and Flanders, as different parties are up for election in each of the two regions. Within Great Britain, I only consider England to analyze respondents with an identical set of parties.

2.5.1 Does Europe matter to voters?

I first present the results based on multilevel conditional logit models for each year separately. Figure 2.2 shows the results.¹⁹ The dots visualize the point estimates, the vertical lines the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2.2: Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4, EES 2014, ESS8, and EES 2019



The larger the effect size of the spatial coefficients the more weight voters attach to this issue in their voting decision and the larger the electoral salience of that issue. In more technical terms, a large effect size indicates that a small distance between a voter's position and a party's position on an issue is associated with a higher probability to vote for that party.

¹⁹The regression results are presented in Table 2.3 in the Appendix.

There is an intermittent pattern with a trend towards a more pronounced salience of the European integration issue. In 2008, 2014, and 2016, European integration ranked among the least salient issues. Unsurprisingly, the established economic issue dimension was always the most salient, but also the immigration (2008, 2014, 2016) and the environmental issue (2014, 2016) exceeded the salience of the European integration issue. However, what is remarkable is the turning point from 2016 to 2019. While the European integration issue was the least salient one in 2016, the distance to the other issues narrowed significantly in 2019. It was almost as salient as the immigration and the environmental issue, and the distance to the economic issue had drastically decreased. This is in line with the literature, according to which the salience of the European integration issue increased after the Brexit referendum in 2016 (Carrieri, 2021; De Vries, 2018). Overall, European integration was not a major electoral issue right before the multiple crises (the Eurozone Crisis started in December 2009 with the financial difficulties of Greece becoming public) and also not in the context of the Migration Crisis and directly after the Brexit referendum. However, the salience of the European integration issue increased significantly in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. Thus, the results support *H1* that the electoral salience of the European integration issue has increased over time as compared to other issues, albeit not in a linear process.

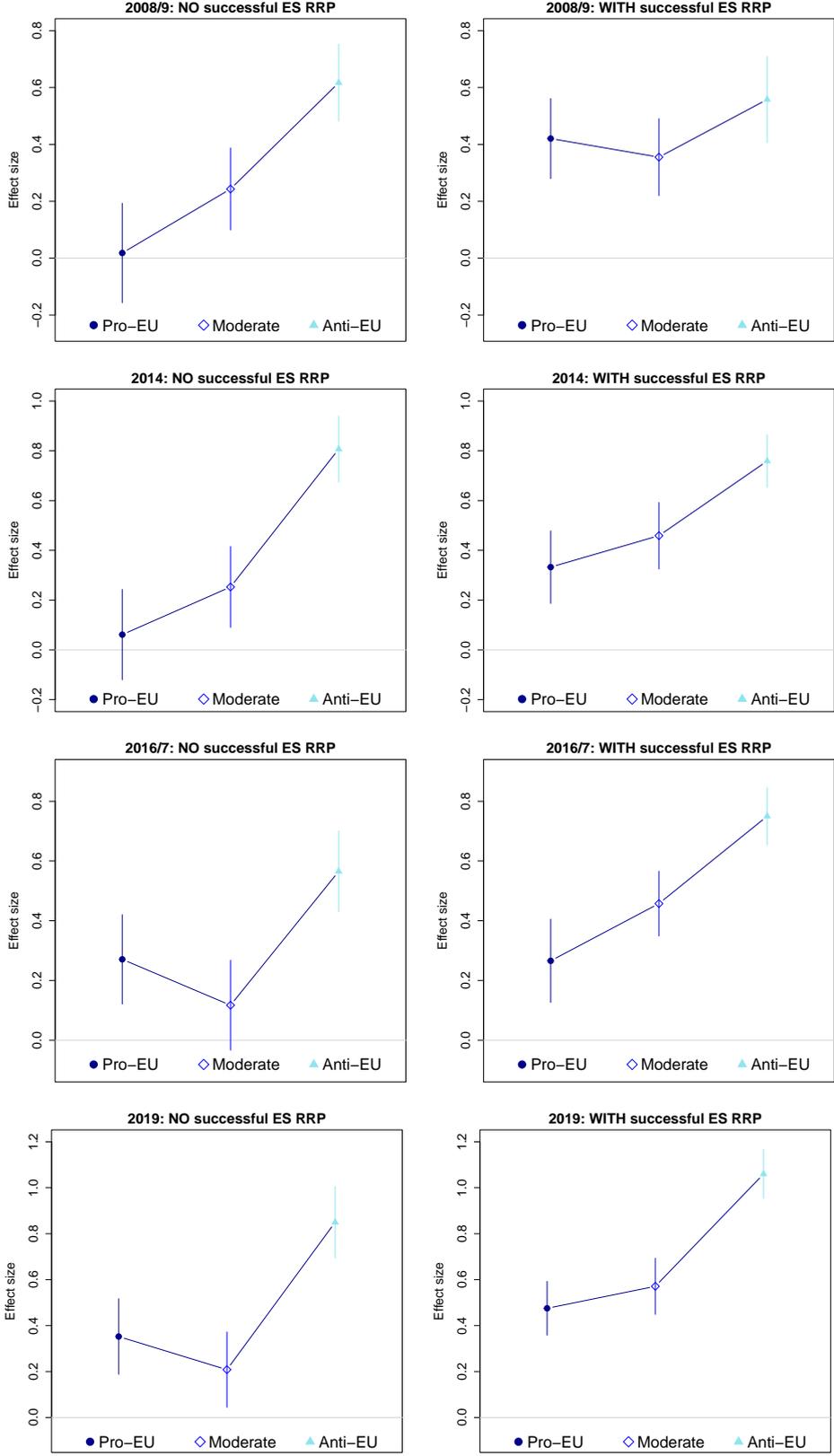
2.5.2 From constraining dissensus to stimulating dissensus? - Aggregated results

Having seen that the European integration issue has become a salient issue in recent years, I now show how its salience varies among anti-European, pro-European, and moderate voters. I present the results of multilevel conditional logit models, in which the effects are estimated for anti-European, moderate, and pro-European voter groups separately for countries with a successful Eurosceptic radical right party (ESRRP) and for those without such a party.²⁰

Figure 2.3 shows the results. Again, the points depict the spatial coefficients, the vertical lines the 95% confidence intervals. One consistent finding across all data sources is that European integration has always been most salient among Eurosceptic voters, thus supporting *H2a*. Since this is not only the case in countries with a successful ESRRP, the results support the notion of a reciprocal influence of parties' and voters' issue priorities. The success of ESRRP might also be (partly) driven by demand, since they encountered high issue salience among their target electorate on one of their core issues. This gives them even more incentives to push the salience of the European integration issue which should have a mutually reinforcing effect.

²⁰The group sizes for countries with a successful Eurosceptic radical right party and those without such a party are presented in Figure 2.12 in the Appendix. Regression tables are shown in Table 2.4 in the Appendix.

Figure 2.3: Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup-specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP (first column) and countries with a successful ESRRP (second column) in 2008/9, 2014, 2016/7, and 2019



The results concerning *H2b* are more mixed. The pattern looks quite similar in 2008/2009 (first row) and 2014 (second row). The left panels for 2008/2009 and 2014 show that in countries without a successful ESRRP, the European integration issue was not salient at all for voters who support European integration, indicated by the insignificant effects for the Europhile voter group. The right panels for 2008/2009 and 2014 demonstrate a significant effect for pro-European voters. This supports *H2b*: In 2008/2009 and 2014, the electoral salience of the European integration issue among Europhile voters was more pronounced in countries with a successful ESRRP than in countries without such a party.

The pattern looks different in 2016/2017 and 2019. The third and the fourth rows of Figure 2.3 illustrate that, independently of whether there was a successful ESRRP, there is a significant effect for the pro-European camp of voters. The difference between the extent of salience of the European integration issue among pro-Europeans and anti-Europeans remains stable regardless of whether there is a Eurosceptic party actively competing on this issue. This does not support *H2b*. Interestingly, there is no pattern specific to the data source used. The results do not suggest that the issue is generally more salient for Europhile voters in the context of the European Parliament Elections 2014 and 2019. On the contrary, there is a comparable pattern in 2008/2009 and 2014, as well as in 2016/2017 and 2019. That makes me quite confident that the results are not driven by the increased visibility of European topics in the context of the European Parliament Elections, but that there is indeed an increasing trend over time towards a more pronounced electoral salience of European integration among Europhile voters in countries without a successful ESRRP. One possible interpretation could be that other sources of politicization, besides those of ESRRPs, play a role for the salience of European integration among pro-European voters. As suggested by the literature, Brexit and the subsequent negotiations on the UK's withdrawal had the power to affect the public mood regarding European integration not only in the UK but also abroad (Malet & Walter, 2024). It could also be that the increasing politicization efforts of Europhile parties played a role in 2016 and 2019.²¹

Another interesting finding is that the effect sizes for moderate voters increase remarkably when there was a successful ESRRP in 2016 and 2019 compared to when there was not such a party. These moderate voters are neither committed pro- nor anti-Europeans. It could be that these people prefer the status quo because they neither want deeper integration nor consider the integration process to be too far-reaching. One reading is that voters do not care so much about *deeper* integration but about the further existence

²¹However, as the literature suggests that Europhile parties respond to Eurosceptic parties by focusing more intensively on the issue of European integration, this should also be visible in the subsets with and without a successful ESRRP, at least in tendency. Nevertheless, future research should examine the role of pro-European parties and how they interplay with pro-European voters more closely.

of the EU in its current form.²² However, these ‘moderate’ attitudes could also reflect ambivalence indicating attitude variability or indifference indicating the absence of attitudes regarding European integration (De Vries, 2013; De Vries & Steenbergen, 2013; Stoeckel, 2013).

To sum up, there is a certain increase in salience of the European integration issue among pro-European voters. However, the results show that this happens at a low level: The question is more about whether European integration matters at all to pro-European voters and not whether there is a pronounced pro-European backlash in terms of electoral salience. The electoral salience of European integration is always considerably higher for Eurosceptics, as compared to moderates and Europhiles.

2.5.3 From constraining dissensus to stimulating dissensus? - Country level results

Since the literature suggests that politicization is punctuated and country specific (Grande & Kriesi, 2016; Kriesi, 2016), I now present disaggregated results to detect heterogeneity in the electoral salience of the European integration issue among different voter groups across countries and points in time. For this purpose, I present results based on conditional logit models estimated for each country and point in time separately.²³ Figure 2.4 gives a summary of these country level results. Panel (a) shows the share of countries in which I find a significant effect for the electoral salience of European integration for pro-European (dark blue bars) and for anti-European voters (bright blue bars) over time.

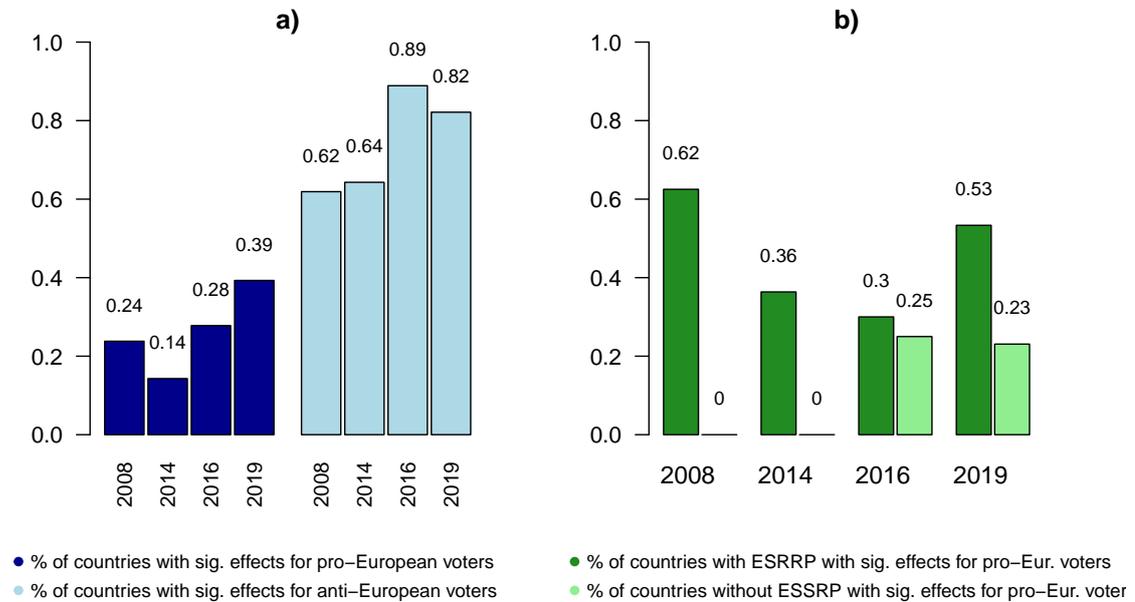
First of all, the results corroborate the finding that it is much more likely that anti-European voters significantly consider the European integration issue in their vote calculus, as compared to pro-European voters. In at least 62% of the countries, I find significant effects for the anti-European camp of voters. On the contrary, in at most 39% of the countries, there is a significant effect for pro-European voters. However, the share of countries in which I find a significant effect for pro-European voters increases over time. In 2008 in 24% of the countries, European integration was an electoral issue for pro-European voters, this share dropped to 14% in 2014, but then increased from 28% (2016) up to 39% (2019). The share of countries with significant effects for anti-European voters also tends to intensify over time: It increased from 62% (2008) to 89%

²²Increasing electoral salience of the European integration issue for moderate voters is also relevant in terms of group size, as the moderate group is the largest of the three subgroups (see Figure 2.12 in the Appendix).

²³Coefficients plots for each country and point in time are presented in the Appendix, Figures 2.13 to 2.16. Regression tables are available upon request.

(2016) and then slightly dropped to 82% (2019).

Figure 2.4: Electoral salience of European integration at the country level: (a) Share of countries with significant electoral salience effects for pro- and anti-European voters; (b) Share of countries with significant electoral salience effects for pro-European voters in countries with and without Eurosceptic radical party



Panel (b) of Figure 2.4 shows the share of countries with significant effects for pro-European voters for countries with (dark green) and without a successful ESRRP (bright green) over time. The country level results also corroborate the finding that the electoral salience of European integration is more pronounced in countries with a successful ESRRP. It is more likely to detect significant effects for pro-European voters in countries with a ESRRP than in countries without such a party, supporting *H2b*.²⁴ However, the extent to which this pattern is observed differs over time. For example, in 2008, in 62% of the countries with a successful ESRRP at this time I find a significant effect for the pro-European camp of voters and in none of the countries without such a party.²⁵ The difference is less pronounced in the two most recent years, especially in 2016. No causal conclusion can be drawn from the data used. However, one potential interpretation of these results is that in 2016 the European integration issue was not only politicized by ESRRP but also by the Brexit referendum and the resulting societal discussions about

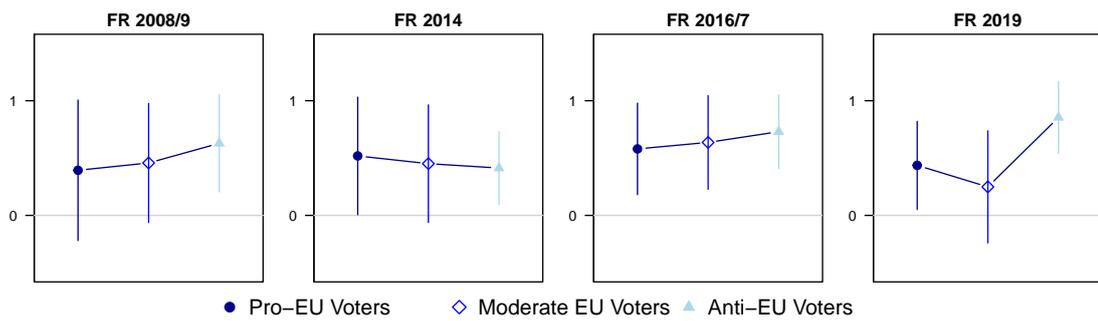
²⁴This is also supported by the macro analysis that I present as a robustness check in the Appendix in section G.1. Vote shares of ESRRPs in the election before the respective voter survey was conducted are significantly positively associated with larger salience levels of European integration among pro-European voters.

²⁵For an overview of the countries with and without a ESRRP at the respective points in time, see Table 2.2 in the Appendix.

European integration all over Europe. Taken together, the European integration issue is most electorally decisive for Eurosceptic voters. However, there is also an increasing tendency for the issue to gain importance among pro-European voters, even though at a remarkably lower level than among Eurosceptic voters. It is more likely that Europhile voters care about European integration if there is an ESRRP competing on that issue within their country.

In a final analytical step, I take a closer look at some particularly interesting cases with a strong Eurosceptic party and/or an important Europe-related event, as I then expect a high politicization of European integration and thus a higher salience of European integration for pro-European voters. Figure 2.5 shows the salience estimates for the European integration issue in France from 2008 to 2019. What makes France a particularly interesting case is that there is a well-established Eurosceptic radical right party (Front National/Rassemblement National). Moreover, Emmanuel Macron was elected president in 2017 with a strikingly pro-European election campaign (Bouza García & Oleari, 2022). The analyses so far have shown that the European integration issue is usually not highly salient among pro-Europeans and most salient for Eurosceptic voters. The pattern looks somewhat different in France. In 2008/2009, the European integration issue was only salient among Eurosceptic voters. In 2014 and 2016/17, it was salient among the pro- and anti-European camp to a similar extent. In 2019, the issue was still important for pro- and anti-Europeans, but more for the latter group. However, it was still more salient among pro-European voters than among moderate voters. The data do not allow for a causal conclusion, but the increasing success of Front National/Rassemblement National (the party increased its vote share from 4.29 (2007) to 13.6 (2012) and 13.2% (2017) and has gained parliamentary representation since 2012) coincides with significant effects for Europhile voters. The slight increase in salience among voters supporting European integration already seems to open up a window of opportunity for political leaders to succeed with pro-European election campaigns. These results also support the notion that Macron already encountered significant salience among pro-Europeans, as there was already a significant effect for the pro-European camp in 2014. The party *En Marche*, with which Macron ran in 2017, was founded in April 2016.

Figure 2.5: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in France 2008–2019



Another interesting case with strong Eurosceptic forces is England. There are several smaller Eurosceptic parties (British National Party, UKIP, Brexit Party) and also pronounced Euroscepticism among voters (Vasilopoulou, 2016), as well as an intense public discourse revolving around the Brexit referendum. The Conservative Party also engaged with the EU issue by initiating the Brexit referendum. Figure 2.6 shows the salience estimates in England between 2008 and 2019. While the European integration issue was not of importance for pro-Europeans in 2008/2009, 2014, and 2016/17, the picture changed in 2019 in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. One plausible explanation is that this extraordinary event of politicization of EU issues has shaken up the reluctant pro-Europeans and made them aware of the consequences of political disintegration and, finally, led them to care about European integration and consider it in their vote calculus.

Figure 2.6: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in England 2008–2019

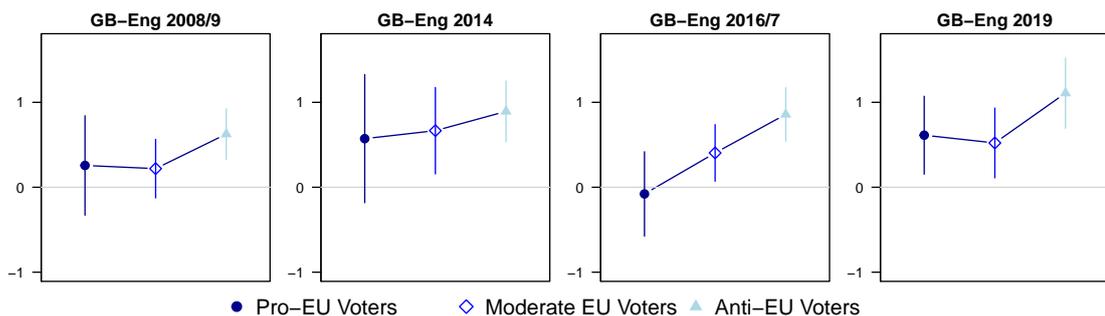
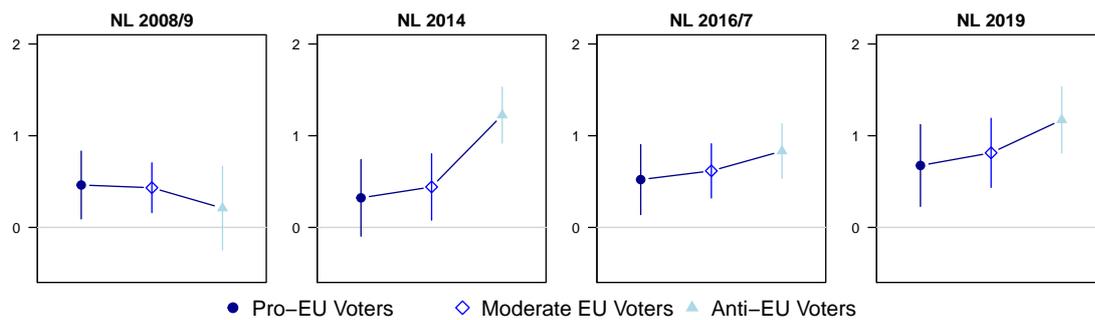


Figure 2.7 presents the salience estimates in the Netherlands. There has been a well-established strongly Eurosceptic party (Partij voor de Vrijheid) since 2008 onward. Except for 2014, the salience of the European integration issue was relatively high among pro-Europeans, even more than among Eurosceptics in 2008/2009. The presence of the ESRRP comes with relatively stable levels of salience of European issues among

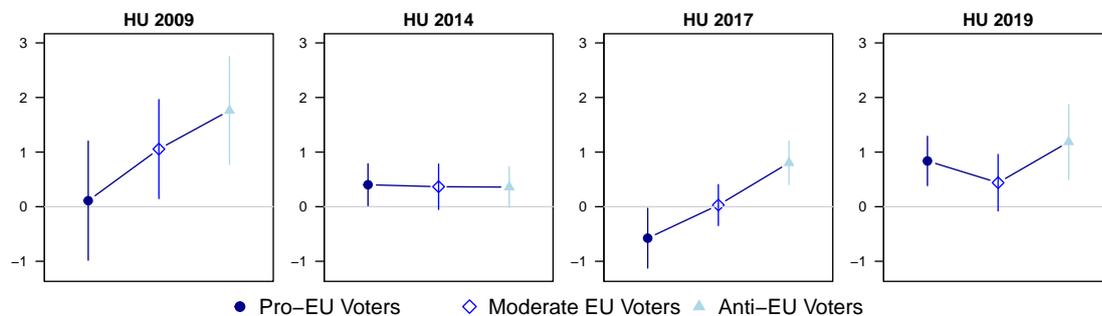
Europhiles. The Netherlands is also the first country in which the strongly pro- and pan-European party Volt entered a national parliament in 2019. The results support the notion that already small increases in salience could provide opportunities for parties to succeed with strikingly pro-European election campaigns.²⁶

Figure 2.7: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in the Netherlands 2008–2019



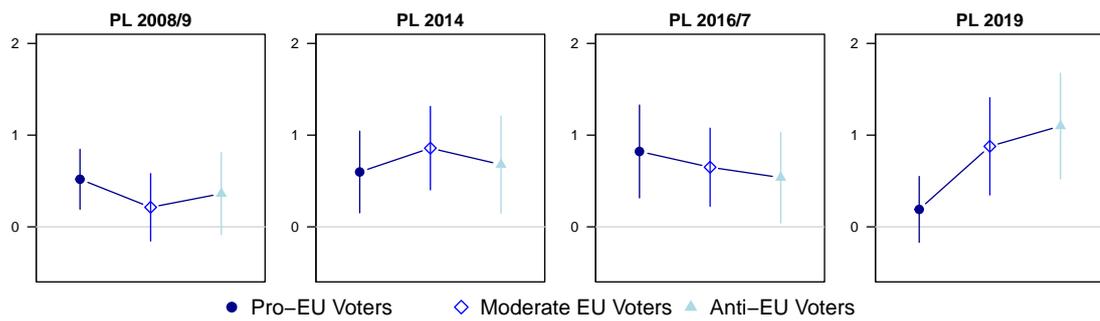
Two other interesting cases are Hungary (Figure 2.8) and Poland (Figure 2.9). In both countries, there are successful Eurosceptic parties. Victor Orbán from the nationalist and Eurosceptic Fidesz has been Hungarian president since 2010, and in Poland the Eurosceptic PiS party was in power from 2015 to 2023. However, there is a pattern of at least punctuated salience among Europhile voters in both countries. In Hungary, the electoral salience among Europhiles was almost as strong as among Eurosceptics in 2014 and 2019. In Poland, the salience of the European integration issue was even more pronounced in the pro- than in the anti-European camp of voters in 2008/2009 and 2016/2017.

Figure 2.8: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Hungary 2008–2019



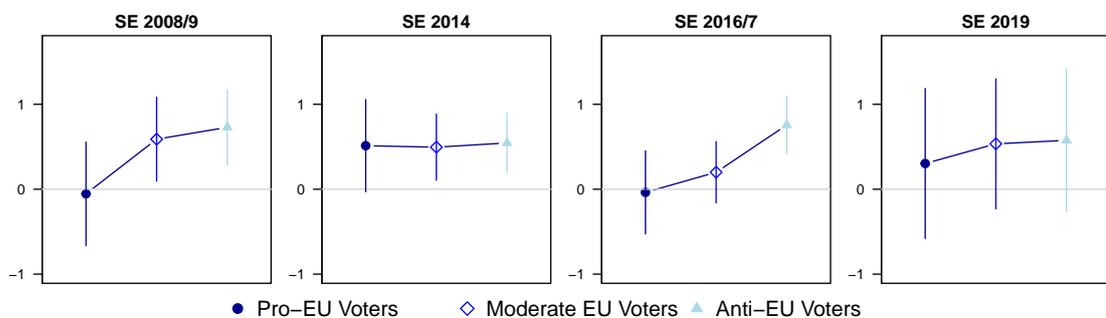
²⁶With their strong Europhile profile, Volt also politicizes strongly in a pro-European manner, which could also foster salience among pro-Europeans. However, since the party was founded in June 2018, the results suggest that they have already encountered a relatively pronounced salience among pro-European voters.

Figure 2.9: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Poland 2008–2019



Zooming in the country level shows that there are indeed cases in which Europhile voters care about European integration and that this is particularly the case in politicized environments. However, there are also countries with strong Eurosceptic parties in which the pro-European side does not care about European integration at all. As an example, Figure 2.10 shows the salience estimates for Sweden. Although the Swedish party system includes a particularly successful Eurosceptic radical right party (Sverigedemokraterna), there are no significant effects for supporters of European integration throughout the period studied.

Figure 2.10: Electoral salience of the European integration issue in Sweden 2008–2019



Thus, the country-level results support the notion of punctuated politicization of the European integration issue reflected in time- and country-specific variance of its electoral salience. Future research should delve deeper into the specific national circumstances to disentangle the concrete mechanisms of the (non-)existence of electoral salience of European integration for pro-European voters.

2.6 Conclusion

The past 15 years have been characterized by rising Euroscepticism and multiple European crises such as the Eurozone Crisis, the Migration Crisis and Brexit, fostering the

politicization of the European integration process. However, there is little evidence of how these developments have affected voters holding pro-European attitudes. I examine whether Europhile voters have become more aware of their preferences regarding European issues in a time period of increasing politicization.

Overall, the results show that the salience of the European integration issue has increased in recent years. After the European Election in 2019, European integration was almost as salient as immigration and economic issues and as salient as environmental issues. In 2008, 2014 and 2016, the issue played a subordinate role in comparison to economic, immigration, and environmental issues. Moreover, the results demonstrate that the electoral salience of European integration is the most pronounced among voters opposing European integration. The salience of European integration is clearly less visible among Europhile voters. However, it tends to be more pronounced in countries with successful Eurosceptic radical right parties, especially in 2008 and 2014. In 2016 and 2019, there was a 'baseline' salience of European integration in the pro-European camp of voters, independently of the existence of a successful Eurosceptic radical right party, indicated by small but significant effects for Europhile voters. This finding suggests that there are also other sources of politicization, which are not specific to the national party system. This is in line with the finding by Malet and Walter (2024) that the Brexit decision and the subsequent negotiations had the power to affect the public mood regarding European integration also abroad.

Looking at countries with particularly strong Eurosceptic radical right parties reveals interesting variation. For example, France and the Netherlands stand out for their relatively high salience of the European integration issue among pro-European voters and for the success of Europhile actors in campaigning on this issue. Even in countries such as Hungary and Poland, which are known for their pronounced anti-EU stances, the salience of the European integration issue is surprisingly pronounced in the pro-European camp of voters. However, salience of European integration among Europhile voters does not always increase in contexts with strong Eurosceptic parties. For example, I do not find any significant effects for the pro-European camp of voters in Sweden. Therefore, future research should further disentangle the mechanism under which the salience of European integration is particularly high or low, beyond the presence of Eurosceptic radical right parties. In particular, the (limited) politicization efforts of Europhile parties and their impact on voters should be addressed. The hesitancy of pro-European voters to raise the salience of European integration could also be due to the opposing pressures Europhile parties face. They are confronted with widespread public Euroscepticism, while at the same time being constrained by their previous ideological commitments, in which they were driving forces of European integration.

One major limitation of the analyses in this paper is that the data used do not allow for making any causal claims because contextual factors are only considered indirectly. With the data available, I can only observe the development of electoral salience of European integration in a period of increasing politicization. This is still an important contribution since it provides an overview of this development in a wide range of EU member states between 2008 and 2019. However, I cannot causally identify whether heterogeneity in salience is indeed due to the politicization efforts of the ES-RRPs, whether parties react to voter-induced shifts in issue importance and which role other factors, such as the strategies of Europhile parties, play. Thus, future research should use panel data to disentangle the interplay of parties' and voters' issue salience, as well as other sources of politicization. Moreover, it is least likely to find pronounced pro-European counter-reactions at the voter level since the politicization literature shows that engagement with the European integration issue at the individual level is still substantially lower than that of actors in parties or the mass media (De Wilde et al., 2016). Again, this stresses the importance that future research should also focus more on the party level, especially on the strategies of Europhile parties, how they interplay with Eurosceptic parties' strategies, and the public mood regarding European integration.

References

- Adam, S., Antl-Wittenberg, E.-M., Eugster, B., Leidecker-Sandmann, M., Maier, M., & Schmidt, F. (2017). Strategies of pro-European parties in the face of a Eurosceptic challenge. *European Union Politics*, 18(2), 260–282.
- Adams, J., Clark, M., Ezrow, L., & Glasgow, G. (2004). Understanding Change and Stability in Party Ideologies: Do Parties Respond to Public Opinion or to Past Election Results? *British Journal of Political Science*, 34(4), 589–610.
- Ansolabehere, S., & Puy, S. (2018). Measuring issue-salience in voters' preferences. *Electoral Studies*, 51, 103–114.
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2018). From the euro to the Schengen crises: European integration theories, politicization, and identity politics. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(1), 83–108.
- Bouza García, L., & Oleart, Á. (2022). Make Europe Great Again: The Politicising Pro-European Narrative of Emmanuel Macron in France. In T. Haapala & Á. Oleart (Eds.), *Tracing the Politicisation of the EU: The Future of Europe Debates Before and After the 2019 Elections* (pp. 271–293). Springer.
- Brader, T., De Sio, L., Paparo, A., & Tucker, J. A. (2020). “Where You Lead, I Will Follow”: Partisan Cueing on High-Salience Issues in a Turbulent Multiparty System. *Political Psychology*, 41(4), 795–812.
- Braun, D., Popa, S. A., & Schmitt, H. (2019). Responding to the crisis: Eurosceptic parties of the left and right and their changing position towards the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(3), 797–819.
- Carrieri, L. (2021). *The impact of European integration on West European politics: Committed pro-Europeans strike back*. Springer Nature.
- Carrieri, L. (2023). Awakening the Europhile Giant: EU Issue Voting in Western and Central-Eastern Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1–23.
- Crawley, S., Coffé, H., & Chapman, R. (2022). Climate Belief and Issue Salience: Comparing Two Dimensions of Public Opinion on Climate Change in the EU. *Social Indicators Research*, 162, 307–325.
- Dalton, R. J. (2008). The quantity and the quality of party systems: Party system polarization, its measurement, and its consequences. *Comparative political studies*, 41(7), 899–920.
- Dalton, R. J. (2017). Party representation across multiple issue dimensions. *Party Politics*, 23(6), 609–622.
- De Vries, C. E. (2007). Sleeping giant: Fact or Fairytale? How European Integration Affects National Elections. *European Union Politics*, 8(3), 363–385.
- De Vries, C. E. (2013). Ambivalent Europeans? Public support for European integration in east and west. *Government and Opposition*, 48(3), 434–461.

- De Vries, C. E. (2018). The cosmopolitan-parochial divide: changing patterns of party and electoral competition in the Netherlands and beyond. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(11), 1541–1565.
- De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2012). When dimensions collide: The electoral success of issue entrepreneurs. *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 246–268.
- De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2016). EU Issue voting in national and European Parliamentary elections. In van der Brug W & de Vreese CH (Eds.), *(Un)intended Consequences of European Parliamentary Elections* (pp. 101–124). Oxford University Press.
- De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2020). *Political Entrepreneurs: The Rise of Challenger Parties in Europe*. Princeton University Press.
- De Vries, C. E., & Steenbergen, M. (2013). Variable opinions: The predictability of support for unification in European mass publics. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 12(1), 121–141.
- De Vries, C. E., & Tillman, E. R. (2010). European Union issue voting in East and West Europe: The role of political context. *Comparative European Politics*, 9(1), 1–17.
- De Wilde, P. (2011). No polity for old politics? A framework for analyzing the politicization of European integration. *Journal of European integration*, 33(5), 559–575.
- De Wilde, P., Leupold, A., & Schmidtke, H. (2016). Introduction: The differentiated politicisation of European governance. *West European Politics*, 39(1), 3–22.
- Down, I., & Wilson, C. J. (2010). Opinion polarization and inter-party competition on Europe. *European Union Politics*, 11(1), 61–87.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper; Row.
- Ejrnæs, A., & Jensen, M. D. (2019). Divided but united: explaining nested public support for European integration. *West European Politics*, 42(7), 1390–1419.
- Elff, M. (2018). *mclogit: Mixed Conditional Logit Models*: Available from: <http://github.com/melff/mclogit/>.
- ESS. (2018). *ESS4 - integrated file, edition 4.5*. https://doi.org/10.21338/ESS4E04_5
- ESS. (2020). *ESS8 - integrated file, edition 2.2*. https://doi.org/10.21338/ESS8E02_2
- Ferrara, F. M., & Kriesi, H. (2022). Crisis pressures and European integration. *Journal of European public policy*, 29(9), 1351–1373.
- Ferrera, M., & Burelli, C. (2019). Cross-national solidarity and political sustainability in the EU after the Crisis. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57(1), 94–110.
- Filip, A. (2021). The Evolution and Trends of Eurosceptic Success. In A. Filip (Ed.), *Eurosceptic Contagion: The Influence of Eurosceptic Parties in West-European Party Systems* (pp. 65–87). Springer.

- Genschel, P., & Jachtenfuchs, M. (2018). From market integration to core state powers: The Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and integration theory. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(1), 178–196.
- Gerhards, J., Lengfeld, H., Ignácz, Z., Kley, F., & Priem, M. (2019). *European solidarity in times of crisis: Insights from a thirteen-country survey*. Routledge.
- Grande, E., & Kriesi, H. (2016). Conclusions: the postfunctionalists were (almost) right. In S. Hutter, E. Grande, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *Politicising Europe* (pp. 279–300). Cambridge University Press.
- Green-Pedersen, C. (2019). *The reshaping of West European party politics: agenda-setting and party competition in comparative perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Green-Pedersen, C., & Krogstrup, J. (2008). Immigration as a political issue in Denmark and Sweden. *European Journal of Political Research*, 47(5), 610–634.
- Hellwig, T. (2014). The structure of issue voting in postindustrial democracies. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 55(4), 596–624.
- Henjak, A. (2010). Political Cleavages and Socio-economic Context: How Welfare Regimes and Historical Divisions Shape Political Cleavages. *West European Politics*, 33(3), 474–504.
- Hobolt, S. B., & De Vries, C. E. (2015). Issue Entrepreneurship and Multiparty Competition. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(9), 1159–1185.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Rodon, T. (2020). Domestic contestation of the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(2), 161–167.
- Hoeglinger, D. (2016). The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns. *West European Politics*, 39(1), 44–63.
- Hooghe, L., Bakker, R., Brigevich, A., De Vries, C. E., Edwards, E., Marks, G., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. (2010). Reliability and validity of the 2002 and 2006 Chapel Hill expert surveys on party positioning. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(5), 687–703.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British journal of political science*, 39(1), 1–23.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2018). Cleavage theory meets Europe's crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the transnational cleavage. *Journal of European public policy*, 25(1), 109–135.
- Hutter, S., & Grande, E. (2014). Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5), 1002–1018.
- Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (2019). Politicizing Europe in times of crisis. *Journal of European public policy*, 26(7), 996–1017.

- Jolly, S., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2019. *Electoral Studies*, 75.
- Jones, E., Kelemen, R. D., & Meunier, S. (2021). Failing forward? Crises and patterns of European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1519–1536.
- Kitschelt, H., & McGann, A. J. (1997). *The radical right in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*. University of Michigan Press.
- Klüver, H., & Sagarzazu, I. (2016). Setting the agenda or responding to voters? Political parties, voters and issue attention. *West European Politics*, 39(2), 380–398.
- Klüver, H., & Spoon, J.-J. (2016). Who responds? Voters, parties and issue attention. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 633–654.
- Knutsen, O. (2018). *Social Structure, Value Orientations and Party Choice in Western Europe*. Springer.
- König, T., Marbach, M., & Osnabrügge, M. (2017). Left/Right or U? Estimating the Dimensionality of National Party Competition in Europe. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(3), 1101–1105.
- Kriesi, H. (2016). The politicization of European integration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54, 32–47.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921–956.
- Kurella, A.-S., & Rapp, M. (2024). Combining voter preferences with party position estimates from different sources for studying voting behavior and representation. *Electoral Studies*, 87, 1–12.
- Kurella, A.-S., & Rosset, J. (2017). Blind spots in the party system: Spatial voting and issue salience if voters face scarce choices. *Electoral Studies*, 49, 1–16.
- Malet, G., & Thiebaut, C. (2024). Silent responsiveness: How public opinion affects party discourse on wedge issues. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(4), 1491–1514.
- Malet, G., & Walter, S. (2024). The reverberations of British Brexit politics abroad. *European Union Politics*, 25(1), 63–85.
- Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Steenbergen, M. R., & Bakker, R. (2007). Crossvalidating data on party positioning on European integration. *Electoral Studies*, 26(1), 23–38.
- Meguid, B. M. (2005). Competition between unequals: The role of mainstream party strategy in niche party success. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 347–359.
- Meguid, B. M. (2008). *Party Competition Between Unequals. Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

- Meijers, M. J. (2017). Contagious Euroscepticism: The impact of Eurosceptic support on mainstream party positions on European integration. *Party Politics*, 23(4), 413–423.
- Pierson, P. (1996). The path to European integration: A historical institutionalist analysis. *Comparative political studies*, 29(2), 123–163.
- Rauh, C., & Zürn, M. (2016). Die Politisierung der Europäischen Union als Chance nutzen. *integration*, 3–14.
- Ray, L. (2007). Mainstream Euroscepticism: Trend or Oxymoron? *Acta Politica*, 42, 153–172.
- Reinl, A.-K., & Braun, D. (2023). Who holds the union together? Citizens' preferences for European Union cohesion in challenging times. *European Union Politics*, 24(2), 390–409.
- Rohrschneider, R., & Whitefield, S. (2016). Responding to growing European Union-skepticism? The stances of political parties toward European integration in Western and Eastern Europe following the financial crisis. *European Union Politics*, 17(1), 138–161.
- Rosset, J., & Stecker, C. (2019). How well are citizens represented by their governments? Issue congruence and inequality in Europe. *European Political Science Review*, 11(2), 145–160.
- Sanders, D., & Toka, G. (2013). Is anyone listening? Mass and elite opinion cueing in the EU. *Electoral Studies*, 32(1), 13–25.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2018). Liberal intergovernmentalism and the crises of the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(7), 1578–1594.
- Schmitt, H., Hobolt, S. B., Brug, W. v. d., & Popa, S. A. (2022). European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13846>
- Schmitt, H., Hobolt, S. B., Popa, S. A., Teperoglou, E., & European Parliament, P. M. U., Directorate-General for Communication. (2016). European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study, First Post-Election Survey. <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12628>
- Schmitter, P. C. (2009). On the way to a post-functionalist theory of European integration. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 211–215.
- Schoen, H. (2019). Not a powerful electoral issue yet: On the role of European integration in the 2017 German federal election. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(5), 717–733.
- Slothuus, R., & De Vreese, C. H. (2010). Political parties, motivated reasoning, and issue framing effects. *The Journal of politics*, 72(3), 630–645.
- Spoon, J.-J., & Williams, C. (2017). It takes two: How Eurosceptic public opinion and party divisions influence party positions. *West European Politics*, 40(4), 741–762.

- Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., & De Vries, C. E. (2007). Who's cueing whom? Mass-elite linkages and the future of European integration. *European Union Politics*, 8(1), 13–35.
- Stoeckel, F. (2013). Ambivalent or indifferent? Reconsidering the structure of EU public opinion. *European Union Politics*, 14(1), 23–45.
- Stoeckel, F., & Kuhn, T. (2018). Mobilizing citizens for costly policies: The conditional effect of party cues on support for international bailouts in the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(2), 446–461.
- Szczerbiak, A., & Taggart, P. (2008). *Opposing Europe?: The comparative party politics of euroscepticism: Volume 1: Case studies and country surveys* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press, USA.
- Therneau, T. M. (2022). *A Package for Survival Analysis in R*.
- Toshkov, D., & Krouwel, A. (2022). Beyond the U-curve: Citizen preferences on European integration in multidimensional political space. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 462–488.
- Treib, O. (2014). The voter says no, but nobody listens: causes and consequences of the Eurosceptic vote in the 2014 European elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10), 1541–1554.
- Treib, O. (2021). Euroscepticism is here to stay: what cleavage theory can teach us about the 2019 European Parliament elections. *Journal of European public policy*, 28(2), 174–189.
- Van der Brug, W., & Van Spanje, J. (2009). Immigration, Europe and the 'new' cultural dimension. *European Journal of Political Research*, 48(3), 309–334.
- Vasilopoulou, S. (2016). UK Euroscepticism and the Brexit referendum. *The Political Quarterly*, 87(2), 219–227.
- Vasilopoulou, S. (2023). Parties and European integration. In N. Carter, D. Keith, G. M. Sindre, & S. Vasilopoulou (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Parties* (pp. 301–311). Routledge.
- Wlezien, C. (2005). On the salience of political issues: The problem with 'most important problem'. *Electoral Studies*, 24(4), 555–579.
- Zeitlin, J., Nicoli, F., & Laffan, B. (2019). Introduction: The European Union beyond the polycrisis? Integration and politicization in an age of shifting cleavages. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(7), 963–976.

Appendix

Appendix A: Operationalization of voters' issue positions

European Social Survey (ESS)

Since the ESS provides several items on the economy, immigration and the environment, my procedure is to first estimate a factor analysis to determine which of the items to consider for the respective index. I extract three factors for each latent issue dimension, covering different aspects of the respective issue. Depending on how many items each factor encompasses, I build a weighted index, such that all distinct aspects weigh about equally. The list of the items considered is shown below.

ESS wave 4 (2008)

- **European integration dimension:** "European unification go further or gone too far".
- **Economic dimension:** "Large differences in income acceptable to reward talents and efforts", "For fair society differences in standard of living should be small", "Health care for the sick, governments' responsibility", "Standard of living for the old, governments' responsibility", "Standard of living for the unemployed, governments' responsibility", "Government should reduce differences in income levels", "Social benefits/services place too great strain on economy", "Social benefits/services cost businesses too much in taxes/charges".
- **Environmental dimension:** "Important to care for nature and environment".
- **Immigration dimension:** "Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority", "Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group as majority", "Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe", "Immigration bad or good for country's economy", "Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants", "Immigrants make country worse or better place to live", "When should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services", "Immigrants receive more or less than they contribute".

ESS wave 8 (2016)

- **European integration dimension:** "European unification go further or gone too far"
- **Economic dimension:** "Government should reduce differences in income levels", "Large differences in income acceptable to reward talents and efforts", "For

fair society, differences in standard of living should be small", "Standard of living for the old government's responsibility", "Standard of living for the unemployed, government's responsibility", "Child care services for working parents, governments responsibility", "Social benefits/services place too great strain on economy", "Social benefits/services cost businesses too much in taxes/charges"

- **Immigration dimension:** "Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority", "Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority", "Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe", "Immigration bad or good for country's economy", "Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants", "Immigrants make country worse or better place to live", "Government should be generous judging applications for refugee status", "When should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services"
- **Environmental dimension:** "How much electricity in [country] should be generated from solar power", "How much electricity in [country] should be generated from wind power", "Do you think world's climate is changing", "To what extent feel personal responsibility to reduce climate change", "How worried about climate change", "Favour increase taxes on fossil fuels to reduce climate change", "Favour subsidise renewable energy to reduce climate change", "Favour ban sale of least energy efficient household appliances to reduce climate change".

Voter Studies of the European Election Studies (EES)

Voter Study 2014

- **European integration dimension:** "European unification go further or gone too far"
- **Economic dimension:** "State regulation and control of the market", "Redistribution of wealth", "You are fully in favour of raising taxes to increase public services"
- **Environmental dimension:** "Environmental protection should always take priority even at the cost of economic growth"
- **Immigration dimension:** "You are fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration"

Voter Study 2019

- **European integration dimension:** "European unification go further or gone too far"

- **Economic dimension:** "You fully in favour of state intervention in the economy", "You fully in favour of redistribution from the rich to the poor in [country]"
- **Environmental dimension:** "Environmental protection should take priority even at the cost of economic growth"
- **Immigration dimension:** "You fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration"

Appendix B: Combining different sources of party and voter positions

Figure 2.11: Exemplary voter distributions from EES 19 and party positions from CHES 19 in Germany

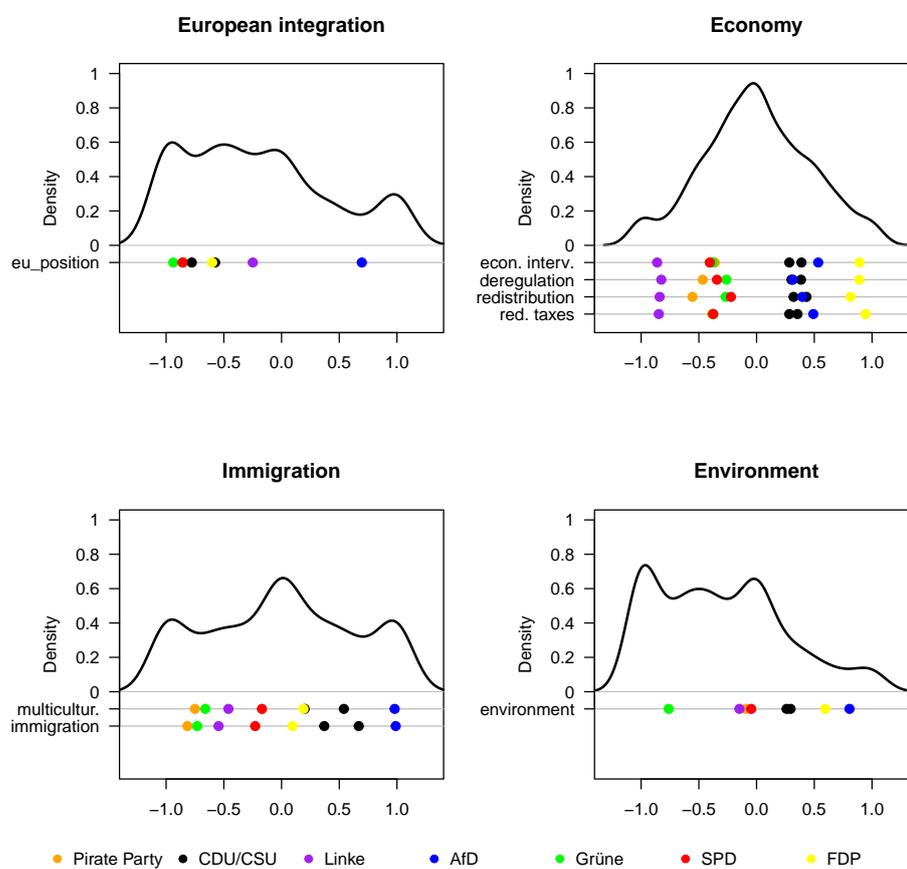


Table 2.1: Correlation of CHES party positions (2006-2019) in EU member states on economic issues

	irecon	spendvtax	deregulation	redistribution	econ_interven
irecon	1				
spendvtax	0.94	1			
deregulation	0.95	0.92	1		
redistribution	0.95	0.94	0.93	1	
econ_interven	0.95	0.92	0.95	0.93	1

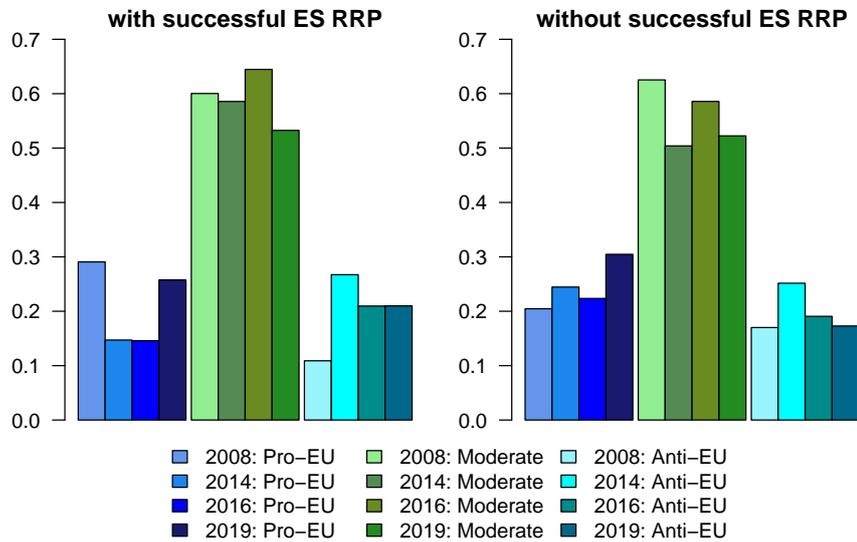
Appendix C: Overview of countries included in the analyses and the (non-)existence of successful Eurosceptic radical right parties

Table 2.2: Eurosceptic radical right parties by country and data source, *Note:* ‘-’ = no party classified as successful ESRRP, ‘not included’ = country is not included in the analyses

Country	ESS4	Voter Study 2014	ESS8	Voter Study 2019
AT	Not included	FPÖ (2013: 20.51%)	FPÖ (2013: 20.51%)	FPÖ (2017: 25.97%)
BEF	VB (2007: 11.99%)	-	-	VB (2019: 11.95%)
BEW	-	-	Not included	-
DE	-	-	-	AfD (2017: 12.6%)
FR	-	FN (2012: 13.6%)	FN (2012: 13.6%)	RN (2017: 13.20%)
IE	-	-	-	-
LU	Not included	-	Not included	-
NL	PVV (2006: 5.90%)	PVV (2012: 10.10%)	PVV (2012: 10.10%)	PVV (2017: 13.10%)
GB (England)	-	-	UKIP (2015: 14.1%)	-
GR	LAOS (2009: 5.63%)	XA (2012: 6.90%) ANEL 2012: 7.50%)	Not included	-
CY	Not included	-	Not included	-
IT	Not included	-	-	LN (2018: 17.39%)
PT	-	-	-	-
ES	-	-	-	Vox (2019: 10.26%)
DK	DF (2007: 13.90%)	DF (2011: 12.20%)	Not included	DF (2019: 8.70%)
FI	-	PS (2011: 19.10%)	PS (2015: 17.7%)	PS (2019: 17.50%)
SE	-	SD (2010: 5.70%)	SD (2014: 12.90%)	SD (2018: 17.50%)
BG	NOA (2005: 8.20)	NOA (2013: 7.30%)	Not included	-
HR	Not included	-	Not included	-
CZ	-	USVIT (2013: 6.90%)	USVIT (2013: 6.90%)	SPD (2017: 10.64%)
EE	-	-	EKRE (2015: 8.1%)	EKRE (2019: 17.80%)
HU	-	JOBBIK (2014: 20.20%)	JOBBIK (2014: 20.20%)	Fidesz-KDNP (2018: 49.28%), JOBBIK (2018: 19.06%)
LV	Not included	-	Not included	-
LT	Not included	-	-	-
PL	PiS (2007: 32.11%)	PiS (2011: 29.90%)	PiS (2015: 37.6%)	PiS (2015: 37.6%)
RO	-	-	Not included	-
SI	SNS 2008: 5.40%)	-	-	-
SK	SNS (2006: 11.70%)	-	Not included	LSNS (2016: 8.04%), Sme Rodina (2016: 6.63%), SNS (2016: 8.64%)

Appendix D: Group Sizes

Figure 2.12: Subgroup sizes in countries with and without successful ESRRP in % of the total electorate



Appendix E: Multilevel Conditional Logit Models

Table 2.3: Results of multilevel conditional logit models without subgroups

	ESS4	VS14	ESS8	VS19
distance on Europ. integration	0.38*** (0.03)	0.51*** (0.03)	0.46*** (0.02)	0.66*** (0.02)
distance on economy	0.96*** (0.03)	0.96*** (0.03)	1.05*** (0.03)	0.79*** (0.03)
distance on environment	0.31*** (0.04)	0.61*** (0.03)	0.57*** (0.04)	0.66*** (0.03)
distance on immigration	0.73*** (0.03)	0.64*** (0.03)	0.88*** (0.03)	0.72*** (0.02)
Observations	21155	15027	18730	16093
Null deviance	77160	57170	74030	60780
Residual deviance	59530	45480	56880	50240

Note: SE in ()

‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05

Table 2.4: Results of multilevel conditional logit models with subgroups for countries with a successful ESRRP (ES) and without a successful ESRRP (NES)

	ESS4 ES	ESS4 NES	VS14 ES	VS14 NES	ESS8 ES	ESS8 NES	VS19 ES	VS19 NES
dist. on EU.: pro	0.42*** (0.07)	0.01 (0.09)	0.33*** (0.07)	0.06 (0.09)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.27*** (0.08)	0.48*** (0.06)	0.35*** (0.08)
dist. on EU.: mod	0.36*** (0.08)	0.25*** (0.07)	0.46*** (0.07)	0.25** (0.08)	0.46*** (0.06)	0.12 (0.08)	0.57*** (0.06)	0.21* (0.08)
dist. on EU: anti	0.57*** (0.08)	0.62*** (0.07)	0.76*** (0.05)	0.81*** (0.07)	0.75*** (0.05)	0.57*** (0.07)	1.06*** (0.05)	0.85*** (0.08)
dist. on Econ.: left	1.17*** (0.10)	1.19*** (0.08)	1.84*** (0.13)	0.88*** (0.11)	1.56*** (0.09)	1.22*** (0.11)	0.86*** (0.07)	0.78*** (0.09)
dist. on Econ.: mod	0.69*** (0.06)	0.79*** (0.05)	1.21*** (0.07)	0.52*** (0.06)	0.85*** (0.05)	0.77*** (0.06)	0.83*** (0.06)	0.70*** (0.08)
dist. on Econ.: right	1.24*** (0.11)	1.19*** (0.07)	1.37*** (0.11)	0.63*** (0.10)	1.41*** (0.10)	0.84*** (0.10)	0.72*** (0.08)	0.78*** (0.11)
dist. on Envir.: pro	0.50*** (0.09)	0.40*** (0.07)	1.14*** (0.08)	0.55*** (0.08)	0.92*** (0.08)	0.53*** (0.09)	1.17*** (0.06)	0.64*** (0.10)
dist. on Envir.: mod	-0.09 (0.11)	0.34*** (0.09)	0.66*** (0.08)	0.34*** (0.08)	0.55*** (0.07)	0.33*** (0.08)	0.54*** (0.07)	0.44*** (0.11)
dist. on Envir.: anti	0.26 (0.31)	-0.47* (0.20)	0.26 (0.14)	0.31** (0.12)	0.45** (0.14)	0.36* (0.17)	0.12 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.18)
dist. on Immi.: pro	1.40*** (0.10)	1.08*** (0.09)	0.11 (0.08)	0.20* (0.09)	1.42*** (0.09)	1.18*** (0.10)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.20* (0.10)
dist. on Immi.: mod	0.72*** (0.07)	0.50*** (0.06)	0.65*** (0.07)	0.37*** (0.08)	0.74*** (0.06)	0.58*** (0.07)	0.58*** (0.06)	0.54*** (0.09)
dist. on Immi.: anti	0.67*** (0.10)	0.40*** (0.10)	1.12*** (0.07)	0.80*** (0.07)	0.91*** (0.09)	0.55*** (0.12)	1.39*** (0.06)	0.86*** (0.08)
Observations	7928	13227	6835	8192	10875	7855	9658	6435
Null Deviance	31130	46020	27220	29950	43370	30660	37110	23670
Residual Deviance	24640	34640	21350	23690	33340	23240	30490	19300

Note: SE in ()

***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

Appendix F: Conditional Logit Models Country Level

Figure 2.13: ESS4: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately

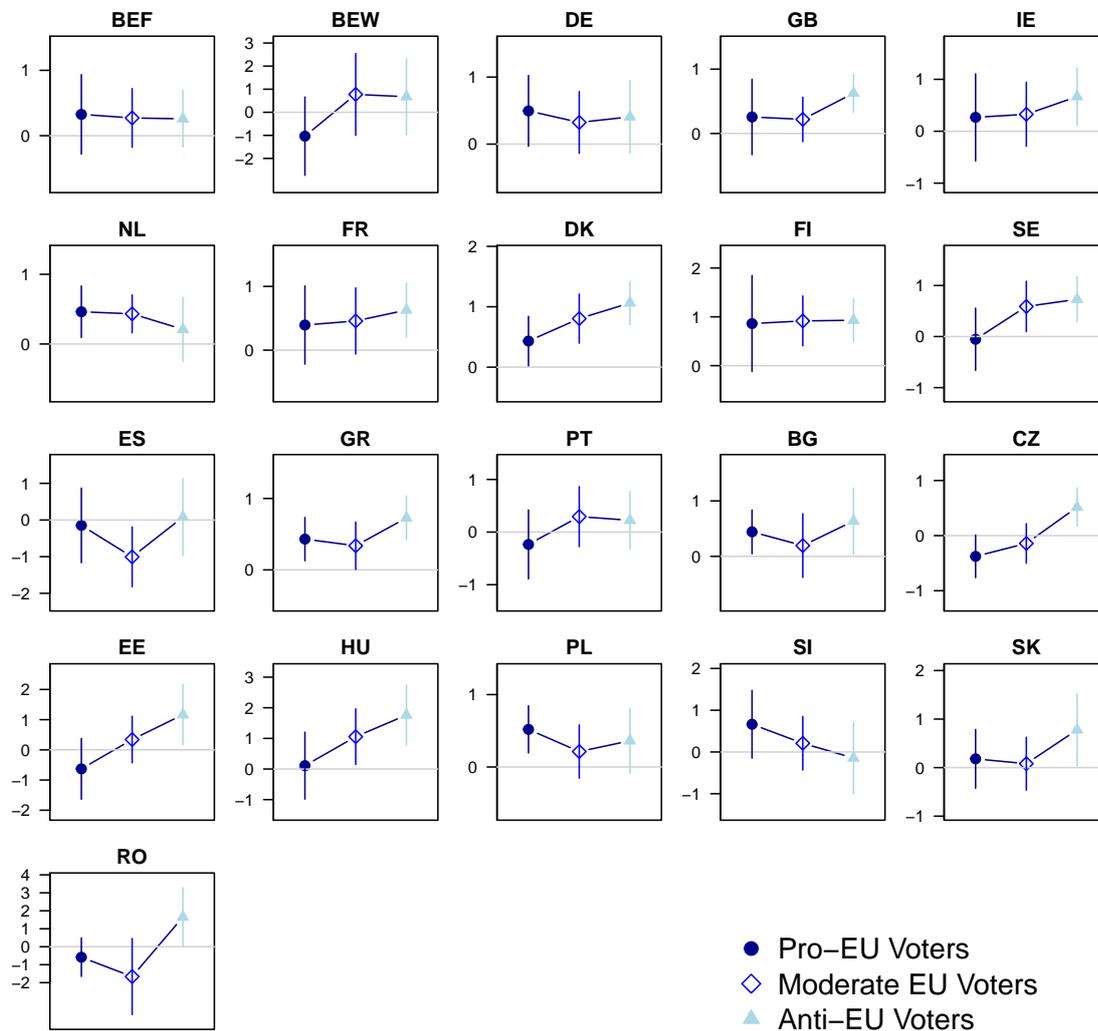


Figure 2.14: Voter Study 14: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately

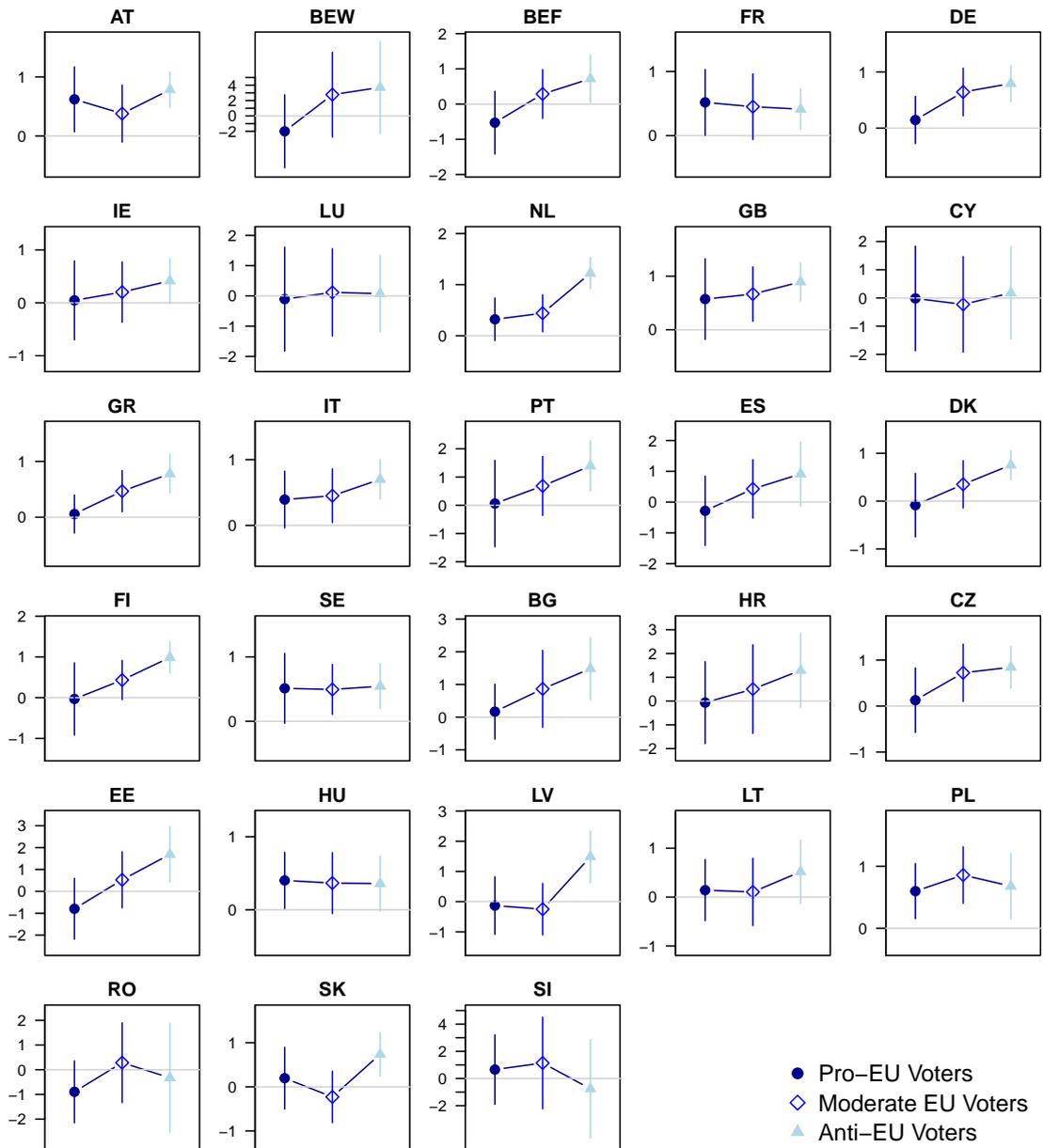


Figure 2.15: ESS8: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately

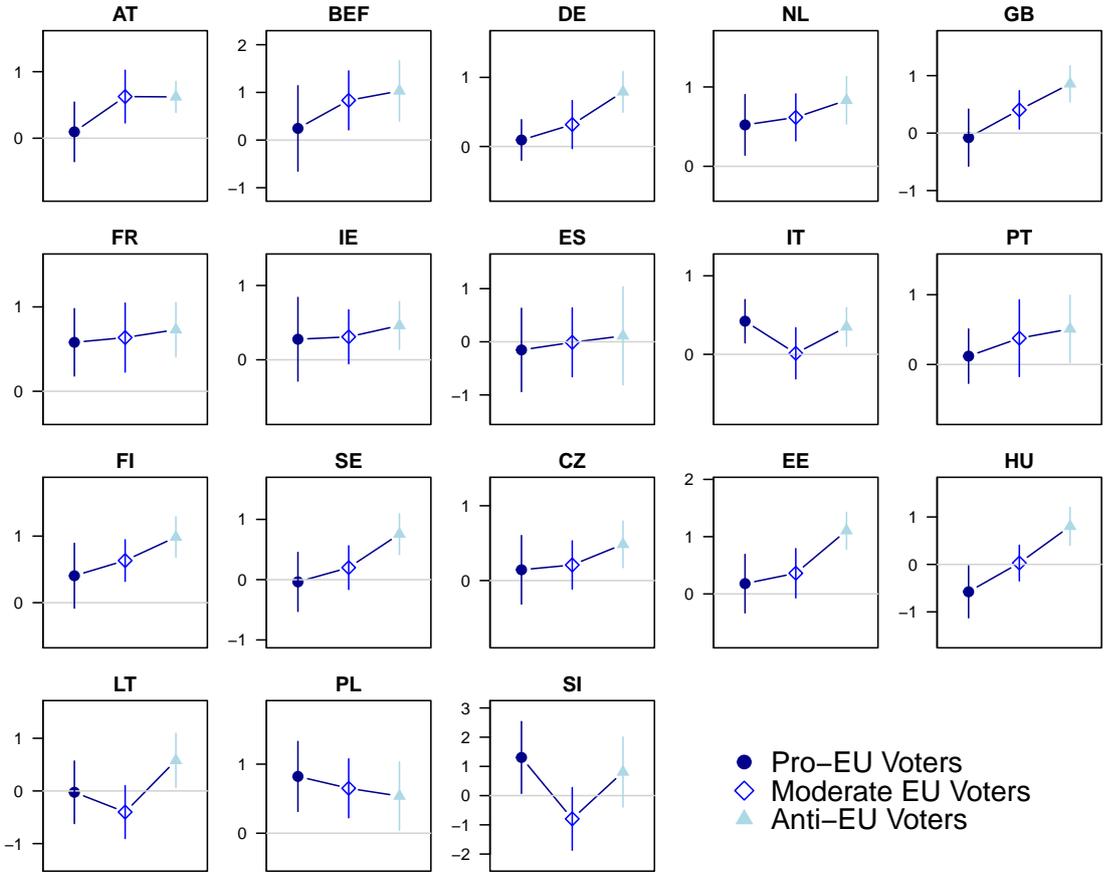
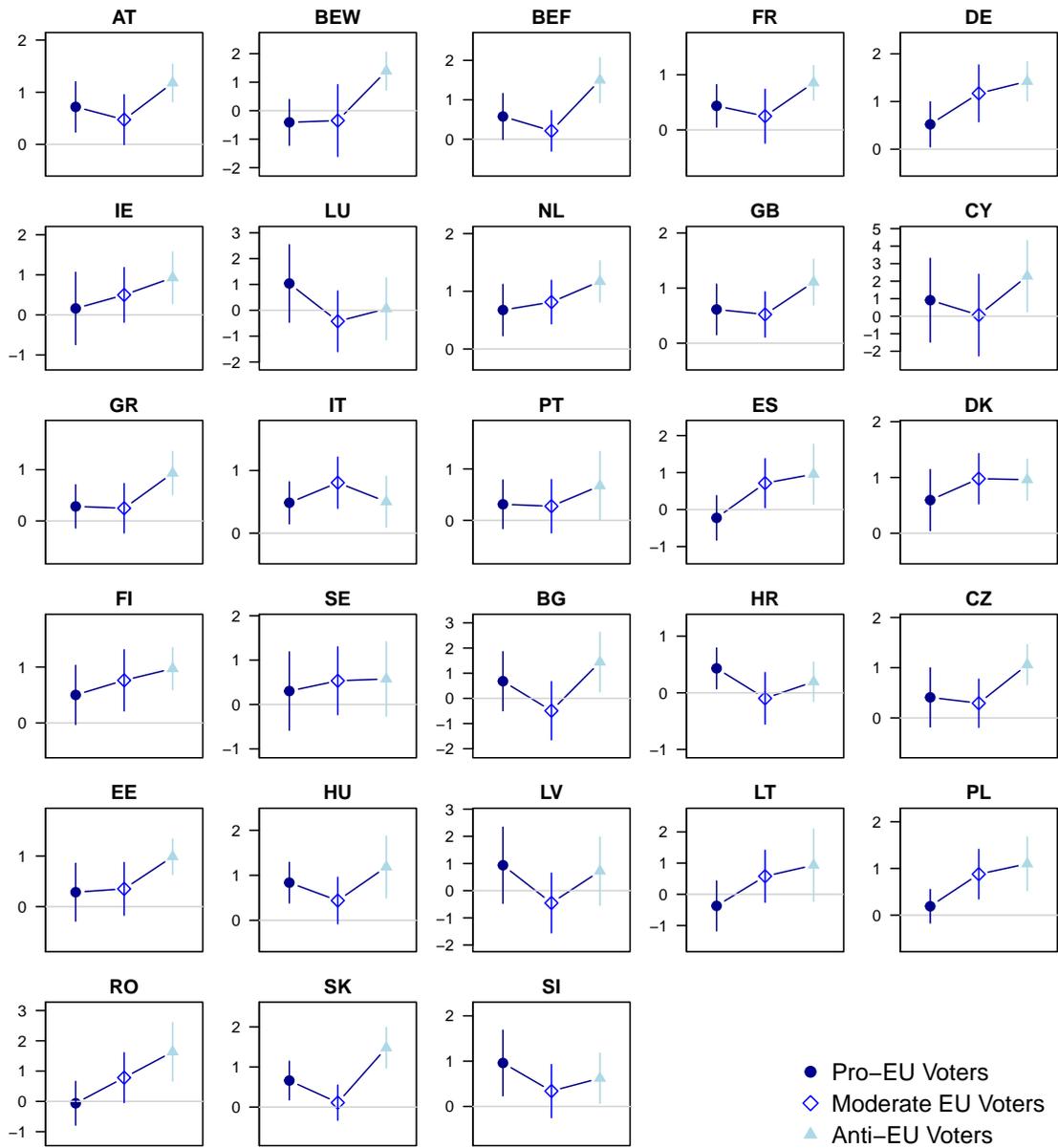


Figure 2.16: Voter Study 2019: Estimates for electoral salience of the European integration issue for different subgroups based on conditional logit models for each country separately



Appendix G: Macro Analysis

My main indicator of politicization of the European integration issue at the national level is the success of ESRRPs. To show that my results are not driven by the decision to use a 5% threshold to determine whether there exists a successful ESRRP in a country or not, I present a macro analysis at the country wave level. I run a pooled model encompassing all countries present in the four data sources used (ESS4, EES 2014, ESS8, EES 2019) resulting in 91 country-year-units. Since the spatial coefficients cannot be compared directly across models, I construct a measure of relative issue salience based on the

β -coefficients of all voters holding left-libertarian stances on the four issues. I extract these spatial coefficients from the country and time specific conditional logit models and calculate the relative salience of European integration for pro-European voters based on the following formula:

$$\text{relative salience}_{pro-EU} = \frac{\beta_{pro-EU}}{\beta_{left-econ} + \beta_{pro-immi} + \beta_{pro-envir}}$$

This measure captures the relative salience of the European integration issue for pro-European voters compared to the other three issue dimensions. The explanatory variable 'vote share of ESRRPs' captures the vote share for ESRRPs at the country level in the election before the respective voter survey was conducted. If there is more than one party classified as Eurosceptic and radical right, I calculate the sum of vote shares. I run a linear regression with country fixed effects. The results are shown in Table 2.5. The larger the vote share for ESRRPs, the more pronounced the relative salience of European integration among pro-European voters. Thus, the results support the analyses shown in the main text, that the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties is associated with pro-European voters raising the salience of the European integration issue.

Table 2.5: Results macro analysis: Effect of success of ESRRPs on relative electoral salience of European integration for pro-European voters

<i>DV: rel. salience of European integration for pro-European voters</i>	
Vote share ESRRP	0.014*** (0.003)
Country fixed effects	Yes
Observations	91
R-squared	0.53
Adjusted R-squared	0.32

Note: SE in ()

‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05

Appendix H: Robustness Tests

Figure 2.17: Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP (first column) and with a successful ESRRP (second column) in 2008/2009, 2014, 2016/17, and 2019 using cutoff-points from -0.4 to 0.4

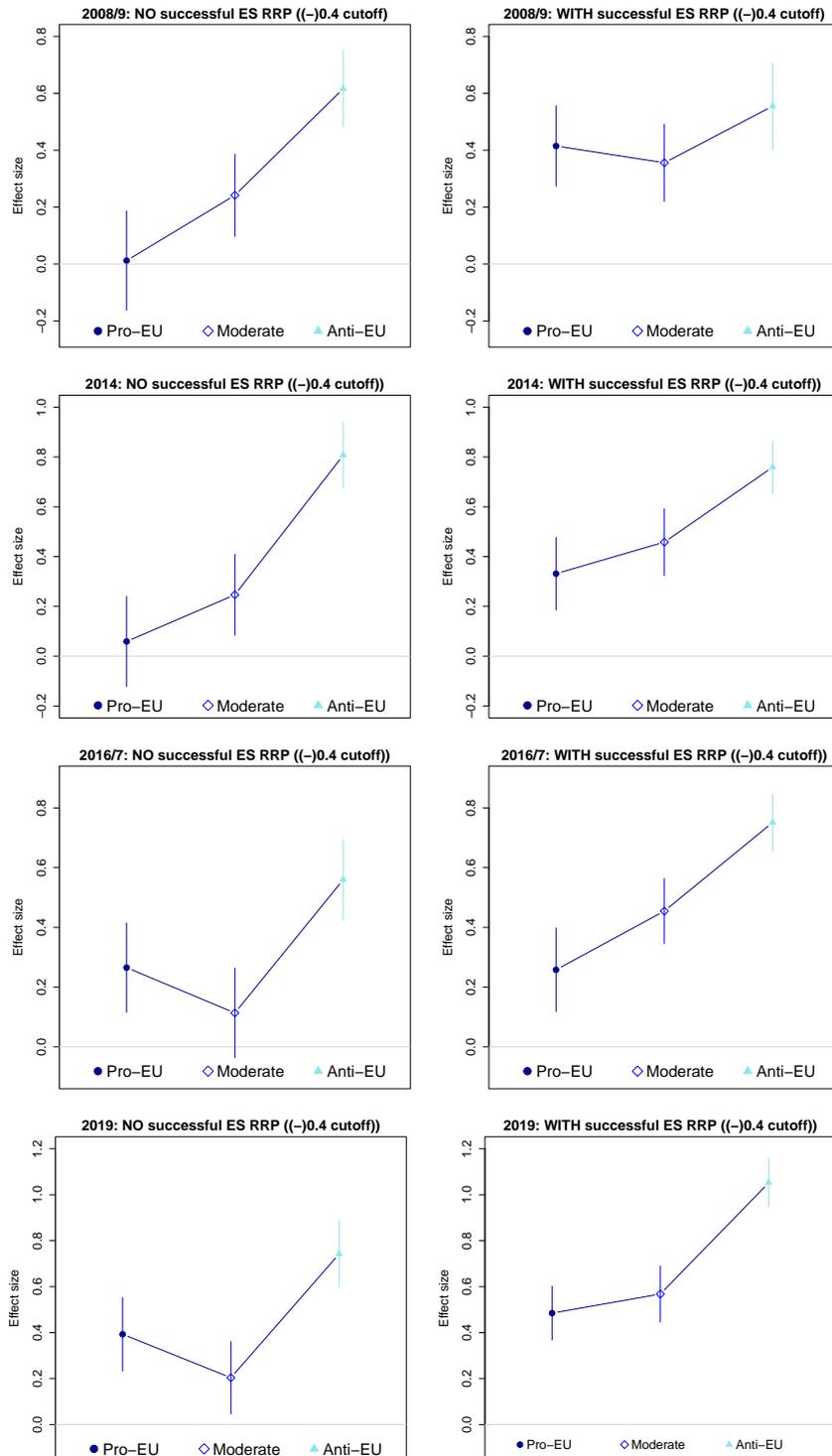


Figure 2.18: Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP (first column) and with a successful ESRRP (second column) in 2008/2009, 2014, 2016/17, and 2019 using cutoff-points from -0.6 to 0.6

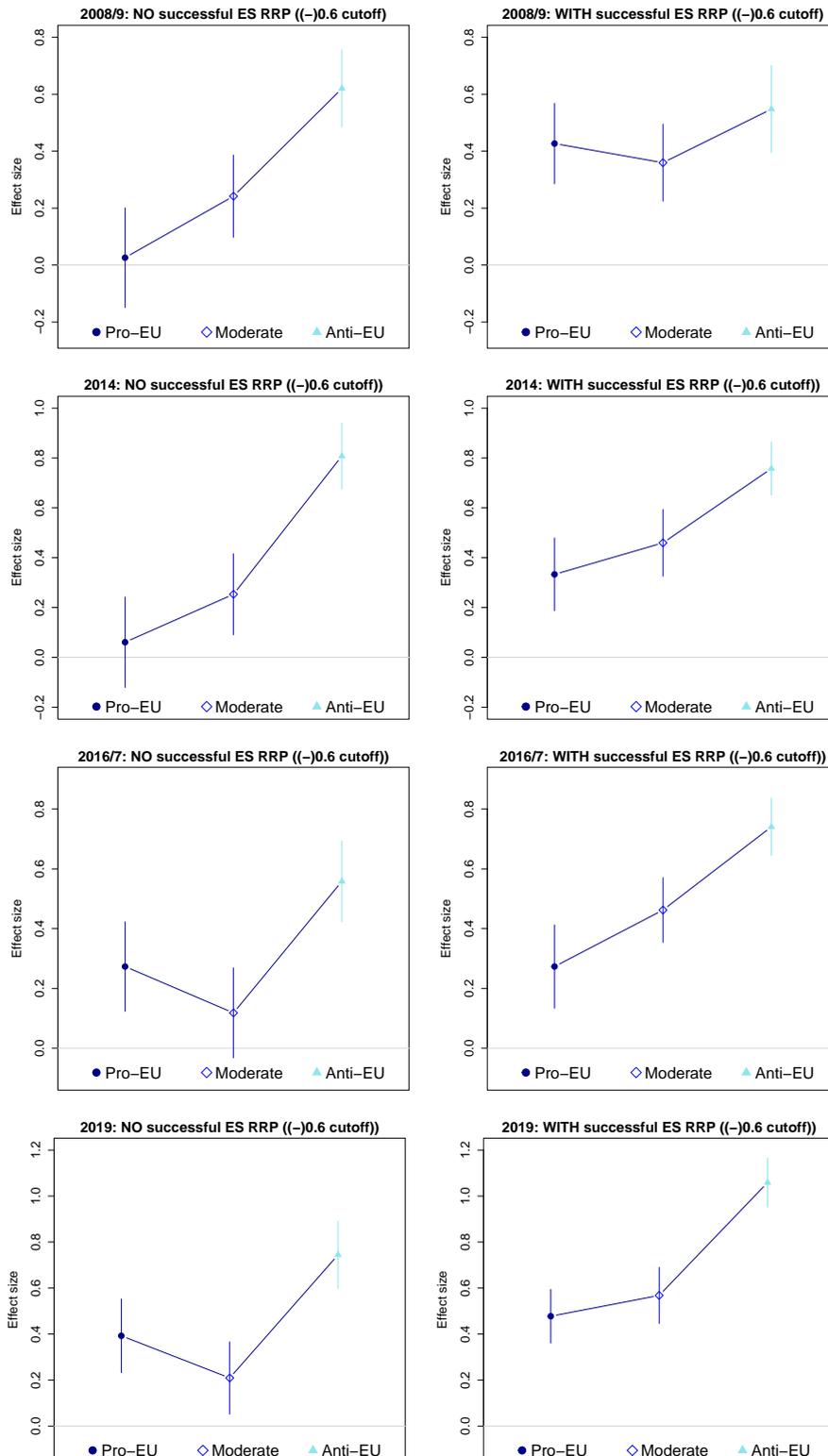


Figure 2.19: Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4 matched with CHES 2006 and ESS8 matched with CHES 2019

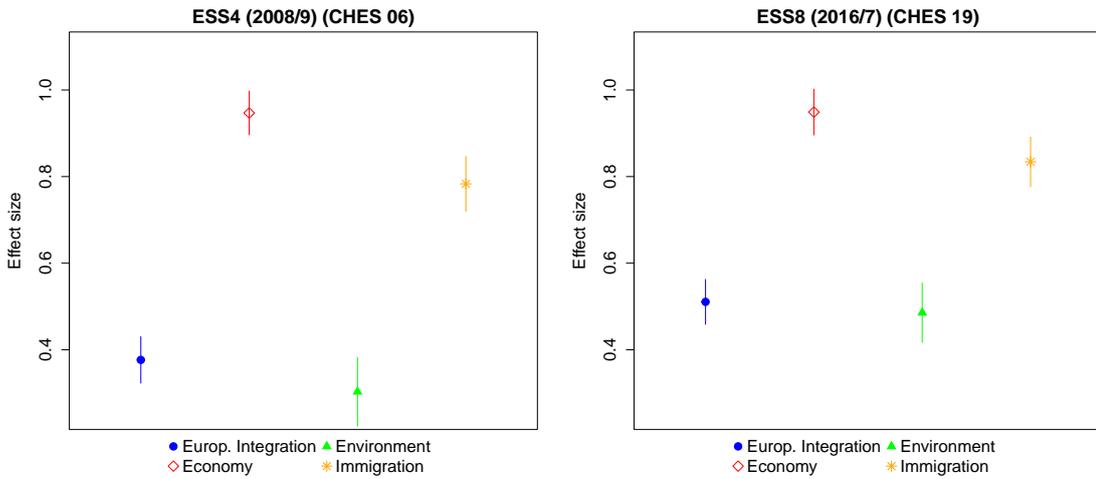


Figure 2.20: Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP (first column) and with a successful ESRRP (second column) in 2008/2009, and 2016/17; ESS4 matched with CHES 2006 and ESS8 matched with CHES 2019

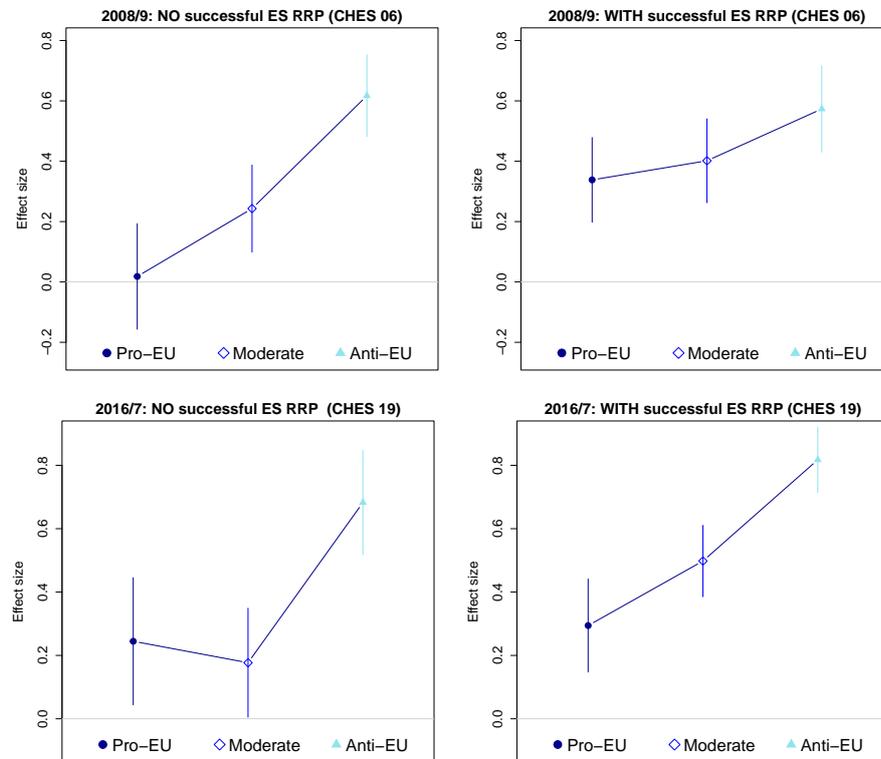


Figure 2.21: Multilevel conditional logit models for ESS4 and ESS8 based on the same subset of countries (countries available in all data sources)

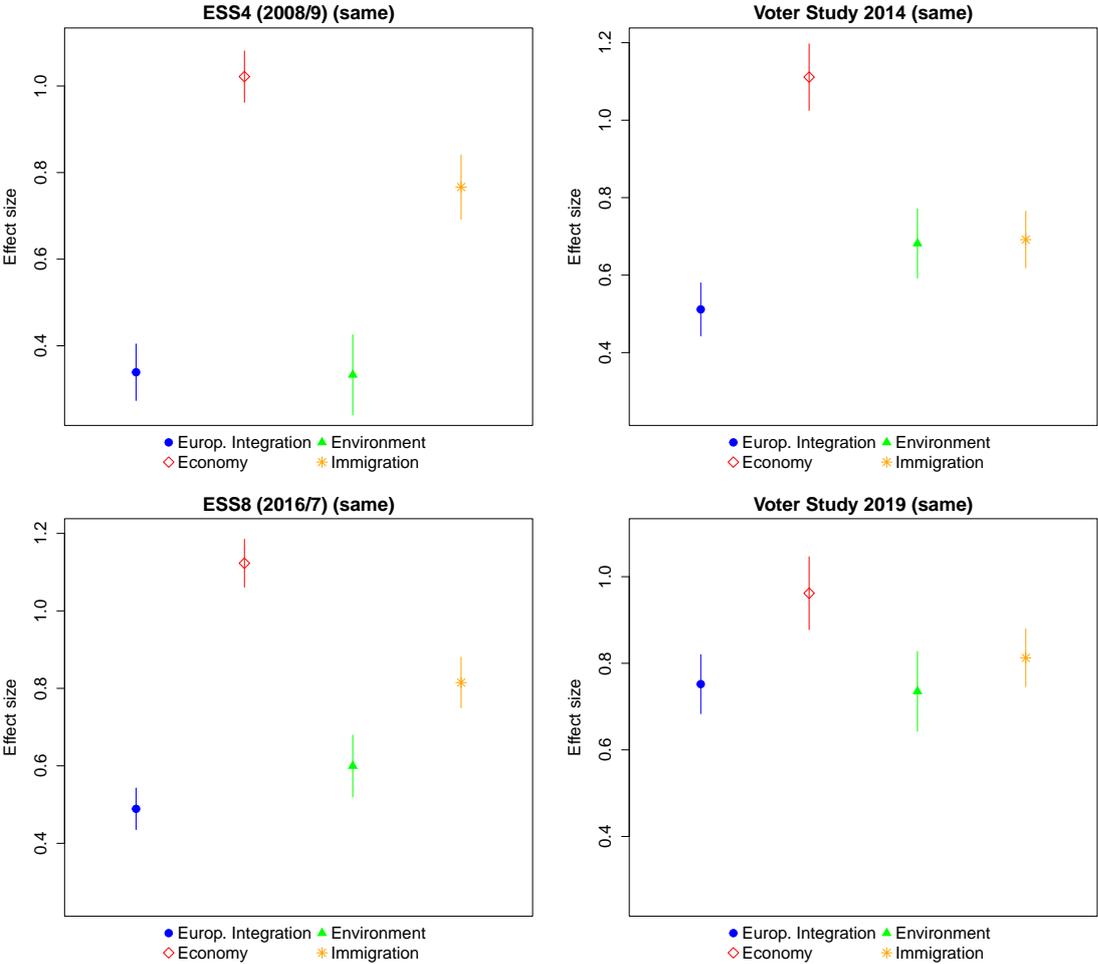
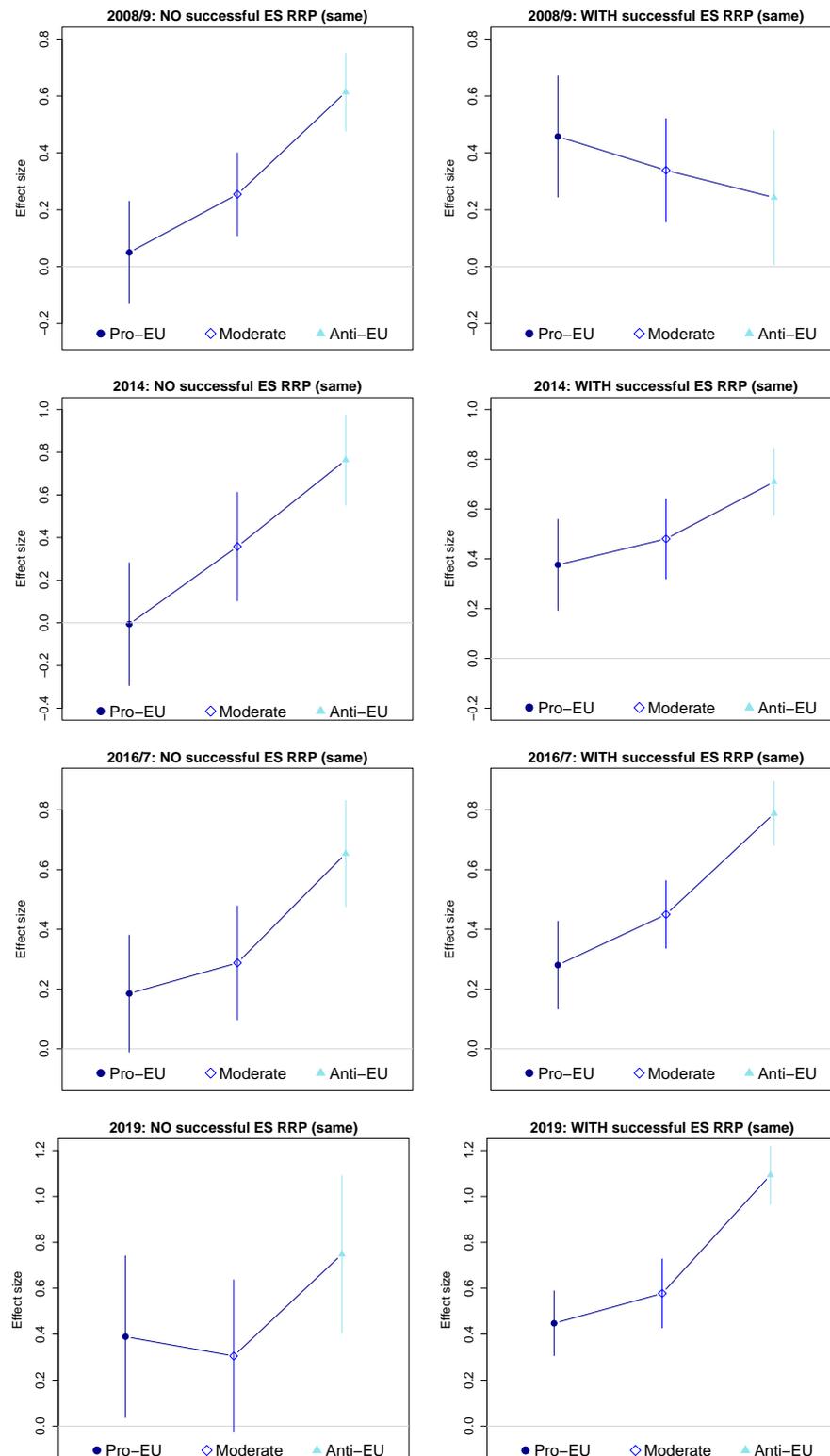


Figure 2.22: Multilevel conditional logit models with subgroup specific estimates for countries without a successful ESRRP (first column) and with a successful ESRRP (second column) in 2008/2019, 2014, 2016/17, and 2019 based on the same subset of countries (countries available in all data sources)



3 Ignorance, contagion, or pro-European backlash? - Europhile parties' strategies from 1999 to 2024

Abstract European integration has become increasingly politicized as its scope has expanded from economic to cultural domains. In its early stages, when integration enjoyed broad public consensus, Europhile parties could depoliticize the issue effectively. However, as debates over European integration have intensified, particularly driven by the rise of radical right parties, this strategy has become less viable. This paper argues that different types of Europhile parties face divergent strategic incentives depending on their positioning on the new cultural conflict line. Europhile parties with progressive cultural stances (Europhile GAL parties) are expected to reinforce and expand their pro-European profiles. In contrast, Europhile parties with more traditional cultural positions (Europhile TAN parties) are expected to moderate their pro-European positions while downplaying these shifts to avoid reputational costs tied to their earlier support. Using panel regressions based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (1999-2024), the analysis reveals a systemic transformation of European party systems. Europhile GAL parties have become significantly more pro-European over time, while Europhile parties tend to adopt less supportive stances. However, all Europhile parties have decreased the salience of European integration over time. There is very limited evidence of short-term responses to the success of radical right parties, for either Europhile GAL or TAN parties.

Keywords: European integration, politicization, party competition, Europhile parties, GALTAN divide

3.1 Introduction

European integration has become increasingly politicized. Whereas earlier stages of integration were backed by a ‘permissive consensus’ (Lindberg, 1970), characterized by tacit public support, the expansion of EU competences to cultural domains has transformed it into a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), with Eurosceptic radical right parties (ESRRPs) opposing a united Europe. I argue that this trajectory has developed into a form of ‘stimulating dissensus’, where also Europhile parties increasingly engage with the issue. This implies that politicization would not only constrain integration but also mobilize pro-European forces, prompting Europhile parties to take explicit positions on European integration rather than relying on depoliticization.

However, empirical findings on how Europhile parties behave in politicized environments are mixed. Some studies find that parties have become more pro-European (e.g. Carrieri, 2021; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2021), while others suggest a shift toward more critical positions (e.g. Filip, 2021; Meijers, 2017). Similarly, evidence is divided on whether Europhile parties have increased (e.g. Carrieri, 2021) or decreased (e.g. Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2015) the salience of European issues. A major limitation of much of this literature is its tendency to treat Europhile parties as a homogeneous bloc, defined primarily by the absence of Euroscepticism. However, the pro-European camp is far from uniform, as parties across all families, except the radical right, are found to support European integration (Jolly et al., 2022). This diversity suggests that Europhile parties may adopt different strategies depending on their broader policy profiles.

In particular, I argue that Europhile parties with progressive positions on the new cultural or GALTAN conflict line (Europhile GAL parties) are more likely to adopt a strategy of reinforcing their pro-European stance and increasing the salience of European integration. These parties can more easily incorporate a clear pro-European profile into their cultural policy agenda, which typically includes support for issues such as environmental protection, multiculturalism, and gender equality. In contrast, Europhile parties with more traditional cultural positions (Europhile TAN parties) face a different situation. To remain electorally competitive in the face of growing radical right success, they may soften their pro-European position while downplaying these shifts to avoid reputational costs associated with their historically strong pro-Europeanism. Moreover, support for cultural aspects of European integration is generally more difficult to reconcile with conservative positions on cultural issues such as migration and national identity.

Understanding how Europhile parties strategically engage with European integration is crucial for assessing the long-term implications of politicization. While most research

focuses on Eurosceptic mobilization, much less is known about how pro-European parties behave in politicized environments. Their strategic choices, whether to increase or decrease their pro-Europeanism, shape whether politicization not only constrains but also stimulates EU support, which is essential to determine the balance of pro- and anti-European coalitions, and, thus, the future trajectory of European integration.

This paper examines how different types of Europhile parties respond to two different sources of politicization: the increasingly cultural character of European integration over time and the growing success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. The cultural extension of European integration over time reflects a long-term, systemic transformation in party competition, marked by the increasing structuring role of the new cultural divide across European party systems (Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020). In contrast, the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties highlights more immediate, context-specific pressures, reflecting short-term, strategic adjustments by Europhile parties in response to national-level political developments.

To test these mechanisms, I estimate fixed effect panel regressions using Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) data from 1999 to 2024. There is very limited evidence that Europhile parties, regardless of type, respond directly to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. Rather, the results reveal a systemic transformation: Europhile GAL parties have become significantly more pro-European over time. Europhile TAN parties tend to move in the opposite direction, but the effect is weaker. However, while both party types reduce the salience of European integration over time, this trend is significantly more pronounced among Europhile TAN parties. These findings suggest that the politicization of European integration is not only driven by the rise of Eurosceptic forces but also by a growing polarization among pro-European parties themselves. As GAL parties increasingly integrate European integration into their broader progressive agenda, pro-European politics are becoming increasingly associated with cultural liberalism. On the one hand, this alignment offers a clear pro-European alternative that actively promotes European values. On the other hand, it risks narrowing the pro-European coalition by potentially alienating electorates with more traditional cultural preferences who are not inherently opposed to European integration.

3.2 The changing nature of European integration

Over the past decades, the nature of European integration has changed. From the outset, the founding treaty of the European Economic Community expressed the goal of fostering ‘an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe’ (“The Treaty of Rome”, 1957), highlighting the ambition to build an increasingly unified Europe. Since then,

European integration has indeed undergone a profound transformation. The EU has not only expanded geographically but substantially broadened and deepened its policy responsibilities. First, the focus was on economic integration. The transition from the European Coal and Steel Community to a single market and subsequently to a monetary union exemplifies this most clearly. However, more recently, the EU has also increased its competencies in other policy areas, including asylum and immigration, justice, as well as foreign and security affairs. Moreover, the EU has further extended its decision making power, by expanding the European Parliament's legislative powers and qualified majority voting in the Council over time (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014). Thus, European integration has evolved from being primarily an economic project to an issue that encompasses a wide range of economic and cultural aspects.

In its earlier phases, European integration was an elite-driven process with pro-European mainstream parties fostering deeper integration backed by broad public support for economic integration. However, this began to shift in the mid-1980s/early 1990s (e.g. Kriesi, 2009; Schmitter, 2009), as integration increasingly expanded into cultural areas of state sovereignty and national identity, leading to a 'constraining dissensus'. Radical right parties emerged as vocal opponents, viewing the deepening of non-economic integration as a threat to national autonomy (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

3.2.1 European integration and the dimensionality of the political space

Historically, political conflict in Europe has been structured around two main axes: an economic and a cultural dimension (Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006), with the latter initially grounded in religious principles and moral values (Rovny & Polk, 2019). Since the late 1960s, new social movements and processes of globalization have shifted the cultural dimension's focus towards new cultural issues, such as gender equality, environmental protection, and immigration (e.g. Ford & Jennings, 2020; Inglehart, 1990). This new cultural conflict line has been labeled among others, as green-alternative-libertarian (GAL) / traditional-authoritarian-nationalist (TAN) (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), integration / demarcation (Kriesi et al., 2008), or transnational cleavage (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), with left-libertarian and right-nationalist parties competing with extreme positions on this dimension. As European integration has increasingly expanded to cultural domains it is expected to further reinforce this new cultural divide (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

However, contestation over European integration followed a different pattern in the 1970s and 1980s. Euroscepticism was most prevalent in the economic left, driven by concerns about market integration and threats to national welfare systems. As long as

integration focused predominantly on economic aspects, (radical) left and green parties were the strongest opponents of European integration (Braun et al., 2019; Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019). This changed as the EU's agenda expanded into cultural areas. Radical right parties began to oppose the EU on grounds of cultural aspects, identity and sovereignty, resulting in the well-known U-shape of Euroscepticism across the ideological left–right dimension (e.g. König et al., 2017; Van Elsas & Van Der Brug, 2015).

However, the increasing importance of the new cultural conflict line in structuring political competition on European integration (Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020), suggests that the inverted U-shape pattern might be reversed again (Toshkov, 2024; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). As European integration increasingly engages with cultural issues, Euroscepticism is less likely to emerge from the left and more likely to originate from radical right parties. Consequently, as the integration process becomes more entangled with cultural aspects, it is intuitive to assume that parties positioned along the new cultural cleavage, such as green and social-liberal parties on the one side and radical right parties on the other, are more likely to incorporate European integration into their political agendas: GAL-parties with a pronounced pro-European agenda and TAN-parties with strong Eurosceptic positions. This would reflect a restructuring of political conflict on European integration along the new cultural divide.

The growing incorporation of cultural issues over time and the increasing success of Eurosceptic radical right have significantly contributed to the politicization of European integration (e.g. Hutter & Grande, 2014). These two processes are closely intertwined, though not identical. The cultural change perspective focuses on how the new cultural conflict aligns with European integration as it expands to cultural domains over time, by this reflecting a fundamental, systemic transformation in party competition across European party systems. The expansion of European integration into cultural domains constitutes a precondition for the radical right to mobilize against it. As discussed above, it was only once the integration process came to encompass cultural aspects that radical right parties began to oppose the European project. In contrast to the structural, long-term cultural change perspective, the electoral success of radical right parties at the national level has politicized European integration in more immediate and country-specific ways, fostering cross-national variation in the extent of politicization.²⁷ While it is well documented that both processes have politicized European integration, it is less researched how Europhile parties respond to these developments. Particularly, we do not know much about how different *types* of Europhile parties deal with the increasingly politicized issue of European integration.

²⁷Other sources of politicization, such as crises, referendums, or summits (e.g. Hoeglinger, 2016; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019), are beyond the analytical scope of this paper.

3.3 Europhile parties' strategies

Generally, parties can compete over policy positions and issue salience. A party's positional repertoire consists of either maintaining its existing stance or shifting in one direction or another on a given issue. Regarding salience, they can increase, decrease, or remain the level of salience they attach to an issue. Depending on the positional strategy adopted, the (de-)emphasis of the European integration issue carries different implications. Table 3.1 visualizes four possible constellations.²⁸

When Europhile parties shift toward a more pro-European position while simultaneously increasing the salience of the issue, they highlight their pro-European orientation and present themselves as clear, opposing alternative to Eurosceptic parties. I refer to this strategy as *committed pro-Europeanism*. By contrast, a shift toward a more critical stance on European integration, coupled with increased salience, amplifies the visibility of Eurosceptic discourse and brings the party's strategy closer to that of explicitly Eurosceptic actors. I call this strategy *visible critical Europeanism*. When positional shifts are accompanied by a reduction in salience, parties seek to deflect attention from the change, downplaying or blurring their repositioning. These strategies are referred to as *silent pro-Europeanism* and *silent critical Europeanism*, respectively. Finally, if parties decide to maintain both their position and salience, the remaining option is *ignorance*, whereby the status quo is preserved.

Figure 3.1: Europhile parties' possible strategies regarding position and salience

	Pro-European Shift	Anti-European Shift
Salience Increase	Committed Pro-Europeanism	Visible Critical Europeanism
Salience Decrease	Silent Pro-Europeanism	Silent Critical Europeanism

Ignorance

In the following section, I first discuss the empirical findings on the positional strategies of Europhile parties and then turn to their salience strategies. I discuss temporal dynamics and responses to Euroscepticism separately.

²⁸These constellations represent ideal-typical scenarios. This does not imply that each cell must be occupied in practice. Rather, they represent theoretically possible combinations.

3.3.1 Positional strategies

Europhile parties' temporal positional adjustments

The findings on temporal dynamics regarding Europhile parties' strategies are mixed. Between 2006 and 2017, Europhile parties in Western Europe shifted to more pro-European positions (Carrieri, 2021) and significantly increased their pro-Europeanism after the Brexit referendum (Hunter, 2024). Contrary, Braun et al. (2019) document shifts to more anti-European positions from 2009 to 2014.

More broadly, research shows that European integration has become increasingly aligned with the cultural dimension over time. Over the course of the European integration process, cultural aspects have replaced economic issues as main structuring force behind party positions on European integration (Prosser, 2016). This trend has been particularly pronounced since the Maastricht treaty in 1992, with party positions on European integration increasingly being mapped along the cultural dimension. Notably, this pattern persisted even in the face of the economic challenges posed by the Eurozone Crisis (Schäfer et al., 2020). These findings highlight the growing importance of the new cultural dimension in structuring European party systems over the past decades and suggest that Europhile parties may respond differently to politicization. Europhile parties with progressive cultural profiles may have incentives to strengthen their pro-European stances, whereas culturally conservative Europhile parties may adopt more critical positions.

Europhile parties' positional reactions to Euroscepticism

While there are only a few contributions focusing on Europhile parties' long-term positional adjustments, a large body of research examines how they respond to the success of Eurosceptic radical right competitors. This literature focuses on immediate positional shifts made in response to national-level political developments, rather than on the broader temporal reconfiguration of party systems.

A first strand of research identifies *contagious* effects. The success of Eurosceptic parties prompted mainstream parties to shift towards more Eurosceptical standpoints between 1984 and 2010 (Meijers, 2017) and 1984 and 2019 (Filip, 2021), although the substantial size of these effects is small (Meijers, 2017). Recent studies also show that mainstream left parties, in particular, adjusted their positions in a Eurosceptic direction (Braun & Carteny, 2024), and that Europhile parties respond not only to Eurosceptic competitors but also to public Euroscepticism by becoming less supportive of European integration (Malet & Thiebaut, 2024; Spoon & Williams, 2017).

A second line of research highlights ignorance strategies. Europhile mainstream parties, including socialists, social democrats, greens, liberals, conservatives and Christian democrats, in Western and Central Europe responded barely to growing Euroscepticism and remained overall positive towards European integration between 2009 and 2013 (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2016), despite increasing public Euroscepticism (Ejrnæs & Jensen, 2019). This ignorance behavior is attributed to the tension between spatial incentives to shift towards more Eurosceptic positions and the potential reputational costs associated with waiving their longstanding pro-Europeanism (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2016; Vasilopoulou, 2023). Moreover, adopting more EU-critical positions is not necessarily electorally advantageous. For instance, center-right parties tend to lose votes when their Eurosceptic competitor was successful in the previous election (Meijers & Williams, 2020).

A third set of findings points to adversarial strategies, where Europhile parties respond to Eurosceptic success by strengthening their pro-European profile. In Germany, Europhile parties became more pro-European in the face of the success of the Eurosceptic AfD (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2021), and similar patterns have been documented across other party systems between 2008 and 2017 (Adendorf & Gross, 2024).

3.3.2 Salience strategies

Parties compete not only with their policy positions but also over issue attention. Recent research suggests that not only extreme parties have an incentive to increase the salience of secondary policy issues (Kurella, 2025). Yet, existing evidence on Europhile parties' issue emphasis strategies is mixed.

Europhile parties' temporal salience adjustments

Some studies find that Europhile parties have increasingly devoted attention to European integration. In 2014, Europhile parties no longer differed from Eurosceptic parties in their willingness to emphasize the issue, especially when internally united on the topic (Adam et al., 2017). Also between 2006 and 2017 (Carrieri, 2021) and after the Brexit referendum (Hunter, 2024), Europhile parties increasingly talked about European issues in a supportive manner.

However, other research observe more limited salience adjustments. Between 2009 and 2014, salience increases of mainstream parties were minor, while Eurosceptic parties from the radical right and left attached much more emphasis on European integration (Braun et al., 2019). Similarly, before and after the Eurozone Crisis, only Eurosceptic communist and nationalist parties increased the salience while the salience remained

stable among Europhile parties, especially in Western Europe. In Central and Eastern Europe, they even tended to decrease the salience, with the exception of the green party family (Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2015).

Europhile parties' salience strategies in response to Euroscepticism

The findings for Europhile parties' salience strategies in response to Euroscepticism are also mixed. Between 1979 and 2019, mainstream left parties responded to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties by increasing the salience of European integration, whereas mainstream right parties generally maintained a stable level of issue attention (Braun & Carteny, 2024). In Germany, all pro-European parties maintained their level of salience despite the growing success of the Eurosceptic AfD (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2021). Contrary, from 1992 to 2016, Europhile parties reacted to growing public Euroscepticism by de-emphasizing the European integration issue (Malet & Thiebaut, 2024).

3.4 Different types of Europhile parties

Existing research provides mixed results on Europhile parties' strategies. Both the direction of positional shifts and patterns of (de-)emphasizing European integration vary across studies. I argue that to make sense of these contradictory findings, it is crucial to differentiate between different *types* of Europhile parties. Most of the existing literature regards Europhile parties, at least implicitly, as a homogeneous group, defined primarily by the absence of Euroscepticism. However, the Europhile camp is rather heterogeneous: All party families, except the radical right, include parties supportive of European integration (see Figure 3.2 in the Results section).

Some scholars distinguish between different types of Europhile parties (e.g. Hertner & Keith, 2017; Kopecký & Mudde, 2002; Luke, 2024), mostly drawing on Easton's (1975) distinction between diffuse and specific support. Although the distinction is already insightful, it does not fully account for why Europhile parties should react differently when integration becomes politicized. As party competition is structured along two dimensions (e.g. Kriesi et al., 2006), European integration works as wedge issue (Van de Wardt et al., 2014), cutting across the established left-right dimension, by this dividing and destabilizing party systems. This threatens specifically major center-left and center-right parties primarily competing on this dimension. This helps explain why some Europhile parties have incentives to downplay the issue (Vasilopoulou, 2023), but it does not account for the systematic variation in the empirical findings beyond ignorance strategies.

I argue that Europhile parties' positions on the new cultural conflict line are crucial for understanding their incentives to adopt one strategy over another. Hooghe and Marks (2009) state in their influential work, that competition over European integration increasingly aligns with the new cultural conflict line. However, their argument focuses primarily on oppositional, radical right TAN parties as the drivers of Euroscepticism, leaving two aspects less clearly specified. First, how non-radical right, but culturally TAN Europhile parties - mostly conservative and Christian democratic mainstream parties - deal with European integration as the issue becomes politicized. Second, how Europhile parties on the GAL-side of the cultural conflict line behave, as they argue that '[t]he association between gal/tan attitudes and attitudes towards European integration is weaker on the gal side.' (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, p. 17).

I connect to this argument by arguing that as politicization endures, not only Eurosceptic but also Europhile party competition becomes increasingly structured along the new cultural divide. For example, an economically left and culturally progressive party may express concerns regarding deeper economic integration as a threat to national welfare systems, but still has good reasons to adopt a more pro-European stance regarding deeper cultural integration, because of its progressive stances on GAL issues, such as striving for a tolerant society and open borders. In contrast, culturally more TAN Europhile parties, which have been strongly supportive of economic market integration in earlier phases, should be more inclined to lower their pro-European stances as European integration is more about cultural issues.

I expect that Europhile parties with a progressive cultural agenda (Europhile GAL parties) have an incentive to pursue a strategy of *committed pro-Europeanism* by shifting their positions towards more EU supportive ones and raise the salience of the issue. They can more easily incorporate a pronounced pro-Europeanism into their progressive cultural agenda and can see the EU as advocate to advance GAL-issues such as environmental policies and asylum (Vasilopoulou, 2023). Moreover, Europhile GAL parties can present themselves as a clear pro-European alternative for the still pro-European majority of voters, who are increasingly concerned about potential disintegration (Malet & Walter, 2024). The revival of public support for the EU (Jones et al., 2021), increasing salience of European integration among pro-European voters (Rapp, 2025), and multiple European crises - for example the Migration and Brexit Crisis - requiring European solutions, can create a demand for parties that clearly defend the European project. This demand is most likely to be fulfilled by parties whose progressive stances on European integration align with their broader cultural policy profiles. This alignment is expected to strengthen over time, as the EU has increasingly expanded its competencies into cultural domains.

H1a: Europhile GAL parties are becoming more pro-European over time.

H1b: Europhile GAL parties raise the salience of European integration over time.

Vice versa, I expect that Europhile parties with a traditional cultural agenda (Europhile TAN parties) have an incentive to follow a strategy of *silent critical Europeanism*, as European integration expands into cultural domains. Most of these parties have historically been driving forces of the integration process, but their support has been rooted primarily in economic market integration. As European integration has become more cultural over time, it is much more difficult for them to reconcile their conservative positions on cultural issues, such as on immigration, gender, and the environment, with supportive positions regarding further integration. I therefore expect them to shift to less pro-European positions over time. Yet, these parties potentially face reputational costs in doing so because of their former engagement for European integration (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2016). Thus, I expect them to downplay their anti-European shifts by decreasing the salience of the issue.

H2a: Europhile TAN parties are becoming less pro-European over time.

H2b: Europhile TAN parties downplay the European integration issue over time.

The first set of hypotheses focus on how Europhile parties' strategies evolve with regard to the general transformation of European party systems along the new cultural conflict line over time. Another plausible, less systemic, and more context-dependent source for strategy adjustment is the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties in national party systems (Filip, 2021; Meijers, 2017). Eurosceptic radical right parties discuss European integration with regard to identity and national sovereignty (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), not only opposing specific EU policies but the EU as such (Treib, 2014). Thus, the politicization efforts of ESRRPs should be more forceful than those of Eurosceptic radical left parties, as they criticize the EU more extensively and fundamentally. Moreover, Eurosceptic radical right parties are increasingly successful and relevant (Filip, 2021; Treib, 2021) and they have become even more sceptical towards European integration in response to the numerous European crises (Braun et al., 2019). It is also shown that the effect of Eurosceptic parties' success on Europhile parties' strategies is mostly driven by Eurosceptic radical right parties and not radical left parties (Meijers, 2017).

The existence of a successful radical right party should therefore put direct pressure on the remaining parties to react. Similar to the time mechanism illustrated above, I expect that Europhile GAL parties are incentivized to follow a strategy of *committed pro-Europeanism* by shifting to more pro-European positions and increasing the salience in response to Eurosceptic radical right party success. By this, they can present themselves

as clear pro-European alternative while they can align this pro-Europeanism with their progressive positioning on the new cultural conflict line.

H1c: Europhile GAL parties react to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties by becoming more pro-European.

H1d: Europhile GAL parties raise the salience of the European integration issue in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties.

Vice versa, I hypothesize that Europhile TAN parties have an incentive to follow a strategy of *silent critical Europeanism* by shifting to more anti-European positions and decreasing the salience in response to Eurosceptic radical right party success. Radical right challengers couple anti-EU positions with pronounced TAN profiles, creating a strong competitive pull on Europhile TAN parties. However, Europhile TAN parties face cross-pressures because they cannot easily align their pro-European position with their conservative positioning on the new cultural conflict line. For example, restrictive immigration policies are difficult to reconcile convincingly with deeper European integration, which comes i.a. with open borders. Competition on their right flank should thus incentivize them to accentuate their TAN profile. To remain electorally competitive Europhile TAN parties are expected to narrow the programmatic distance to the radical right competitor by shifting towards more sceptical positions on European integration. This expectation is supported by findings that right-wing parties are more likely to respond to threats on their right and left-wing parties on their left (Adams & Somer-Topcu, 2009). Again, since most Europhile TAN parties have historically been driving forces of the integration process, I expect them to downplay their anti-European shifts by de-emphasizing the issue.

H2c: Europhile TAN parties react to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties by becoming less pro-European.

H2d: Europhile TAN parties downplay the European integration issue in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties.

However, as patterns of politicization over European integration vary systematically across Europe, I expect regional differences. As Kriesi (2016) argues, cleavage structures and regional experiences have shaped the contestation of European integration. The new cultural conflict line is most clearly institutionalized in North-Western Europe (NWE). These countries experienced a cultural revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, which fostered post-materialist value orientations and created fertile ground for green and, later on, radical right mobilization (Inglehart, 1990; Kriesi, 2016). Consequently, political competition in NWE is structured more strongly along the new cultural conflict

line, as in other European regions. Southern Europe (SE) and Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) did not undergo a comparable socio-cultural change in 1960s and 1970s, since most of SE countries were under authoritarian rule until the mid-1970s and most of CEE under communist rule until the collapse of the Soviet Union. In SE, religious and class-based divisions have remained important and aligned, with Euroscepticism have long been articulated by radical left parties. In CEE the cultural conflict line is important (Coman, 2017), but it centers on other cultural issues than in NWE, focusing on defensive nationalism directed against internal enemies, e.g. ethnic minorities, and external enemies, e.g. foreign companies undermining domestic economies (Haughton, 2014; Kriesi, 2016). Despite these regional peculiarities, there is also evidence pointing to gradual convergence. Policy preferences across EU member states have become more comparable across Europe (Sorace, 2025) and Eurosceptic radical right parties are now electorally successful across the EU, also in SE. This convergence implies that the effects proposed in Hypotheses 1a to 2d should not reverse direction but rather differ in strength. As party competition along the GALTAN divide is most strongly rooted in NWE, I expect the effects to be most pronounced in this region, being weaker but present in SE and CEE countries.

H3: The proposed effects are expected to be strongest in NWE, while remaining present, but less pronounced in SE and CEE countries.

3.5 Data, operationalization, and research design

I combine the CHES Trendfile (Jolly et al., 2022) with the 2024 CHES wave (Rovny et al., 2025) to test my hypotheses. These data contain information on European parties' positions and salience as classified from experts in 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2019, and 2024. I include all countries being a member of the EU at that time.

Dependent variables

I estimate models with two different dependent variables: 1) Europhile parties' EU positions and 2) Europhile parties' EU salience. For the position, I use the item regarding the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration.²⁹ I rescale the item from -1 to 1 with higher values representing more pro-European positions. To measure salience, I use the item capturing the salience of European integration in the party's public stance. I rescale the item from 0 to 1 with higher values representing higher salience. The unit of analysis is the Europhile party. I categorize a party as Europhile if it has once a value larger than 4 on the EU position item (7 point scale).³⁰

²⁹This measure is designed to tap into parties' general positions toward the European project, rather than preferences on particular policy outcomes.

³⁰This allows me to address dropping out effects. I can track Europhile parties even if they once take a Eurosceptic position or develop into a Europhile party over time. For an overview of the included

Independent variables

I estimate two different sets of models. To test hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b, the main independent variable is a linear time trend. To test hypotheses 1c, 1d, 2c, and 2d, I include as main independent variable the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties in the election between t_{-1} and t_0 . The CHES provides the national election results regarding the election most prior to the current CHES wave. A party is classified as Eurosceptic radical right party (ESRRP) if it belongs to the radical right party family and exhibits a value smaller than 4 (on a 7-point scale) on the EU position item (Meijers, 2017; Ray, 2007). If more than one party is classified as ESRRP, I calculate the sum of the respective vote shares.

Both main independent variables are interacted with the position of the Europhile party on the GALTAN dimension which is directly provided in the CHES. This item captures the position of a party regarding its views on social and cultural values.³¹ I rescale the GALTAN position item from -1 to 1 such that negative values indicate a party's position on the GAL side and positive values on the TAN side.

I control for party size, vote loss, government/opposition status, and the public mood regarding European integration. I also include the lagged position on European integration in the position models and the lagged salience of European integration in the salience models to address residual autocorrelation (Wilkins, 2018). Party size is measured by the vote share of the Europhile party in the election most prior to the CHES round. Furthermore, the models include a dummy variable indicating whether a party is in opposition or government, as opposition parties are more likely to respond to the pressure of issue entrepreneurial parties (Van de Wardt, 2015; Van Spanje, 2010). Vote loss is operationalized by calculating the difference in vote share of the Europhile party between the current and former CHES round. Vote loss influences mainstream parties responses to niche parties' success (Abou-Chadi, 2016). Research has also shown that mainstream parties respond to the public opinion regarding European integration (Spoon & Williams, 2017). Thus, following the suggestion of Lubbers and Scheepers (2010), I calculate a public mood indicator using Eurobarometer data.³²

Europhile parties see Table 3.5 in the Appendix.

³¹Question wording: Position of the party in terms of their views on social and cultural values. 'Libertarian' or 'postmaterialist' parties favor expanded personal freedoms, for example, abortion rights, divorce, and same-sex marriage. 'Traditional' or 'authoritarian' parties reject these ideas in favor of order, tradition, and stability, believing that the government should be a firm moral authority on social and cultural stances.

³²I build an index based on the items whether generally the country's membership of the EU is a good thing and whether the country has benefited from EU membership.

I estimate fixed effects panel regressions with standard errors clustered by Europhile party. In the time models, I include party fixed effects, in the Eurosceptic radical right party success models I additionally include time fixed effects. This strategy has been previously applied to investigate parties' positional and salience shifts in response to niche party success (e.g. Abou-Chadi, 2016; Braun & Carteny, 2024). Including party fixed effects restricts the analysis to within-party variation over time. It controls for all time-invariant differences across parties, by this also controlling for a party's average or baseline EU position. Thus, even though the dependent variable is the absolute EU position/salience, the models estimate within-party shifts in parties' EU positions/salience. Additionally including time fixed effects controls for all time-varying shocks that affect all parties equally, such as Brexit or the Eurozone Crisis.

Since these models rely on a strong linear functional form assumption, I also estimate non-parametric models to explore potential non-linear relationships. I specify a tensor interaction which allows to estimate flexible, non-linear interaction terms. These models are estimated with the gam-function from the mgcv package in R (Wood, 2015).

Robustness

I replicate the analyses using data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Lehmann et al., 2024). Positional and salience estimates are calculated using the following formulas (see Abou-Chadi (2016)).³³

$$EU_{position} = \frac{per108 - per110}{per108 + per110}$$

$$EU_{salience\ positive} = per108$$

$$EU_{salience\ negative} = per110$$

$$GALTAN_{pos} = \frac{(per601 + per603 + per608) - (per501 + per602 + per604 + per607)}{per601 + per603 + per608 + per501 + per602 + per604 + per607}$$

³³EU positions and salience are calculated using items on positive (per108) and negative (per110) mentions of the European Community/Union. GALTAN positions are calculated using items on positive (per601) and negative (per602) mentions of the national way of life, positive (per603) and negative (per604) mentions of traditional morality, positive (per607) and negative (per608) mentions of multiculturalism, and favorable mentions of environmental protection (per501).

3.6 Results

Figure 3.2 presents Europhile parties' positions on the GALTAN dimension by party family. The figure shows that there is no 'typical' Europhile party. While the parties do not only vary in the extent of their pro-Europeanism,³⁴ they also vary over the whole spectrum of the GALTAN dimension.³⁵ Both the GAL- and the TAN-side are occupied by Europhile parties. While all CHES party families except the radical right one are presented in the Europhile camp of parties, there is at least a tendency on how they are placed on the GALTAN dimension. Green, socialist, and liberal parties tend to be more progressive; conservative and Christian democratic parties more traditional. However, there are also quite some liberal and socialist parties on the TAN side and parties classified as conservative and Christian democratic on the GAL-side.

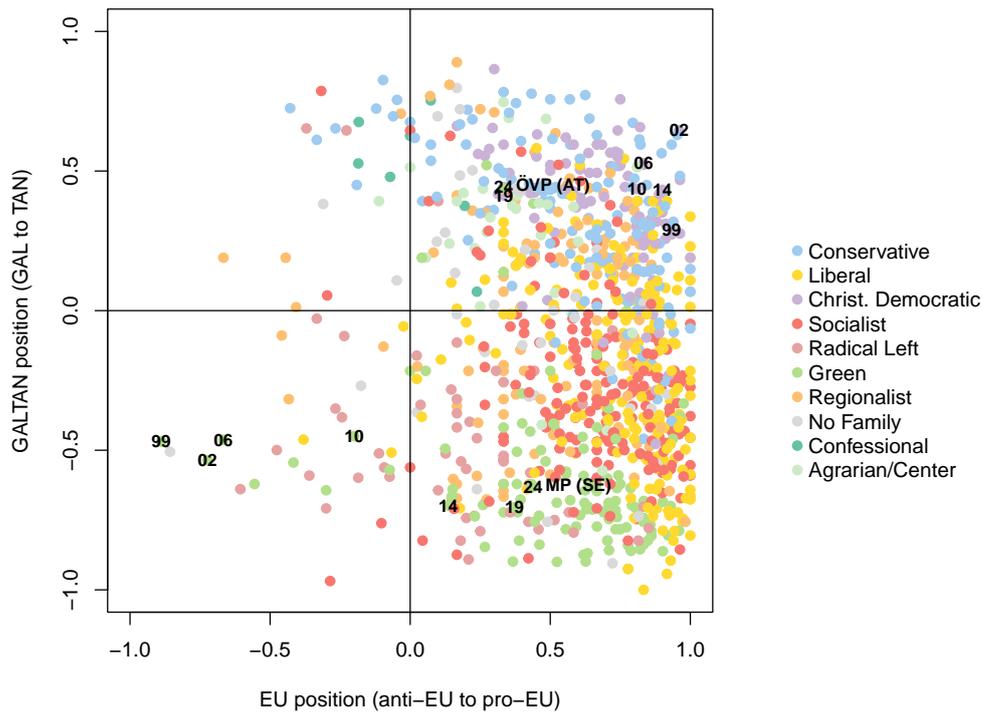
I have highlighted two exemplary parties in the plot to illustrate my argument. The Swedish green party *Miljöpartiet de Gröna (MP)* and the Austrian Christian democratic party *Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP)*. The GAL party *MP* evolves gradually over time from a Eurosceptical party to a party favoring European integration. Its opposition to European integration in the 1990s mostly stemmed from criticism of the EU's economic policies and common European security and defense policies (Aylott, 2007). However, over time, they have increasingly seen the EU as a necessary construct to implement environmental, cultural, human rights, disarmament, and peace related policies (Bomberg, 2002). This reflects how a party with a constantly pronounced GAL-profile has integrated pro-European stances in their agenda, as European integration has become more cultural.

The Austrian *ÖVP* shows a reversed pattern. It has a TAN-profile and has moved from strongly pro-European positions in 1999 and 2002 to less supportive ones until 2024, even though this evolution is not strictly linear. Over the whole time period, the *ÖVP*'s support for European integration mostly originates from economic aspects, e.g. support for the European Stability Mechanism, the European Monetary Fund, and common trade. Support for other aspects of European integration has begun to erode with the enlargement of the EU in 2004 with the *ÖVP* becoming considerable more critical regarding political and cultural aspects of European integration (Luke, 2024).

³⁴Remember -1 indicates the most anti-European position, 1 the most pro-European position. Even though I am focusing on Europhile parties in my analyses, there are some cases where the value drops below zero, since all parties who hold once a pro-European position are included in the sample.

³⁵Remember -1 is the most GAL- and 1 the most TAN-position.

Figure 3.2: Europhile parties' positions on EU and GALTAN 1999-2024



Europhile parties' strategies over time

I now test Europhile GAL- and TAN-parties' strategies systematically across all EU member states. I first present the results for the effect of time conditional on Europhile parties' GALTAN positions on their positional and salience strategies (Figure 3.3).³⁶ The y-axis depicts the marginal effect of time on EU position,³⁷ the x-axis a Europhile parties' GALTAN position.³⁸ The shaded ribbon shows the 95% confidence interval. The dashed zero-line helps to evaluate the significance of the effect: If the confidence interval excludes 0 the effect is significant in this area, if not it is insignificant.

The left panel of Figure 3.3 shows the marginal effect for the interaction of time and a Europhile party's position on GALTAN on their EU position. The interaction effect is negative ($\beta = -0.04$). For Europhile GAL parties, the plot shows a significant and positive marginal effect. This supports Hypothesis 1a: Europhile GAL parties are becoming more pro-European over time. The stronger a Europhile party's GAL profile, the more pronounced is this effect. In terms of substantial size that means that a Europhile party with a strong GAL profile shifts to roughly 0.05 more pro-European positions from one

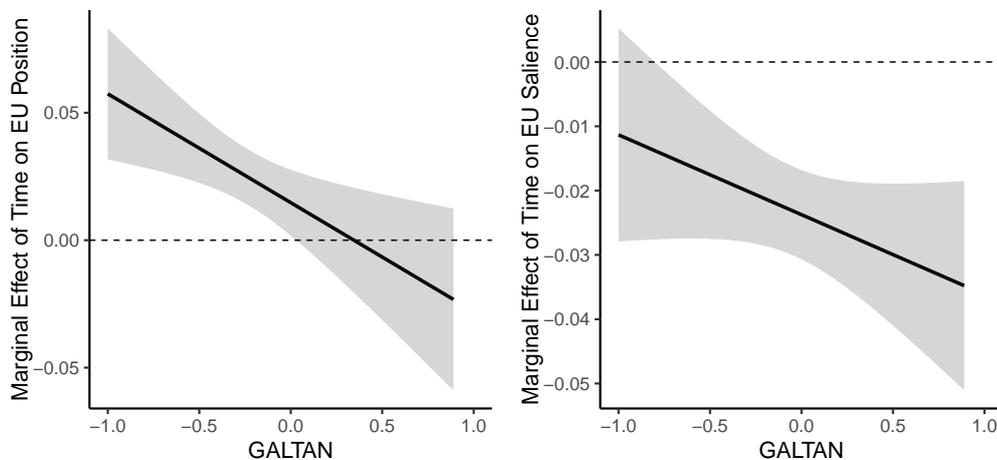
³⁶Complete model results can be found in the Appendix in Table 3.2

³⁷Marginal effects are calculated with all control variables being fixed at their sample means or reference categories.

³⁸The effect is plotted over the empirical range of Europhile parties' GALTAN positions (-1 to 0.9). Figure 3.8 in the Appendix shows the distribution of Europhile parties' GALTAN positions.

CHES wave to the next. Given the five CHES waves considered,³⁹ this leads to a shift of roughly 0.25 scale points over time. This change is equivalent to moving one-eighth of the entire scale toward the pro-European side, a moderate but meaningful positional shift. The effect is not significant for Europhile TAN parties. Still, it becomes negative for Europhile parties with a strong TAN profile ($GALTAN > 0.4$). Thus, there is only limited evidence for Hypothesis 2a.

Figure 3.3: Marginal effects of time on EU position and EU salience across GALTAN positions



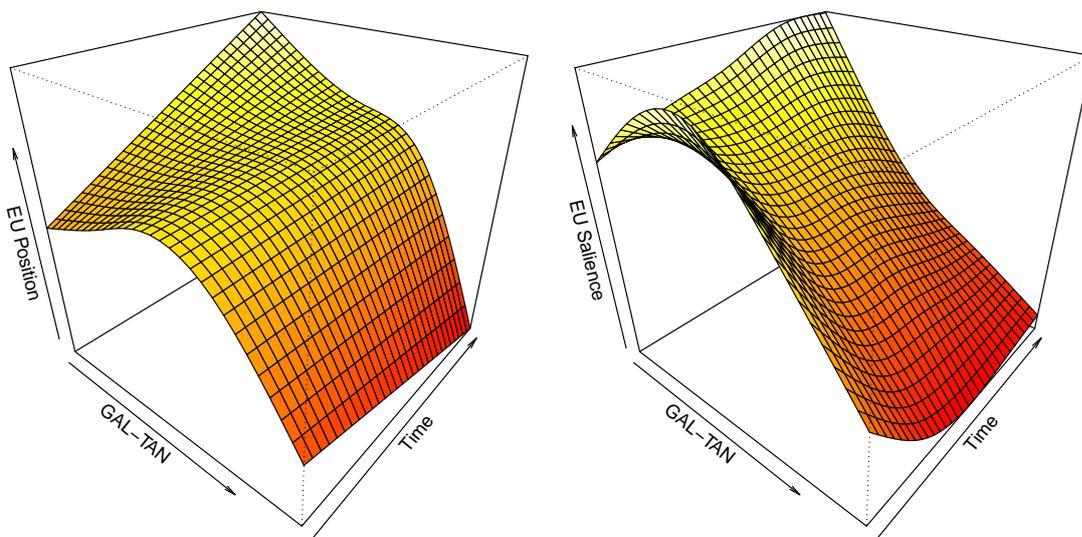
The right panel of Figure 3.3 shows the marginal effect for the interaction of time and a Europhile party's position on GALTAN on their EU salience. The interaction effect is negative ($\beta = -0.01$). The effect is negative for all parties across the GALTAN spectrum. All parties decrease the salience they attach to European integration from one CHES wave to the next. The results do not support Hypothesis 1b, as Europhile GAL parties decrease salience over time. However, the effect is not significant for Europhile parties with a pronounced GAL-profile. The results support Hypothesis 2b: Europhile TAN parties decrease the salience over time and this effect is more pronounced the more conservative a Europhile party's position is on the new cultural conflict line. For a party with a strong TAN-profile ($GALTAN=0.9$) this means a -0.035 decrease of salience on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 from one CHES wave to the next. Over the course of the five CHES waves, this corresponds to a 17.5% decrease on the salience scale, a substantial decline.⁴⁰

³⁹The CHES wave 1999 is not explicitly considered due to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable and the vote loss variable.

⁴⁰One could argue that the differences in the strategies chosen by Europhile GAL and Europhile TAN parties are not specific to their position on the cultural conflict line, but only due to a general evolution of policy spaces from a two- to a one-dimensional structure. In such a case a party's position on GALTAN would be a proxy for its position on an ideological 'super' dimension. To rule that option out, I show cor-

Figure 3.4 shows the non-linear interaction of time and GALTAN.⁴¹ The endpoints of the edges of the dice represent the empirical minimum and maximum values of the respective scales. The left panel illustrates the results for the position model. It shows that the interaction of a Europhile party's GALTAN position and time becomes more linear over time. In 2002 the pattern is best described with a reversed U-shape. Europhile parties with center positions on GALTAN are the most pro-European parties, while Europhile parties with more pronounced GAL- and TAN-profiles are less supportive. In 2024, the pattern is not perfectly linear. However, parties with most pronounced GAL-profiles are the most pro-European ones, and those with the most pronounced TAN-profiles are the least pro-European ones. We can also learn from this plot that Europhile parties with center positions on cultural issues do not considerable move over time, while there is a pronounced linear shift to more pro-European positions for GAL parties and a modest, but linear decrease in Europhile TAN parties pro-Europeanism.

Figure 3.4: Non-linear interaction of time and GALTAN



The right panel illustrates the non-linear interaction for the salience model. The decrease in salience is for almost all Europhile parties particularly strong in the earlier CHES waves and flattens in more recent waves. The plot also shows that Europhile parties with very progressive positions on cultural issues actually increase their salience over time, lending limited support to Hypothesis 1b.

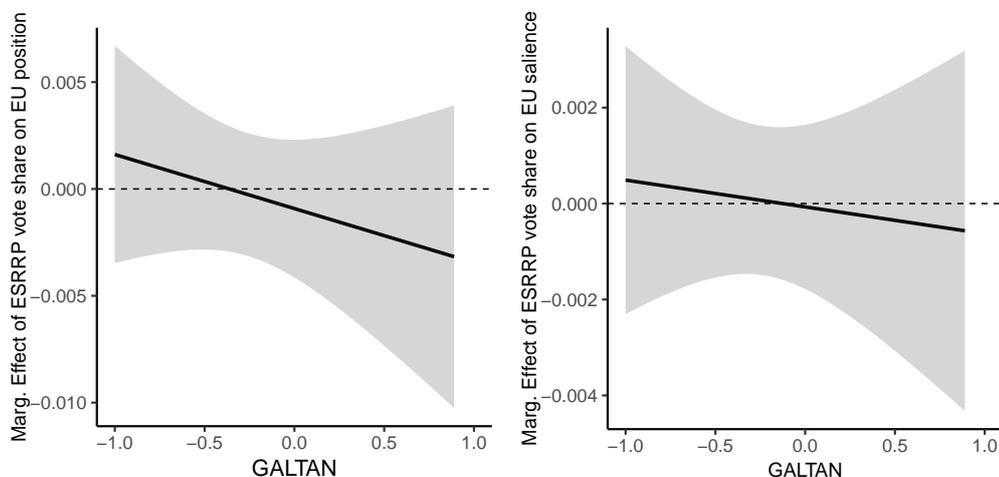
relations of GALTAN and the (economic) left-right dimension, which become increasingly uncorrelated over time (see Table 3.1 in the Appendix).

⁴¹For a comparative overview of the linear and non-linear models' performance see Table 3.4 in the Appendix.

Europhile parties' strategies in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties

I now move on to the results regarding Europhile parties' reactions to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties.⁴² The left panel of Figure 3.5 shows the marginal effect of the interaction of GALTAN and ESRRP vote share on EU position. The interaction effect is negative ($\beta = -0.003$) but fails to reach statistical significance over the whole GALTAN spectrum. However, the slope points into the expected direction with a positive effect for more GAL parties and a negative effect for more TAN parties. Still the effect is very small. Even for the most GAL-ish party, the marginal effect is roughly around 0.002. This implies that a ten percentage point increase in ESRRP success - a quite substantial shift - results in only a 0.02 change on the EU position scale, representing just 1% of the total scale. This effect is practically negligible. Thus, there is no support for Hypotheses 1c and 2c that Europhile GAL and TAN parties react to the success of ESRRPs in terms of their EU positions.

Figure 3.5: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic radical right party vote share on EU position and EU salience across GALTAN positions

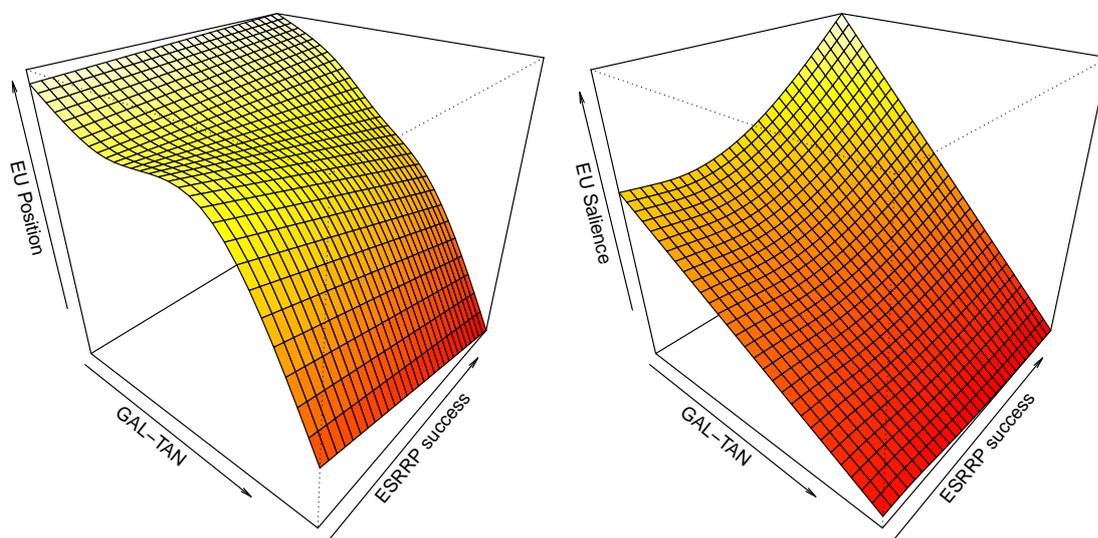


The right panel of Figure 3.5 shows the marginal effect of the interaction of GALTAN and ESRRP success on EU salience. The interaction effect is negative ($\beta = -0.0006$) and also fails to reach statistical significance over the whole range of GALTAN. Still, there is a positive effect for more GAL parties and a negative effect for more TAN parties. However, the effect size is substantially meaningless. Thus, there is no support for Hypotheses 1d and 2d. Neither Europhile GAL nor Europhile TAN parties significantly adjust their EU salience in response to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties.

⁴²Complete model results can be found in Table 3.3 in the Appendix.

Figure 3.6 shows the results of the non-linear interaction. The positional plot (left panel) mostly confirms the findings of the linear model, very small but almost linear effects. However, the non-linear salience plot (right panel) reveals some interesting nuances. While there is almost a flat line for Europhile TAN parties, there is a considerable increase of salience for parties with more progressive positions on cultural issues for the upper two-thirds of the ESRRP vote share scale. Empirically, this means that if Eurosceptic radical right parties gain more than 20% of the votes, Europhile GAL parties substantially increase the salience of European integration. However, practically this only applies to few empirical cases.

Figure 3.6: Non-linear interaction of Eurosceptic radical right party vote share and GALTAN



Robustness

I conduct several robustness checks. Since the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable is not without criticism,⁴³ I replicate the analyses excluding the lagged dependent variable. Figure 3.11 in the Appendix shows that the results are robust. I also present two robustness checks based on alternative selections of Europhile parties: First, I apply a broader definition of Europhile parties by only excluding parties belonging to the radical right party family (Figure 3.12 in the Appendix). Second, I use a more restrictive definition only considering parties with pro-European positions over the whole time period (Figure 3.13 in the Appendix). Overall, the results remain stable.

⁴³For a discussion see Wilkins (2018).

Replicating the analyses based on data from the Comparative Manifesto Project partly confirms the results based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.⁴⁴ Figure 3.9 and 3.10 in the Appendix show the results. Regarding position, the effect of time and ESRRP success is positive for Europhile GAL parties and negative for Europhile TAN parties resembling the overall pattern based on CHES data. However, the effects are only significant for Europhile TAN parties.

Regarding salience the CMP allows to distinguish between positive and negative mentions of European integration. Over time, all parties decrease positive mentions of European integration. However, the effect is stronger for more TAN profile parties and is not significant for GAL parties. This resembles the pattern based on CHES data, suggesting that the CHES salience measure rather captures EU salience in a positive framework. Regarding negative salience, we see the reversed pattern. The more pronounced the TAN profile of a Europhile party, the more likely they increasingly emphasize negative aspects of European integration over time. A similar salience pattern is found in reaction to ESRRP success. Europhile TAN parties significantly less often mention positive and more often negative aspects of European integration in response to ESRRP success.

The main difference between CHES and CMP data is that the former is based on expert judgments and the latter on written manifestos. Experts should be non-strategic and evaluate a party's broader stance considering not only manifestos but also for example public speeches, media coverage, or parliamentary behavior. According to the analyses based on expert evaluations, Europhile GAL parties are perceived as key movers by shifting to more pro-European positions. However, Europhile TAN parties are more likely to adapt their manifestos over time and in response to ESRRP success. This probably reflects strategic communication efforts of these parties to convey an image that they assume to be electorally advantageous (Ecker et al., 2022). Still, it is questionable whether these manifesto based adaptations are actual perceived by a broader public.

⁴⁴Party positions based on the CHES have been shown to produce reliable and viable estimates of party positions (Hooghe et al., 2010; Marks et al., 2007). However, especially the salience estimates are not without limitations. They represent *absolute* salience measures, meaning that, in theory, a party could assign the highest possible salience score to multiple issues simultaneously. In practice, however, it is often more informative to consider how salient a particular issue is relative to others. This *relative* salience provides a clearer indication of issue prioritization within a party's overall agenda. For this purpose, the CMP data is particularly valuable, as it captures the relative emphasis placed on an issue compared to the remainder of the manifesto.

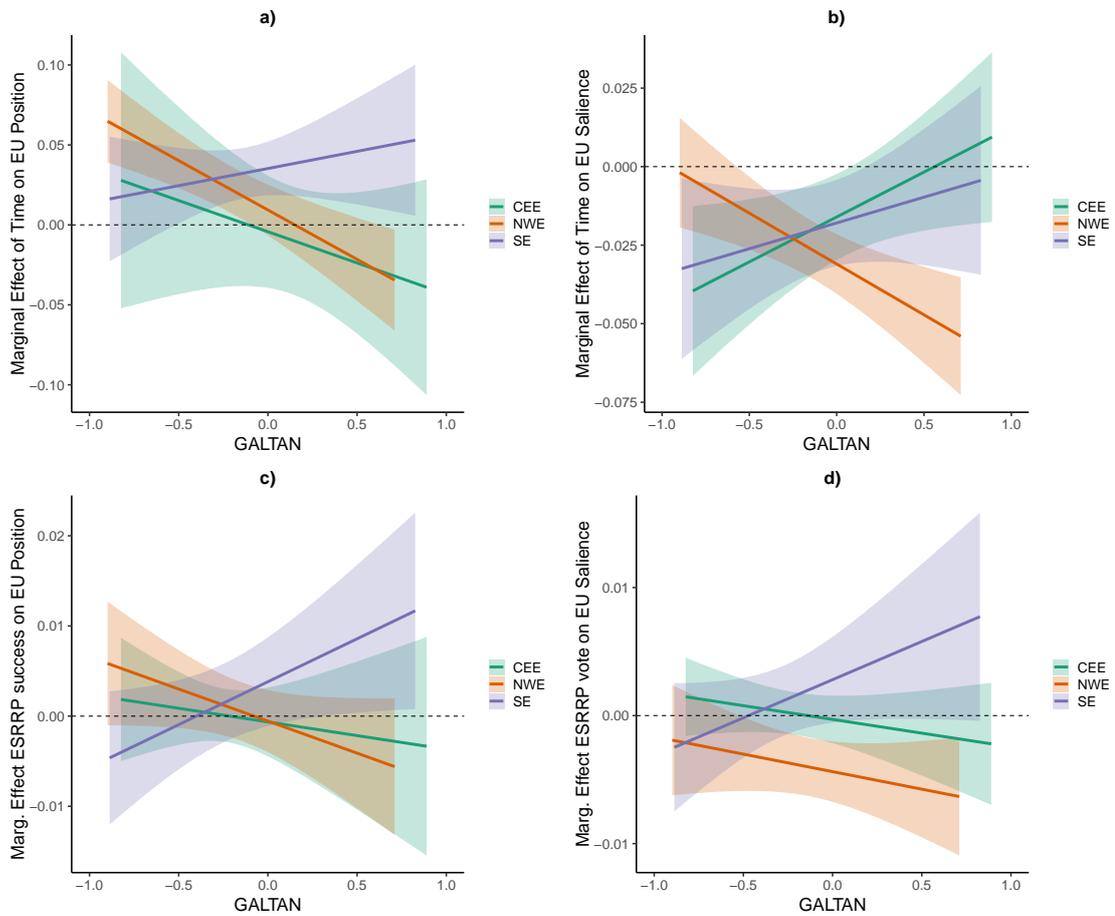
Regional Analyses

Figure 3.7 presents the regional results for the interactions between GALTAN position and time (Panels a and b), as well as GALTAN position and ESRRP success (Panels c and d).⁴⁵ The overall pattern identified in the main analyses (see Figures 3.3 and 3.5) is replicated for North-Western European countries. An exception is found for Europhile TAN parties, as salience decreases in response to the success of ESRRPs reach statistical significance in NWE. In Central and Eastern Europe, the results broadly mirror the findings from the main models, although effects are weaker and less statistically robust. The main deviation occurs in Panel b), where Europhile GAL parties significantly decrease the salience of European integration over time, while there are no significant effects for Europhile TAN parties. The pattern diverges most sharply in Southern Europe. Across all models, the effects run in the opposite direction compared to the main models. In SE countries, Europhile TAN parties become significantly more pro-European over time and in response to ESRRP success and do not significantly decrease their EU salience. Thus, support for Hypothesis 3 is limited. While the expected effects are most clearly visible in NWE and, to a lesser extent, in CEE, Europhile parties' strategic behavior follows a different logic in SE. In these countries, it appears that Europhile TAN parties assume the role of advancing pro-European positions, rather than Europhile GAL parties.

One potential explanation for this divergent pattern lies in the distinct conflict structure and crisis exposure in Southern Europe. Although many SE countries, such as Spain and Portugal, now have successful Eurosceptic radical right parties, Euroscepticism in the region has historically been more rooted on the left, reflecting the importance of economic divides in party competition (e.g. Kriesi, 2016). Moreover, the legacy of the Eurozone Crisis likely contributes to these differences, as most SE countries were far more severely affected by the financial crisis than NWE. These structural and historical factors may continue to shape the strategic behavior of parties, with left-leaning GAL parties being more reluctant in advancing their pro-Europeanism. However, a detailed examination of the mechanisms underlying this regional divergence lies beyond the scope of this paper. Future research should therefore undertake in-depth case studies to better understand the specific dynamics of European integration contestation in Southern Europe.

⁴⁵Countries are categorized as follows. NWE: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Austria, Luxembourg. SE: Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Portugal. CEE: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia.

Figure 3.7: Regional effects: Triple interaction of GALTAN position, region and time (Panel a and b) or Eurosceptic radical right party success (Panel c and d)



3.7 Conclusion

The evolution from an economic integration project to one increasingly touching on cultural issues and the rise of Eurosceptic radical right parties have significantly politicized European integration. Yet, the question of how Europhile parties react to these developments remains contested. This paper has argued that it is important to distinguish between different party types, as Europhile parties do not constitute a homogeneous group, but rather encompass a range of diverse actors, including conservative, Christian democratic, liberal, green, social democratic, and left parties. Europhile parties are expected to encounter distinct strategic incentives, depending on their positioning on the new cultural conflict line. Europhile parties with progressive cultural positions (Europhile GAL parties) are expected to reinforce their pro-European agenda and increase the salience, as their support for European integration more easily aligns with their broader cultural stances on environmentalism, multiculturalism, or gender equality. In contrast, Europhile parties with a traditional cultural agenda (Europhile TAN

parties) face a dilemma: They were driving forces of earlier integration, but are increasingly pressured by competition from Eurosceptic radical right parties. As a result, they are expected to shift away from pro-European positions while reducing the salience of the issue to avoid reputational costs due to their past support for integration.

The empirical findings partly confirm these expectations. Europhile TAN parties have decreased the salience of European integration over time, while the evidence for an anti-European positional shift is limited. This strategy aligns with *silent critical Europeanism* - a form of subtle distancing from the EU without openly embracing Euroscepticism. These results support the notion that European integration is a challenging issue for Europhile TAN parties. Their historical association with pro-Europeanism constrains their ability to adopt openly critical positions, leading them to avoid visible engagement with the issue.

The expectations for Europhile GAL parties are also only partly met. While these parties have become significantly more pro-European over time, they have not simultaneously increased the salience of European integration. Their behavior is best described as *silent pro-Europeanism*: a consistent but low-key reinforcement of their pro-Europeanism without making it a prominent campaign issue.

The evidence for strategic responses to the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties is limited. Neither Europhile GAL nor Europhile TAN parties consistently adapt their positional and salience strategies in response to increasing vote shares of ESRRPs. Thus, the findings point to a broader systemic transformation of European party systems with party competition on European integration being increasingly aligned with the new cultural conflict line. These developments represent long-term realignments rather than short-term, reactive responses to the national success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. Moreover, clear regional differences emerge: The findings discussed are most evident in North-Western Europe, less pronounced in Central-Eastern Europe, and largely absent in Southern Europe.

This study is not without limitations. Recent research shows that European integration is better described as a multidimensional phenomenon (e.g. Freudlsperger & Weinrich, 2025; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). Unfortunately, existing panel data does not allow for a nuanced disaggregation of different aspects of European integration. However, time series data is essential to investigate changes in party behavior. This paper has focused on whether Europhile parties adopt different strategies in response to the evolving character of European integration and the success of Eurosceptic radical right parties. Future research should examine whether the strategic choices identified here also translate into

electoral benefits. Moreover, the temporal realignment between GAL-parties and pro-Europeanism may not remain stable. If conservative or even radical right parties gain greater influence over EU policy-making, GAL-parties may find fewer of their core issues advanced at the European level. This raises questions about whether European integration will continue to be perceived as a culturally progressive project or whether new forms of 'conservative Europeanism' might emerge. Ultimately, European integration remains a moving target, subject to changing interpretations, issue ownership, and political leadership. Understanding how different visions of Europe evolve and are supported by different types of parties is crucial for future research.

References

- Abou-Chadi, T. (2016). Niche party success and mainstream party policy shifts—how green and radical right parties differ in their impact. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 417–436.
- Adam, S., Antl-Wittenberg, E.-M., Eugster, B., Leidecker-Sandmann, M., Maier, M., & Schmidt, F. (2017). Strategies of pro-European parties in the face of a Eurosceptic challenge. *European Union Politics*, 18(2), 260–282.
- Adams, J., & Somer-Topcu, Z. (2009). Policy adjustment by parties in response to rival parties' policy shifts: Spatial theory and the dynamics of party competition in twenty-five post-war democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(4), 825–846.
- Adendorf, A., & Gross, M. (2024). Under pressure? How regional dominant parties shift their EU positions when challenged by Eurosceptic parties. *Journal of European Integration*, 1–25.
- Aylott, N. (2007). A long, slow march to Europe. In T. Poguntke (Ed.), *The Europeanization of National Political Parties: Power and Organizational Adaptation* (pp. 162–189). Routledge.
- Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanisation of green parties: Exploring the EU's impact. *West European Politics*, 25(3), 29–50.
- Braun, D., & Carteny, G. (2024). How Does Eurosceptic Party Consolidation Transform Party Competition Over European Issues? *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 1–20.
- Braun, D., Popa, S. A., & Schmitt, H. (2019). Responding to the crisis: Eurosceptic parties of the left and right and their changing position towards the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(3), 797–819.
- Carrieri, L. (2021). *The impact of European integration on West European politics: Committed pro-Europeans strike back*. Springer Nature.
- Coman, E. (2017). Dimensions of political conflict in West and East: An application of vote scaling to 22 European parliaments. *Party Politics*, 23(3), 248–261.
- Easton, D. (1975). A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British journal of political science*, 5(4), 435–457.
- Ecker, A., Jenny, M., Müller, W. C., & Praprotnik, K. (2022). How and why party position estimates from manifestos, expert, and party elite surveys diverge: A comparative analysis of the 'left–right' and the 'European integration' dimensions. *Party politics*, 28(3), 528–540.
- Ejrnæs, A., & Jensen, M. D. (2019). Divided but united: explaining nested public support for European integration. *West European Politics*, 42(7), 1390–1419.

- Filip, A. (2021). The Evolution and Trends of Eurosceptic Success. In A. Filip (Ed.), *Eurosceptic Contagion: The Influence of Eurosceptic Parties in West-European Party Systems* (pp. 65–87). Springer.
- Ford, R., & Jennings, W. (2020). The changing cleavage politics of Western Europe. *Annual review of political science*, 23(1), 295–314.
- Freudlsperger, C., & Weinrich, M. (2025). Varieties of pro-Europeanism? How mainstream parties compete over redistribution in the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*.
- Haughton, T. (2014). Money, margins and the motors of politics: The EU and the development of party politics in Central and Eastern Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(1), 71–87.
- Hertner, I., & Keith, D. (2017). Europhiles or eurosceptics? Comparing the European policies of the labour party and the liberal democrats. *British Politics*, 12(1), 63–89.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Tilley, J. (2014). *Blaming Europe?: Responsibility without accountability in the European union*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hoeglinger, D. (2016). *Politicizing European integration: Struggling with the awakening giant*. Springer.
- Hooghe, L., Bakker, R., Brigevich, A., De Vries, C. E., Edwards, E., Marks, G., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. (2010). Reliability and validity of the 2002 and 2006 Chapel Hill expert surveys on party positioning. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(5), 687–703.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British journal of political science*, 39(1), 1–23.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2018). Cleavage theory meets Europe's crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the transnational cleavage. *Journal of European public policy*, 25(1), 109–135.
- Hunter, T. (2024). Disintegration and party competition: evidence from parliamentary speeches on Brexit. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–24.
- Hutter, S., & Grande, E. (2014). Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5), 1002–1018.
- Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (2019). Politicizing Europe in times of crisis. *Journal of European public policy*, 26(7), 996–1017.
- Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton University Press.

- Jolly, S., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2019. *Electoral Studies*, 75.
- Jones, E., Kelemen, R. D., & Meunier, S. (2021). Failing forward? Crises and patterns of European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1519–1536.
- Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- König, T., Marbach, M., & Osnabrügge, M. (2017). Left/Right or U? Estimating the Dimensionality of National Party Competition in Europe. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(3), 1101–1105.
- Kopecký, P., & Mudde, C. (2002). The two sides of Euroscepticism: Party positions on European integration in East Central Europe. *European Union Politics*, 3(3), 297–326.
- Kriesi, H. (2009). Rejoinder to Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, ‘A postfunctional theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining disensus’. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 221–224.
- Kriesi, H. (2016). The politicization of European integration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54, 32–47.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921–956.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2008). *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kurella, A.-S. (2025). A formal model of party competition with salience. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 37(2), 156–175.
- Lehmann, P., Franzmann, S., Al-Gaddooa, D., Burst, T., Ivanusch, C., Regel, S., Riethmüller, F., Volkens, A., Weßels, B., & Zehnter, L. (2024). The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR). Version 2024a. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB)/ Göttingen: Institut für Demokratieforschung (IfDem).
- Lindberg, L. N. (1970). *Europe’s Would-Be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community*. Prentice-Hall.
- Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2010). Divergent trends of euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(6), 787–817.
- Luke, S. (2024). What does it mean to be pro-European? The case of the European centre-left and centre-right in Austria, Germany and the UK. *Party Politics*, 30(6), 985–996.

- Malet, G., & Thiebaut, C. (2024). Silent responsiveness: How public opinion affects party discourse on wedge issues. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(4), 1491–1514.
- Malet, G., & Walter, S. (2024). The reverberations of British Brexit politics abroad. *European Union Politics*, 25(1), 63–85.
- Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Steenbergen, M. R., & Bakker, R. (2007). Crossvalidating data on party positioning on European integration. *Electoral Studies*, 26(1), 23–38.
- Meijers, M. J. (2017). Contagious Euroscepticism: The impact of Eurosceptic support on mainstream party positions on European integration. *Party Politics*, 23(4), 413–423.
- Meijers, M. J., & Williams, C. J. (2020). When shifting backfires: the electoral consequences of responding to niche party EU positions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(10), 1506–1525.
- Prosser, C. (2016). Dimensionality, ideology and party positions towards European integration. *West European Politics*, 39(4), 731–754.
- Rapp, M. (2025). How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization? *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 66(3), 545–573.
- Ray, L. (2007). Mainstream Euroscepticism: Trend or Oxymoron? *Acta Politica*, 42, 153–172.
- Rohrschneider, R., & Whitefield, S. (2016). Responding to growing European Union-skepticism? The stances of political parties toward European integration in Western and Eastern Europe following the financial crisis. *European Union Politics*, 17(1), 138–161.
- Rovny, J., & Polk, J. (2019). New wine in old bottles: Explaining the dimensional structure of European party systems. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 12–24.
- Rovny, J., Polk, J., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Marks, G., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2025). The 2024 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on political party positioning in Europe: Twenty-five years of party positional data. *Electoral Studies*, 97, 102981.
- Schäfer, C., Popa, S. A., Braun, D., & Schmitt, H. (2020). The reshaping of political conflict over Europe: from pre-Maastricht to post-‘Euro crisis’. *West European Politics*, 44(3), 531–557.
- Schmitter, P. C. (2009). On the way to a post-functionalist theory of European integration. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 211–215.
- Sorace, M. (2025). The Europeanisation of policy preferences: cross-national similarity and convergence 2014–2024. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–25.
- Spoon, J.-J., & Williams, C. (2017). It takes two: How Eurosceptic public opinion and party divisions influence party positions. *West European Politics*, 40(4), 741–762.

- Toshkov, D. (2024). Political Ideology, Policy Attitudes and Public Support for European Integration. *Working Paper*.
- Toshkov, D., & Krouwel, A. (2022). Beyond the U-curve: Citizen preferences on European integration in multidimensional political space. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 462–488.
- The Treaty of Rome. (1957).
- Treib, O. (2014). The voter says no, but nobody listens: causes and consequences of the Eurosceptic vote in the 2014 European elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10), 1541–1554.
- Treib, O. (2021). Euroscepticism is here to stay: what cleavage theory can teach us about the 2019 European Parliament elections. *Journal of European public policy*, 28(2), 174–189.
- Turnbull-Dugarte, S. J. (2021). A new hope for europhiles? The 2017 German federal elections and the revenge of the pro-European mainstream. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(7), 815–840.
- Van de Wardt, M. (2015). Desperate needs, desperate deeds: Why mainstream parties respond to the issues of niche parties. *West European Politics*, 38(1), 93–122.
- Van de Wardt, M., De Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2014). Exploiting the cracks: Wedge issues in multiparty competition. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(4), 986–999.
- Van Elsas, E., & Van Der Brug, W. (2015). The changing relationship between left–right ideology and euroscepticism, 1973–2010. *European Union Politics*, 16(2), 194–215.
- Van Spanje, J. (2010). Contagious parties: Anti-immigration parties and their impact on other parties’ immigration stances in contemporary Western Europe. *Party Politics*, 16(5), 563–586.
- Vasilopoulou, S. (2023). Parties and European integration. In N. Carter, D. Keith, G. M. Sindre, & S. Vasilopoulou (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Parties* (pp. 301–311). Routledge.
- Whitefield, S., & Rohrschneider, R. (2015). The salience of European integration to party competition: Western and Eastern Europe compared. *East European Politics and Societies*, 29(1), 12–39.
- Whitefield, S., & Rohrschneider, R. (2019). Embedding integration: How European integration splits mainstream parties. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 25–35.
- Wilkins, A. S. (2018). To lag or not to lag?: Re-evaluating the use of lagged dependent variables in regression analysis. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 6(2), 393–411.
- Wood, S. (2015). Package ‘mgcv’. *R package version*, 1(29), 729.

Appendix

Appendix A: Descriptives

Figure 3.8: Distribution of GALTAN positions

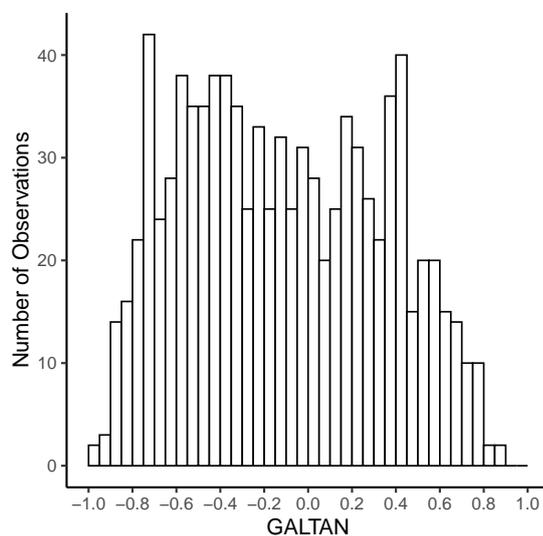


Table 3.1: Descriptives on the dimensionality of the political space: Correlation of the (economic) ideological dimension and GALTAN dimension

	Correlation left-right and GALTAN	Correlation left-right-econ and GALTAN
2002	0.724	0.556
2006	0.672	0.381
2010	0.623	0.390
2014	0.569	0.318
2019	0.648	0.406
2024	0.640	0.397

Appendix B: Regression tables main models

Table 3.2: Time models: Party fixed-effects regression based on CHES data

	M1: EU Position	M2: EU Salience
Intercept	0.31*** (0.08)	0.40*** (0.03)
Time	0.01* (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.004)
Position on GALTAN	-0.05 (0.09)	-0.07 (0.05)
Time * Position on GALTAN	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Public Euroscepticism	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.08* (0.03)
Party Size	0.004 (0.003)	0.002 (0.001)
Vote loss	-0.0002 (0.002)	-0.0007 (0.001)
Government Dummy	0.0005 (0.01)	0.004 (0.008)
Lagged Position/Salience	0.22** (0.07)	-0.25*** (0.05)
Party fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	666	665
N Clusters	191	190
R ²	0.83	0.76
Adjusted R ²	0.76	0.65

Note: Standard errors clustered by party in parentheses, ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Table 3.3: Eurosceptic radical right party success models: Two-way fixed-effects regression based on CHES data

	M1: EU Position	M2: EU Salience
Intercept	0.35*** (0.09)	0.39*** (0.03)
Dummy 2006	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.02)
Dummy 2010	0.003 (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.02)
Dummy 2014	0.03 (0.03)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Dummy 2019	0.06 (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.02)
Dummy 2024	0.07 (0.04)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Success ESRRP	-0.0009 (0.002)	-0.0001 (0.0009)
Position on GALTAN	-0.20* (0.09)	-0.13** (0.04)
Success ESRRP * Position on GALTAN	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.0006 (0.002)
Public Euroscepticism	-0.01 (0.07)	0.02 (0.04)
Party Size	0.004 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)
Vote loss	-0.0005 (0.002)	-0.0008 (0.001)
Government Dummy	0.0008 (0.02)	-0.0007 (0.008)
Lagged Position/Salience	0.22** (0.08)	-0.04 (0.05)
Party fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	621	620
N Clusters	178	177
R ²	0.82	0.79
Adjusted R ²	0.73	0.70

Note: Standard errors clustered by party in parentheses, ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Appendix C: Robustness checks based on data from the Comparative Manifesto Project

Figure 3.9: Marginal effect plots for interaction of time and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience (1999-2024) based on CMP data

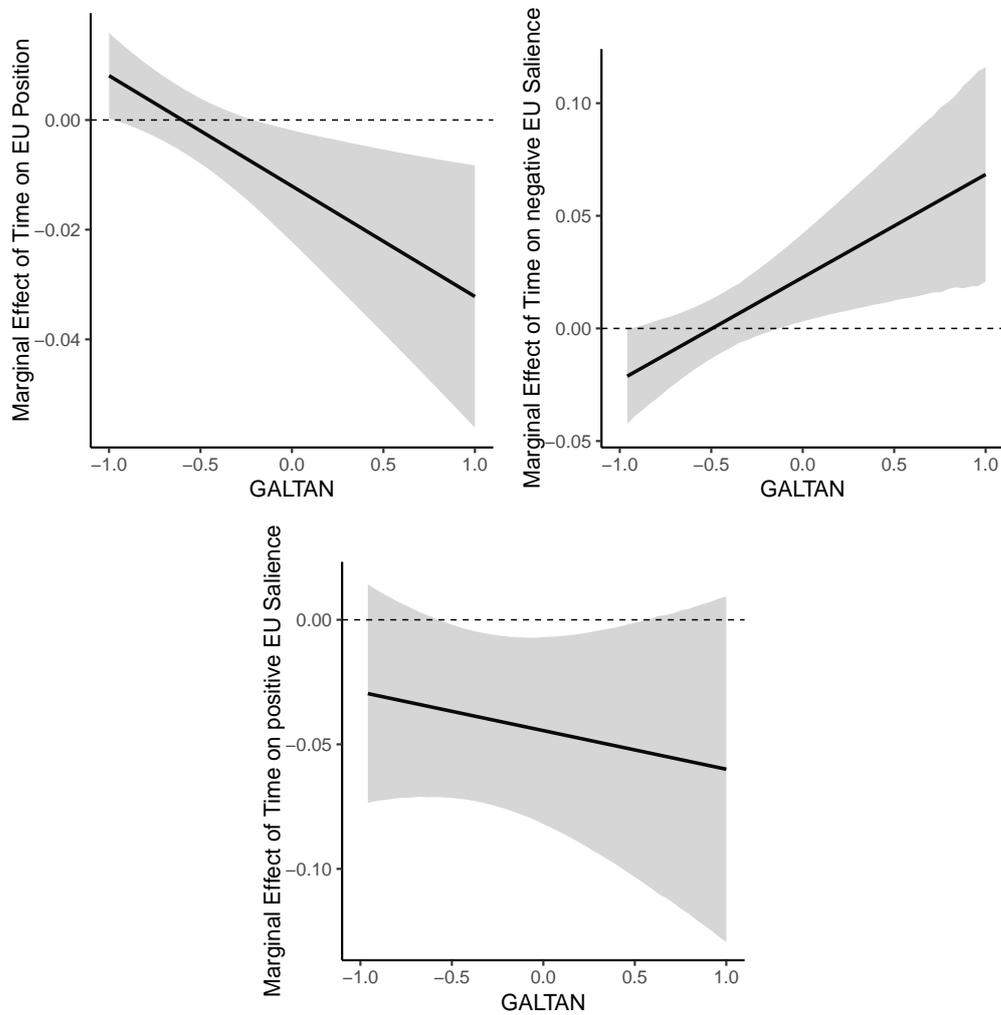
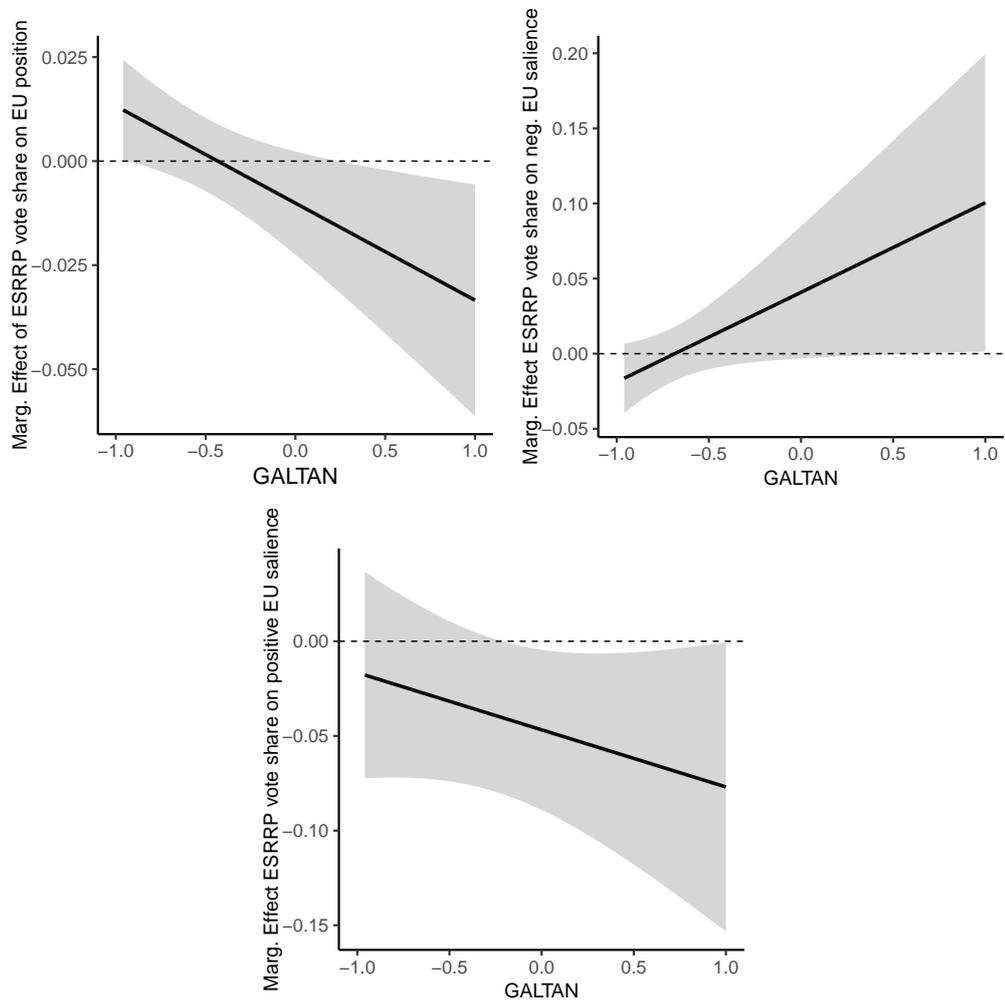
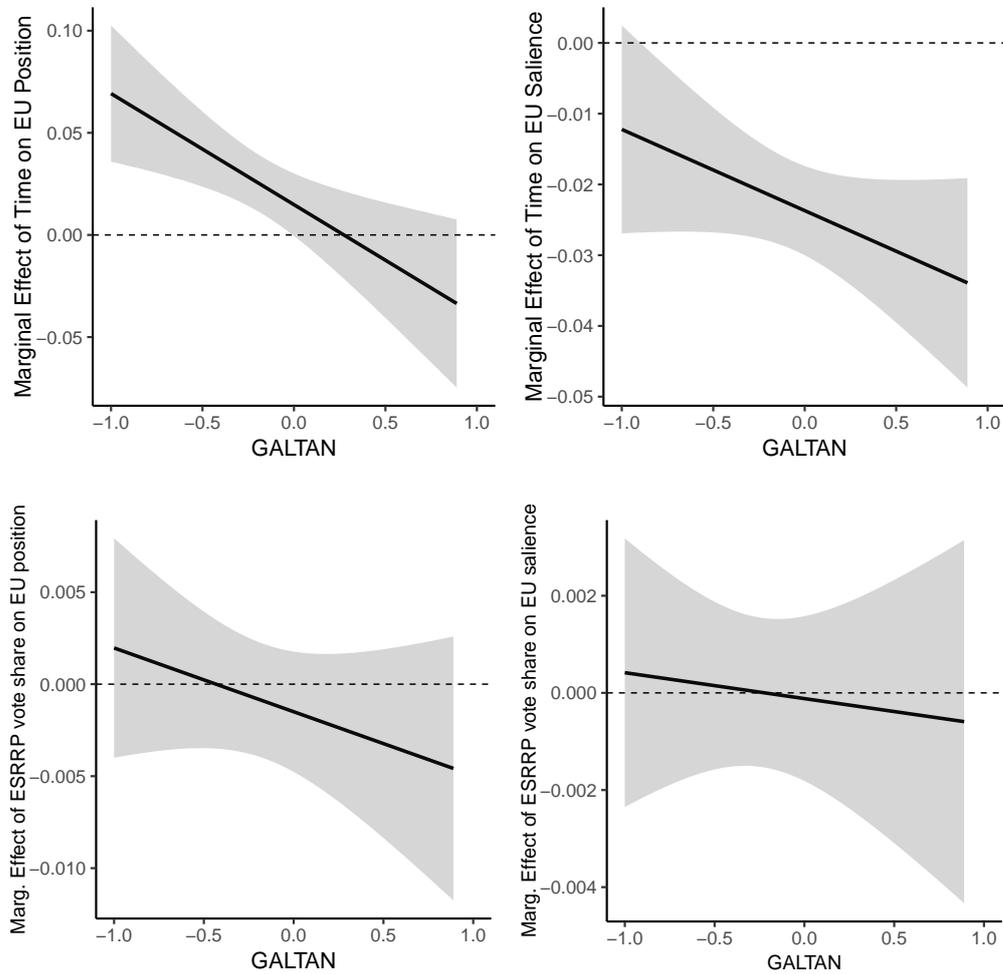


Figure 3.10: Marginal effect plots for interaction of Eurosceptic radical right party success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience (1999-2024) based on CMP data



Appendix D: Robustness checks dropping lagged dependent variable

Figure 3.11: Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience without lagged dependent variable



Appendix E: Robustness for Europhile party selection

Figure 3.12: Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience for all parties except radical right parties

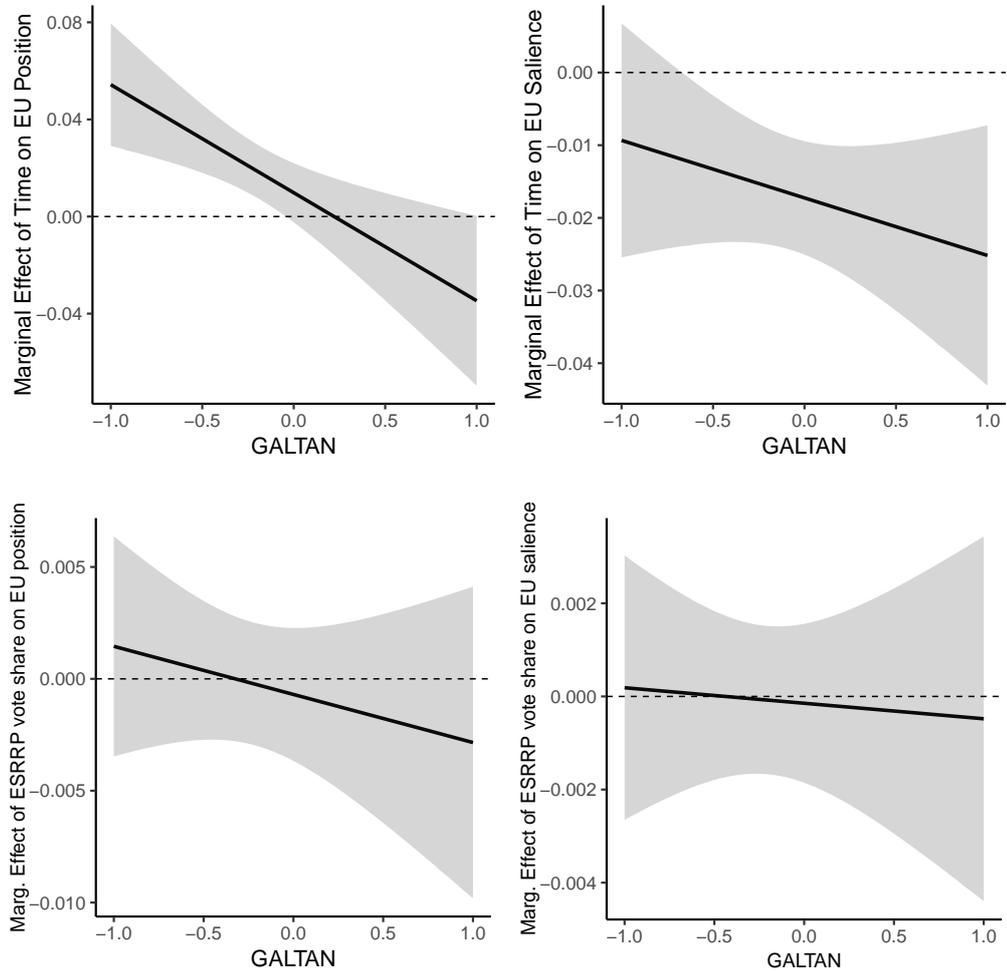
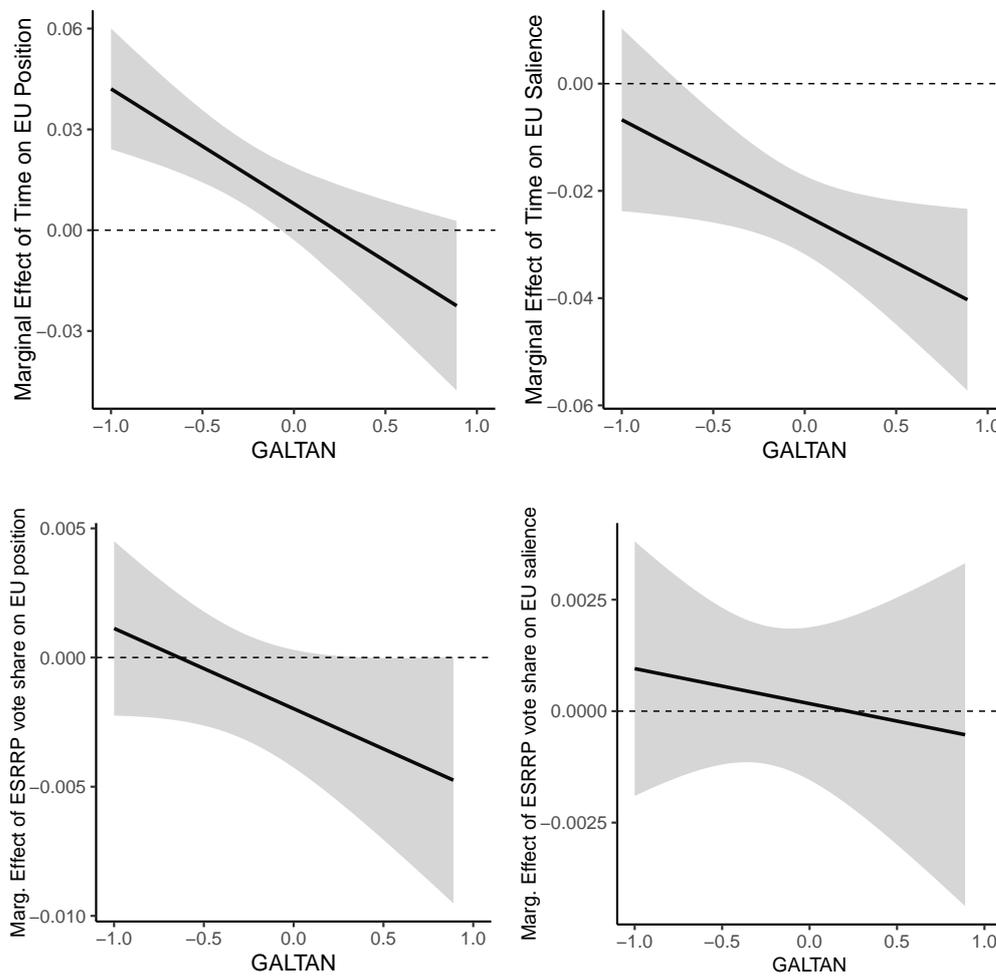


Figure 3.13: Marginal effect plots for interaction of time/ESRRP success and GALTAN position on EU position and EU salience for only pro-European parties



Appendix F: Non-parametric models

Table 3.4: Comparative overview of model fit for linear and non-linear models

	AIC
Non-Linear: DV: EU position, IV: Time*GALTAN	-445.4430
Linear: DV: EU position, IV: Time*GALTAN	-411.3524
Non-Linear: DV: EU salience, IV: Time*GALTAN	-1114.280
Linear: DV: EU salience, IV: Time*GALTAN	-1072.299
Non-Linear: DV: EU position, IV: ESRRP success*GALTAN	-404.3382
Linear: DV: EU position, IV: ESRRP success*GALTAN	-379.0153
Non-Linear: DV: EU salience, IV: ESRRP success*GALTAN	-1129.606
Linear: DV: EU salience, IV: ESRRP success*GALTAN	-1126.816

Appendix G: List of Europhile parties

Table 3.5: CHES parties included in the main analyses

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
AT	1301	SPO
AT	1302	OVP
AT	1304	GRUNE
AT	1304	Grune
AT	1306	LIF
AT	1306	NEOS
BE	102	PS
BE	103	SP
BE	103	SPA
BE	103	SP/SPA
BE	103	Vooruit
BE	104	ECOLO
BE	104	Ecolo
BE	105	AGALEV
BE	105	Groen
BE	106	MR
BE	106	PRL/MR
BE	107	VLD
BE	107	VLD/PVV
BE	107	Open Vld
BE	108	CDH
BE	108	PSC/CDH
BE	108	LE
BE	109	CD&V
BE	109	CDV
BE	110	NVA
BE	110	VU/NVA
BE	110	N-VA
BG	2002	SDS
BG	2003	BSP
BG	2004	DPS
BG	2004	APS
BG	2008	DSB
BG	2010	GERB
BG	2018	DB
CY	4001	DISY
CY	4003	AKEL
CY	4004	DIKO

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
CY	4005	EDEK
CY	4006	KOP
CY	4006	KOSP
CZ	2101	CSSD
CZ	2101	SOCDEM
CZ	2104	KDU-CSL
CZ	2107	SZ
CZ	2109	TOP09
CZ	2111	ANO2011
CZ	2114	Pirates
CZ	2116	STAN
DE	301	CDU
DE	302	SPD
DE	303	FDP
DE	304	Grunen
DE	304	GRUNEN
DE	306	PDS
DE	306	Linkspartei/PDS
DE	306	LINKE
DE	306	DL
DE	308	CSU
DK	201	SD
DK	201	S
DK	202	RV
DK	203	KF
DK	203	DKF
DK	206	SF
DK	211	V
DK	211	v
DK	218	LA
DK	219	ALT
EE	2201	IRL
EE	2201	Isaama
EE	2202	EK
EE	2203	ER
EE	2204	SDE
EE	2206	ERL
EE	2207	EER
EE	2210	E200

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
ES	501	PSOE
ES	502	PP
ES	502	PPP
ES	504	IU
ES	505	CiU
ES	506	PNV
ES	506	EAJ/PNV
ES	507	EA
ES	511	ERC
ES	513	BNG
ES	517	CC
ES	517	Cca
ES	520	CHA
ES	523	UPyD
ES	524	EHB
ES	524	EH Bildu
ES	525	Podemos
ES	550	Junts
FI	1401	SDP
FI	1402	KOK
FI	1403	KESK
FI	1404	VAS
FI	1406	SFP
FI	1406	RKP/SFP
FI	1406	SFP/RKP
FI	1408	VIHR
FR	602	PS
FR	603	PRG
FR	605	VERTS
FR	605	EELV
FR	605	LE/EELV
FR	609	RPR
FR	609	UMP
FR	609	LR
FR	613	UDF
FR	613	MODEM
FR	613	MoDem
FR	621	NC
FR	626	RE

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
GB	1102	LAB
GB	1104	LibDem
GB	1104	LIBDEM
GB	1105	SNP
GB	1106	PLAID
GB	1107	GREEN
GR	401	PASOK
GR	402	ND
GR	403	SYN
GR	403	SYRIZA
HR	3101	HDZ
HR	3102	SDP
HR	3103	HSS
HR	3104	HSLs
HR	3105	HNS
HR	3106	IDS
HR	3107	HDSSB
HR	3110	SDSS
HR	3115	Most
HU	2301	MSZP
HU	2302	Fidesz-M
HU	2302	Fidesz
HU	2303	MDF
HU	2304	SZDSZ
HU	2307	KDNP
HU	2309	LMP
HU	2309	LMP-MZP
HU	2310	E14
HU	2311	DK
HU	2314	Momentum
IE	701	FF
IE	702	FG
IE	703	Lab
IE	703	LAB
IE	705	GP
IE	706	PD
IE	707	SF
IE	710	SD

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
IT	802	DS
IT	808	VERDI
IT	814	CCD
IT	814	UDC
IT	815	FI
IT	815	PDL
IT	818	CDU
IT	819	DL
IT	823	PPI
IT	825	RI
IT	827	SVP
IT	828	IdV
IT	829	UDEUR
IT	837	PD
IT	838	SI
IT	845	M5S
IT	845	MS5
LT	2501	LSDP
LT	2504	NS
LT	2505	LiCS
LT	2506	TS
LT	2506	TS-LKD
LT	2507	LVLS
LT	2507	LVZS
LT	2511	LLRA
LT	2515	TT
LT	2516	DP
LT	2518	LRLS
LT	2518	LS
LU	3801	CSV
LU	3802	Greng
LU	3803	DP
LU	3804	LSAP
LV	2402	LKS
LV	2405	ZZS
LV	2410	SC
LV	2410	SDPS
LV	2410	Saskana
LV	2412	V

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
LV	2414	LRA
LV	2414	AS
LV	2417	AP!
MT	3701	PL
MT	3702	PN
NL	1001	CDA
NL	1002	PvdA
NL	1003	VVD
NL	1004	D66
NL	1005	GL
NL	1016	CU
NL	1020	50PLUS
NL	1050	DENK
PL	2601	SLD
PL	2601	Nowa Lewica
PL	2603	PO
PL	2606	PSL
PL	2611	SDPL
PT	1202	CDS-PP
PT	1202	PP
PT	1202	CDS/PP
PT	1205	PS
PT	1206	PSD
PT	1206	PPD/PSD
PT	1250	PAN
RO	2701	PSD
RO	2702	PC
RO	2704	PDL
RO	2705	PNL
RO	2706	UDMR
RO	2713	USR
SE	1602	SAP
SE	1602	S/SAP
SE	1603	C
SE	1604	FP
SE	1604	L
SE	1605	M
SE	1606	KD
SE	1607	MP

Country	CHES Party ID	Party Name
SI	2901	LDS
SI	2902	SDS
SI	2903	SD
SI	2904	SLS-SMS
SI	2904	SLS
SI	2905	NSI
SI	2905	NSi
SI	2906	DeSUS
SI	2911	SMC
SI	2912	Levica
SI	2913	AB
SK	2801	LS-HZDS
SK	2802	SDKU-DS
SK	2803	Smer
SK	2803	Smer-SD
SK	2804	SMK
SK	2804	SMK-MKP
SK	2805	KDH
SK	2812	SaS
SK	2813	MH
SK	2814	OLaNO

4 The (mis-)match of parties' and citizens' multidimensional preferences on European integration - Insights from the European Parliament Election 2024

Abstract As the EU has evolved from an economic project into a polity reaching deeply into cultural domains, European integration has become increasingly multi-faceted and complex. Existing research shows that citizens' EU preferences are multidimensional, such that support for one aspect of integration does not necessarily translate into support for another. However, we know far less about whether these preferences are represented in the party supply and how they are embedded within national conflict structures. Using exploratory factor analysis on data from 2024, the study shows that, overall, both citizens and parties differentiate between (i) competence expansion to the European level (binding), (ii) external borders and foreign, security, and defense policy (bounding), and (iii) European solidarity (bonding). Binding and most bounding aspects are bundled with national cultural issues, while financial solidarity is economically embedded. Taking multidimensionality into account reveals representation gaps. Right-wing citizens favor a common European foreign, security, and defense policy, whereas right-wing parties oppose such efforts. Left-wing parties are more critical of European integration in general and support for Ukraine in particular than ideologically similar citizens. Moreover, the analyses suggest that the U-shaped pattern of EU support is outdated, at least regarding some aspects of European integration. These findings have important implications for political representation and the further politicization of European integration.

Keywords: European integration, multidimensionality, representation, Europeanization

4.1 Introduction

Research has shown that citizens' EU preferences are multidimensional (e.g. Boomgaarden et al., 2011; De Vreese et al., 2019; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022), illustrating that the public debate has shifted from *how much* integration to questions of *what kind* of integration. However, we still know little about whether they find adequate representation in party competition and how these multidimensional preferences are organized within national conflict structures. As the EU has evolved from a project of trade liberalization into an 'experimental polity' (Ferrera, 2023; Kriesi et al., 2021; Oana et al., 2023), conflicts over the fundamental components of a polity - demarcation, binding authority, and bonding ties - have become more prevalent (Ferrera, 2023). Once largely technocratic, integration increasingly touches on cultural aspects, such as national sovereignty and identity (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This transformation has fostered politicization, in which European integration has become more salient, polarized, and is contested by a broader range of actors (e.g. Carrieri, 2021; De Wilde, 2011; Hutter & Grande, 2014). Such politicization, this paper argues, stimulates more fine-grained and differentiated preferences among both citizens and parties, reflecting the experimental polity building process of the EU. However, as EU policy making has expanded into formerly national competence areas (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014), the boundaries between domestic and European politics have become increasingly blurred (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002) and national policies have become 'Europeanized' (e.g. Ladrech, 2002, 2014). This intertwining implies that preferences toward European integration cannot be understood in isolation from national policy debates or ideological structures. Rather, it underscores the need to examine how specific aspects of integration relate to existing economic and cultural conflict lines. Against this backdrop, this paper asks: (1) How do citizens and parties structure their attitudes toward different aspects of European integration? (2) How do these aspects relate to economic, cultural, and ideological dimensions? (3) To what extent do parties represent citizens' multidimensional preferences?

Adopting a multidimensional perspective for citizens' and parties' EU preferences helps to detect potential representation gaps that remain hidden when focusing solely on general support for European integration. Such potential mismatches matter, as citizens evaluate representation not only in ideological terms but also with respect to specific issues. Overlooking these preferences can affect democratic satisfaction negatively (Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016). Examining whether citizens and parties envision the same kind of Europe, or where their preferences diverge, also helps to assess the possibilities for specific future trajectories of European integration. Moreover, the alignment of European integration preferences with national conflict structures is crucial for understanding which actors shape European debates in specific ways and how national

competition connects to the European level. Culturally related aspects are typically mobilized by parties with strong cultural policy agendas, such as greens and the radical right, while economically related aspects are more likely to be politicized by parties primarily competing along the economic left-right divide. Hence, the more political competition on European integration takes place along the cultural conflict line, the more likely is the politicization of European integration (Börzel & Risse, 2009).

Empirically, I conduct factor analyses on two novel datasets from 2024 covering Northern, Western, Southern, and Central–Eastern EU member states. The findings highlight the multidimensional character of both citizens’ and parties’ preferences on Europe. Overall, they are structured along (i) competence expansion; (ii) external borders and foreign, security, and defense policies; and (iii) solidarity. Most EU dimensions relate to cultural aspects. The main exceptions are financial solidarity and, to a certain degree foreign, security and defense, which show stronger economic embedding. At the party and citizen level, there is evidence that the U-shaped pattern of Euroscepticism is outdated regarding most aspects of European integration. Party support for competence expansion and European solidarity follow a J-shaped pattern, with green parties most supportive and the radical right most opposed. This pattern is also found among citizens for competence expansion, general EU support, and European support for Ukraine. Yet representation gaps exist: Citizens link EU foreign, security, and defense policies to immigration and socio-economic attitudes, with right-leaning citizens more supportive of European security efforts, a pattern not mirrored at the party level. In addition, radical-left parties are more Eurosceptic and more critical of support for Ukraine than ideologically similar voters. Finally, contextual variation matters: In Southern Europe different aspects of European integration are more strongly related to national economic issues than in North-Western and Central-Eastern Europe, and crisis exposure appears to reshape attitudes, e.g. in Mediterranean countries, preferences for border control cluster with support for an EU-wide asylum distribution scheme.

4.2 Enduring politicization and the differentiation of European integration preferences

European integration has become politicized, as the process has increasingly touched on cultural aspects, such as sovereignty and national identity. The former tacit public backing for an elite-driven process has eroded leading to a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), in which further integration is increasingly contested. As shown in Chapter 1.1, the politicization of the European integration process has substantially increased since the early 2000s, mostly driven by radical right parties (e.g. Filip, 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hutter & Grande, 2014). This implies that European issues

have become more salient and, as also Europhile parties increasingly engage with European integration (Carrieri, 2021; Rapp, 2025b), positions have polarized. Thus, citizens are increasingly exposed to competing ideas of what the EU is and could potentially be. Moreover, citizens are increasingly informed about the EU and consider European issues in their vote calculus (Goldberg et al., 2021; Hobolt, 2007; Rapp, 2025a), challenging the understanding of European integration as a second-order issue (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). I thus argue, that ongoing politicization stimulates more fine-grained, multidimensional citizen preferences, rather than attitudes that map onto being generally in favor or against European integration. In such a context, support for one aspect of integration does not exclude opposition to another aspect (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022; Van den Hoogen et al., 2022). Citizens may, for instance, favor European environmental legislation while opposing stronger EU competences in border controlling or they may support their country's EU membership but resist further enlargement.

This argument also applies to the party level. As the EU nowadays regulates issues from a wide range of policy areas (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014), parties face divergent incentives to advance specific policies at the European level. For example, depending on a party's ideological profile support for specific European issues probably vary. Left-leaning parties tend to support more far-reaching cultural and social integration, while expressing reservations regarding the neoliberal character of the EU as a threat to national welfare states. Contrary, right-leaning parties tend to favor economic integration, but are more reluctant regarding cultural aspects, such as transferring more core state powers to the European level (Braun et al., 2019; Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019). At the same time, even though radical right parties are typically sceptical of further integration, they have increasingly grounded their nationalist agendas within a European framework (Beaudonnet & Hoyo Prohuber, 2024). In this sense, they face incentives to utilize the European arena, for example to advance more restrictive immigration policies, thereby engaging with the EU as an instrument to implement their policies rather than as an object of rejection. The rise of radical right parties have also constrained the EU's ability to reach unified positions on various issues, fueling conflict on issues such as immigration, climate action, or responses to Russia's aggression to Ukraine (Hobolt et al., 2025).

The 2024 European Parliament Election provides a suitable context for observing such processes of preference differentiation. The election occurred in the aftermath of a prolonged crisis period, amid mounting external and internal pressures facing the EU with a wide range of Europe related issues being discussed. External challenges, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, underscored the EU's still lacking unified military capacity (Raik et al., 2024), but also highlighted the need for joint European responses.

The war fostered a debate about a common European foreign, security, and defense policy and a prospective EU membership for Ukraine, with particularly left parties being under pressure of how to position towards sanctions against Russia (Holesch et al., 2024). Also internal pressures, particularly the growing success of radical right parties, brought several issues on the agenda, such as immigration that remained one of the most debated issues in the context of the European Parliament Election 2024 (Hobolt et al., 2025). Also climate policy was a relevant issue (Braun et al., 2025; Hobolt et al., 2025; Toygür & Sojka, 2025), as the European Green Deal introduced by the previous Commission provoked considerable resistance among radical right parties (Dickson & Hobolt, 2025). Moreover, the EU's foundational values of liberal democracy were debated. Particularly in countries where radical right parties entered government, adopted policies provoked fundamental conflicts with EU institutions (e.g. Blauburger et al., 2025; Hobolt et al., 2025). Consequently, European integration can be regarded as complex and contested issue in 2024, with a wide range of specific aspects being discussed at the European level. This makes the contemporary EU a suitable case for examining how integration preferences crystallize in a context of enduring politicization at both the party and citizen level.

4.2.1 The EU as an experimental polity

The complex and contested nature of European integration in 2024 can be traced back to its stepwise development. From its founding vision of 'an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe' ('The Treaty of Rome', 1957), the EU has evolved into an experimental polity, a political system in which polity-building itself is experimental (Kriesi et al., 2021). Its uniqueness stems from an ongoing configuration of the fundamental components of any polity - boundaries, authority, and solidarity - in response to functional and political challenges (Ferrera, 2023). Adopting this polity perspective shifts the analytical focus from a 'more vs. less' integration continuum toward understanding how integration reconfigures the basic structures of political order. The EU's stepwise evolution increasingly affects, first, the allocation of authority (*binding*), second, the distribution of solidarity (*bonding*), and, third, the definition of political boundaries (*bounding*). Support for specific aspects of European integration can thus be structured along the so-called 'three Bs' (Ferrera, 2023; Ferrera et al., 2024; Kriesi et al., 2021; Oana et al., 2023):

Binding refers to the extent of authoritative control and problem-solving capacities within the polity. It captures both the expansion of the EU's core authoritative powers and the introduction of new regulations across policy domains. *Bonding* describes the demarcation of the polity's territory and their citizens and by this refers to external

border creation at the European level. This includes, for example, responsibilities for border control, EU enlargement, or a common European security and defense policy. *Bonding* concerns solidarity and a shared identity among the members of the polity.

This polity perspective acknowledges that integration today is less about functional cooperation than about negotiating the political foundations of a shared polity, highlighting the necessity to go beyond the well-known distinction between diffuse and specific forms of support for European integration (Easton, 1975; Hobolt & De Vries, 2016). The expansion from economic to cultural domains has fostered politicization and heightened complexity. Conflicts over sovereignty, border drawing, and identity could only emerge because the EU has become a relevant political, economic, and legal actor in the politics of its member states (Kriesi et al., 2021). Recognizing the EU's growing role in policymaking suggests that preferences towards European integration should be multi- rather than unidimensional. Support for all three components of a polity - bounding boundaries, binding authority, and bonding ties - would need to align to realize the original goal of an 'ever closer union'. When these dimensions diverge, however, alternative visions of Europe emerge, such as selective forms of integration with, e.g. stronger external borders but limited solidarity among member states.

Empirical findings on the dimensionality of parties' and citizens' EU preferences

Empirical research shows that citizens' preferences toward European integration are multidimensional rather than organized along a single 'more versus less' Europe dimension (e.g. Boomgaarden et al., 2011; De Vreese et al., 2019; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022; Van den Hoogen et al., 2022). With respect to the aspects of European integration shaping citizens' preferences, the literature offers diverse insights, which vary considerably depending on the specific items examined in the empirical analyses.⁴⁶ Still, there is evidence at the citizen level that the 'three Bs' play a structuring role for public opinion.

Boomgaarden et al. (2011) and De Vreese et al. (2019) show that citizens' EU preferences are structured along five dimensions: emotional responses, utilitarian considerations, identity, performance, and support for further strengthening of the EU. The latter dimension, which captures support for expanding EU competences, closely corresponds to the *binding* component and indicates that authority transfer constitutes a distinct attitudinal dimension. Similarly, Toshkov and Krouwel (2022) find that citizens who generally favor the EU are not necessarily those who support a further expansion of its responsibilities.

⁴⁶Generally, findings on the dimensionality of attitudes are heavily influenced by the choice of items, which is often determined by data availability (Rovny & Polk, 2019). This also applies to this analysis, which I will consider in the conclusions I draw from it.

Baute et al. (2018) examine attitudes toward ‘Social Europe’ in Belgium and identify five dimensions: European social citizenship, harmonization through regulation, interpersonal solidarity, a European social security system, and member-state solidarity. The latter is the most relevant one, thereby underscoring its importance in shaping citizens’ EU preferences. This dimension closely mirrors the *bonding* component, as it centers on redistributive mechanisms between member states. Likewise, Reinl and Braun (2023) and Pellegata and Visconti (2024) emphasize the centrality of European solidarity in structuring public opinion.

Recent research highlights how external threats can activate the *bounding* dimension of European integration. Studies on the Russian invasion of Ukraine show that the war increased the salience of European security, prompting citizens to form more structured attitudes toward a common foreign and defense policy and support for Ukraine (Thomson et al., 2023; Wang & Moise, 2023). Whereas Europeans have previously been uncertain about transferring defense competences or establishing a European army (Mader et al., 2020), they now express greater support for a unified and autonomous role of the EU in security affairs. This underscores that the EU is a moving target: As external challenges emerge, public opinion adapts, making European security and defense an important topic in the 2024 context.

While most existing research has focused on public opinion, much less is known about whether parties represent multidimensional citizen preferences. Most of the party level studies focus on general support for European integration and its relation to economic and cultural conflict lines, leaving open how the growing complexity of European integration manifests in party positions. If focusing on specific aspects of integration, typically, research distinguishes between constitutive and policy-related issues (e.g. Braun et al., 2016; Grabbe, 2024). Yet, it remains unclear whether parties also distinguish between different policy types and whether this structuring corresponds to citizen preferences. As the relationship between parties and public opinion is reciprocal, parties play not only an important role in structuring public opinion by reducing complexity (e.g. Meijers et al., 2025; Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021), but also respond to societal developments by engaging with conflicts emerging within the electorate (e.g. Steenbergen et al., 2007). Hence, if citizens’ attitudes toward European integration are structured along the ‘three Bs’, a similar pattern can be expected at the party level. Nevertheless, this does not imply that party positions and public preferences automatically align.

For example, plenty of research shows, that citizen preferences tend to be more dimensional than party positions (e.g. Dolezal et al., 2013; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022; Van

der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009), which partly stems from a less structured cultural conflict line at the citizen level (Kurella & Rapp, 2025; Wheatley & Mendez, 2021). Lupton et al. (2015) argue that less structured citizen attitudes are due to peoples' limited political knowledge and interest. While political sophisticated people tend to structure their issue attitudes around ideology, large parts of the electorate may not have sufficient cognitive and motivational resources to align their preferences with ideology. Alternatively, more-dimensional citizen preferences could also reflect the variety of belief systems within the electorate (Kurella & Rapp, 2025). The latter argument is supported by Goldberg et al. (2021): Citizens indeed hold fairly grounded views regarding future scenarios of the EU, rather than expressing non-attitudes or being indifferent. Hence, I expect in the 2024 context that conflicts over sovereignty, border drawing, and solidarity are mirrored in the preferences of both parties and citizens:

H1: Citizens' and parties' EU preferences are structured along aspects of binding, bonding, and bounding, with the citizen structure being more-dimensional than the party structure.

4.2.2 The embedding of European integration in national politics

Building on this, there is not only reason to expect that party and citizen preferences toward European integration are multidimensional, but also that these preferences are increasingly intertwined with national issues. The deepening of European integration has blurred the boundary between national and European politics (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). As the scope and depth of EU policy making has expanded, issues once considered to be the exclusive domain of national governments, e.g. financial, economic, immigration, asylum, judicial, foreign, and security policies, have become increasingly shaped at the European level (Hobolt & Tilley, 2014). This authority transfer led to the 'Europeanization' of national politics and society, which is, the impact of European structures created through integration on domestic politics (e.g. Caramani, 2015; Jordan et al., 2004; Ladrech, 2014). New political layers at the European level do not replace, but continuously interact with existing national structures (Risse et al., 2001), by this transforming the character of policies. For instance, party programs increasingly emphasize not only the EU itself, but also in relation to traditionally national policy areas (Ladrech, 2002). Similarly, citizens have increasingly hold the EU accountable for outcomes in different policy areas (Wilson & Hobolt, 2015).

While we know that processes of Europeanization have intertwined national and European levels, we know far less about the specific ways in which this intertwining occurs. European politics have historically been characterized by two dominant conflict lines, an economic and a cultural one (e.g. Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006), with the latter

originally being linked to religious and moral values (Rovny & Polk, 2019) but more recently shaped by new cultural issues such as gender equality, environmental concerns, and immigration. The relation of parties' EU positions to these two dimensions has evolved substantially over the course of the integration process. Conflicts over economic issues are no longer the main driver of party positions towards European integration, but cultural issues (Prosser, 2016; C. Schäfer et al., 2020). There is also evidence at the citizen level that attitudes on European integration tend to be more aligned with the cultural than the economic dimension (Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). However, despite its increasing cultural alignment, citizens' general support for European integration still maintains a stable association with the economic dimension (Foster & Frieden, 2021; Katsanidou & Jungmann, 2025; Rekker & van der Brug, 2023). Moreover, the strength of association varies across different cultural issues (I. Schäfer, 2025; Toshkov, 2024).

H2: Among both citizens and parties, general support for European integration is more closely linked to cultural than economic issues.

However, much less is known about how *specific aspects* of European integration connect to domestic economic and cultural issues, what I refer to as their economic or cultural embedding. Existing literature suggests a complex embedding: Even integration domains with clear economic implications, such as support for the common currency, are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by cultural concerns (Kuhn & Stoeckel, 2014) and this can also vary over time (Hobolt & Wratil, 2017). This complex intertwining with domestic issue becomes also evident regarding the 'three Bs':

Binding encompasses both the transfer of core authoritative powers and of specific policy domains to the European level. While the former often touches on cultural aspects, such as national sovereignty, the latter can also involve economic aspects. For example, granting the EU its own tax-raising powers touches upon sovereignty (a cultural issue) while simultaneously addressing fiscal policy (an economic issue). However, other issues, such as expanding the powers of the European Parliament, are also about competence expansion, but more strongly tied to cultural aspects of integration.

Bounding refers to the demarcation of the EU's borders, also engaging with both cultural and economic aspects. Borders differentiate a community from its external environment. In doing so, they raise fundamental questions of identity, for example who belongs to our community and who does not. Such questions are closely linked to the new cultural conflict line. At the same time, border creation touches on issues of immigration, which are not only associated with cultural identity but also with economic concerns (Gerber et al., 2017).

Bonding, which describes solidarity among EU member states, can concern economic or cultural aspects, depending on the specific form of solidarity. For example, financial support for other member states clearly reflects an economic aspect, whereas the proportional distribution of asylum seekers relates more closely to cultural issues. More generally, solidarity rests on a shared sense of identity among member states (cultural), while also involving redistributive mechanisms (economic) (Marks & Steenbergen, 2004; Oana et al., 2023). This is also reflected in empirical work, e.g. Reinl and Wallaschek (2024) show that party positions on European solidarity in Germany are shaped by their placement on the GAL–TAN dimension, while Visconti and Pellegata (2024) demonstrate that citizen preferences for European solidarity are linked to economic and cultural issues. In sum, the three components of polity building, *binding*, *bonding*, and *bounding*, encompass both cultural and economic aspects. Thus, it is not a priori evident how domestic economic and cultural issues bundle with specific aspects of European integration. This is why this paper exploratively investigates citizen and party structures. Thus, I derive the rather general expectation:

H3: The dimensions of *binding*, *bonding*, and *bounding* vary in more complex ways in their relationship to economic and cultural aspects.

4.2.3 European integration preferences and ideology

Another strand of literature examines support for European integration in relation to the ideological left–right dimension. A consistent finding is that parties and citizens with more extreme left- or right-wing orientations are more Eurosceptic, producing a U-shaped pattern: Support is strongest among centrist actors and weakest at both extremes (e.g. König et al., 2017; Kutiyski et al., 2021; Van Elsas & Van Der Brug, 2015). Historically, this relationship has evolved. In the 1970s and 1980s, Euroscepticism was mainly a left-wing phenomenon, rooted in concerns about market liberalization and the erosion of national welfare states. Right-wing parties supported economic integration, for instance trade liberalization and the creation of the single market. From the early 1990s onward, following the Maastricht Treaty, Euroscepticism increasingly emerged on the radical right, centered on national sovereignty and identity, giving rise to the U-shaped pattern (Van Elsas & Van Der Brug, 2015).

However, there is reason to expect that this pattern is evolving once again. Theoretically, one would expect, as European integration increasingly engages with cultural rather than purely economic issues, Euroscepticism should be less prevalent on the left of the ideological spectrum. Rather, support for integration should then come from left-leaning parties with cultural policy profiles, such as social-liberal and green parties. Indeed, formerly Eurosceptic green parties have gradually adopted pro-European positions, view-

ing the EU as a vehicle for advancing their cultural policy agendas (Rapp, 2025b). At the citizen level, too, preferences toward European integration vary in more complex ways along the ideological dimension that go beyond the U-shape (Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). At the same time, the meaning of the left–right dimension itself has evolved. It has become more diffuse, less strongly related to socio-economic issues and more tightly tied to cultural ones (De Vries et al., 2013; Jankowski et al., 2023), though inequality and redistribution remain relevant (Lindqvist & Dornschneider-Elkink, 2024). In the 2024 context, it can be thus assumed that the ideological dimension combines both cultural and economic aspects.

A U-shaped relationship indicates that opposition to European integration stems from both economically protectionist parties on the left and culturally nationalist parties on the right, whereas a more linear pattern would suggest a primarily cultural embedding. Indeed, analyses for France and Germany based on data from 2009 to 2019 show a more nuanced, J-shaped pattern (Grabbe, 2024): Support is highest among moderately left-leaning parties, such as most green and social-liberal parties are, while the strongest opposition comes from the radical right. Such a pattern indicates that GAL- and TAN-parties, both characterized by strong cultural policy profiles, occupy opposite poles on European integration, suggesting that pro- and anti-European positions are primarily structured along the cultural conflict line. Notably, this J-shaped pattern emerges not only for general EU support but also across a wide range of specific policies, including economic, fiscal, environmental, social, and cultural policies. The only exception is foreign and defense policy where party positions along the ideological dimension still mirror the U-shaped pattern (Grabbe, 2024), reflecting a curvilinear pattern with ideologically more extreme parties being more sceptical of foreign peace missions (Wagner et al., 2018) and more supportive of Russia (Golosov, 2020). However, recent research suggests that after the Russian invasion of Ukraine this pattern shifted with radical-left parties adopting more assertive stances toward Russia (Holesch et al., 2024). I thus expect a J-shaped pattern regarding all aspects of European integration.

H4: Parties' and citizens' preferences regarding European integration relate to the ideological left-right dimension in a J-shaped pattern.

4.2.4 Context dependency of citizens' multidimensional preference structures

Research highlights considerable country- and region-specific variation in how European integration is structured in public opinion.⁴⁷ This variation can be traced back to context-dependent patterns of politicization, shaped by distinct national conflict structures and regional experiences. Kriesi (2016) argues that politicization varies systematically across North-Western (NWE), Southern (SE), and Central-Eastern European (CEE) countries. These differences stem from distinct manifestations of historical cleavages and differing crises exposure. While NWE countries underwent a socio-cultural value change during the late 1960s and early 1970s, this 'silent revolution' (Inglehart, 1990) did not occur in SE countries, as most were under authoritarian regimes until the mid-1970s. Thus, class and religious conflict lines remained strong and closely aligned (Kriesi, 2016). Consequently, in NWE, Euroscepticism has been primarily driven by radical right parties emphasizing cultural protection and national sovereignty, whereas in SE it has traditionally been articulated by radical left parties rooted in economic concerns. In CEE countries, cleavage structures are less clearly defined (e.g. Powell & Tucker, 2014). Although the main conflict line seems to be cultural (Coman, 2017), it differs from that in NWE due to the absence of the cultural revolution. It is rooted in defensive nationalism against internal enemies, such as ethnic minorities, and external ones, such as foreign companies threatening domestic economies (Haughton, 2014). Regional differences in crisis exposure have partly reinforced these patterns: SE and CEE were hit harder by the Great Recession, intensifying demands for redistribution and solidarity, while in NWE debates have revolved more around sovereignty and control (Kriesi, 2016). A similar argument can be made for the Russian invasion of Ukraine, where countries that could be targeted by future Russian aggression due to their geographical location show stronger preferences for supporting Ukraine (Thomson et al., 2023). At the same time, there is also some evidence of convergence in recent years. Policy preferences are becoming increasingly Europeanized, showing more comparable structures across member states (Sorace, 2025). Moreover, the contemporary political landscape suggests that Eurosceptic competition has become dominated by radical right parties, even in Southern Europe.

Empirical studies show that general support for European integration is more closely associated with cultural conflict in wealthier Northern countries, with economic issues in SE, and with immigration and moral permissiveness in CEE (Otjes & Katsanidou, 2017; Toshkov, 2024). Studies of specific EU policies point to similar variation. In most of the countries, European policies cluster with identity-related issues such as im-

⁴⁷In this section, the focus lies on the citizen level, as the available party data do not permit a region-specific analysis. However, there is no reason why the argument developed here, should not also apply to the party level.

migration, Islam, or gay rights. However, in Cyprus, Slovenia, and Ireland they are more strongly connected to economic concerns, and in Greece and Hungary to both (Wheatley & Mendez, 2021). Regional differences also emerge in the case of European solidarity: In NWE, anti-immigration attitudes bundle with opposition to European solidarity, whereas in all countries solidarity is linked to economic considerations. Overall, the patterns within NWE are more consistent, than in the countries in SE and CEE (Visconti & Pellegata, 2024).

H5: Citizens' EU attitudes are more culturally embedded in NWE and CEE, more economically embedded in SE. Citizens' attitudes are less structured in CEE.

4.3 Data, research design, and methods

I conduct my analyses based on two data sets. For the citizen analyses, I rely on a novel public opinion dataset collected after the European Parliament Elections in 2024 (12 June - 2 July 2024) in 16 EU member states.⁴⁸ The data was collected by the SOLID research project 'Policy Crisis and Crisis Politics, Sovereignty, Solidarity and Identity in the EU Post-2008' financed by the European Research Council, the European University Institute, the London School of Economics & Political Science, the University of Milan, and the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation. The data collection resulted in national samples of around 2,000 respondents, stratified by gender, age, education, and macro-area of residence to be representative of the adult populations in each country.

For data on party positions, I rely on data from the EU&I Voting Advice Application 2024 from the European University Institute. This data set includes party positions on the same issues as in the citizen survey. Party positions were determined in an iterative process, directly involving the parties in the positioning process. Parties were invited to participate through an official letter to place themselves on a list of policy statements. Country expert teams reviewed these party positions by comparing them with their own expert evaluations. In cases of discrepancies, parties were asked to provide further evidence to justify their positions. The expert teams always had the final decision. If a party did not respond to the invitation, the country teams alone determined the positions (Ferreira da Silva et al., 2023).

The two data sets contain a large number of identical items, enabling a comparative analysis of parties' and citizens' preference structures. For both data sets, all items have been rescaled such that small values indicate left, progressive, or pro-European positions and large values right, conservative, or anti-European positions. All items are

⁴⁸These are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Latvia, and Poland.

measured on a at least five-point scale and have been standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

The data sets encompass eight items related to the national level. Five of them can be attributed to the socio-economic domain and three of them to cultural aspects.⁴⁹ Table 4.1 shows the items related to the European level and whether they refer to general or specific support; *binding*, *bounding*, or *bonding*; and socio-economic or cultural aspects. I include two items measuring general support for European integration⁵⁰ and fourteen items covering various specific aspects of European integration. Seven of them can be attributed to the *binding* component focusing on competences at the European level. Five items tap into the *bounding* component, targeting aspects of foreign, security and defense policy, and Ukraine. The *bonding* component is represented by two items, focusing on aspects of financial solidarity and the proportional distribution of asylum seekers. As discussed in the theory section, the allocation to socio-economic and cultural aspects is not always unambiguous.

I apply exploratory factor analysis to the citizen and party data to reveal the underlying structure of citizens' and parties' preferences. I use different methods to determine the number of factors to extract - parallel analysis and the Kaiser-Criterion - but also consider the interpretability and uniqueness of dimensions. Table 4.5 in the Appendix presents the results for the different methods. For the citizen analyses, parallel analysis suggests more dimensions than applying the Kaiser-Criterion. In these cases, I use the less-dimensional solution to address concerns of over-dimensionalization of factor analysis of categorical data (Van der Eijk & Rose, 2015).

I conduct an exploratory factor analysis with polychoric correlations, which is appropriate for ordinal items. I use exploratory factor analysis since the goal of this analysis is not to maximize explained variance, but to identify latent dimensions that account for the correlations among the items. Moreover, a central aim of this paper is to explore how different aspects of European integration cluster with national economic and cultural issues, an area where clear expectations are limited. Forcing the data into pre-defined factors could obscure meaningful patterns.

⁴⁹The socio-economic items capture items on social programs vs. higher taxes, state intervention in the economy, unemployment benefits, increase of retirement age, and social security benefits for foreigners. The cultural items focus on restrictive immigration policy, renewable energy vs. higher costs, and the legislation of same-sex marriages. For the exact item wording see Table 4.4 in the Appendix.

⁵⁰The second item on general support for European integration is only available in the citizen data.

Table 4.1: Items related to the European level used for factor analyses

Item Wording	General support	Specific support	Binding	Bounding	Bonding	Socio-Econ.	Cultural
European integration is a good thing.	x						x
Some say European integration should be pushed further. Others say it has already gone too far. How do you feel about this?	x						x
As planned in the European Green Deal, there should be a Europe-wide ban on selling new internal combustion energy vehicles by 2035.		x	x			x	x
The EU should rigorously punish Member States that violate the EU deficit rules.		x	x			x	x
The EU should acquire its own tax raising powers.		x	x			x	x
The European Parliament should be given more powers.		x	x				x
Individual members states of the EU should have less veto power.		x	x				x
The EU should sanction members states whose governments undermine the rule of law.		x	x				x
The EU should protect European farmers from external competition even if this leads to higher food prices		x	x			x	
On foreign policy issues the EU should speak with one voice.		x		x			x
The EU should strengthen its security and defense policy.		x		x			x
The EU should be enlarged to include Ukraine.		x		x			x
To fight the problem of illegal immigration, the European Union should take responsibility in patrolling its borders.		x		x			x
The European Union should continue providing military aid, such as weapons and ammunition, to Ukraine.		x		x		x	x
Asylum-seekers should be distributed proportionally among EU member states through a mandatory relocation system.		x			x		x
The EU should provide financial assistance to member states in economic and financial difficulties.		x			x	x	

I apply *oblimin* rotation to the extracted factors, which allows them to correlate with one another (Preacher & MacCallum, 2003). This approach is appropriate for my analysis, as I am specifically interested in how the factors are related. By contrast, orthogonal rotation imposes the strict assumption that the factors are entirely independent. This condition is unlikely to hold when examining preferences concerning different dimensions of the same broader issue of European integration. The resulting interfactor correlations indicate how the extracted factors relate to one another. The strongest evidence of embedding would be if European items load directly on economic or cultural factors, implying that they are fully integrated into these dimensions. Since such complete integration is not expected, interfactor correlations provide a useful way to assess the degree to which European integration aligns with the economic or cultural dimensions.

To illustrate how the extracted factors refer to the ideological left-right dimension,⁵¹ I use locally estimated scatterplot smoothing (LOESS). LOESS is a nonparametric regression technique that fits a series of locally weighted regressions, producing a smoothed curve that captures broad patterns without imposing a specific functional form. This approach allows to visualize complex, potentially non-linear relationships in the data (Cleveland, 1979).⁵²

I conduct several robustness checks. In the main text, the analyses are based on the computation of the correlation matrix with pairwise deletion of missing values. The results for listwise deletion can be found in the Appendix in Table 4.8 and 4.9. The party analyses in the main text are based on the EU-27 to increase sample size. Since the citizen data has only been collected in 16 EU member states, party analyses based on the same set of countries are presented in the Appendix in Table 4.10. Overall, the results remain stable.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Party Level

I start with the party level results. For all analyses, I only print the highest factor loading and relevant cross-loadings for each item to ease readability. The higher a factor loading is, the more the variable contributes to defining the underlying factor. That means that items with higher loadings are better indicators for the concept measured by the

⁵¹Since the party dataset does not contain a direct measure of the parties' general ideological left-right positions, I rely on the 2024 wave of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Rovny et al., 2025). The CHES provides expert-coded placements of political parties on a general left-right scale (*Irgen*), which I merge with the *euandi* dataset.

⁵²Based on the extracted factors, I compute additive indices, weighting each item by its respective factor loading.

factor. Table 4.2 presents a four-dimensional solution for the party structure. In the upper part, the table shows the factor loadings, in the middle part the interfactor correlations, and in the lower part information on the variance explained. The first factor bundles all three cultural items and some EU *binding* items. It also includes the item on the mandatory relocation system for asylum-seekers, theoretically classified as *bonding*. The second factor centers exclusively on European integration. It is mostly defined by European foreign, security, and defense policies (*bounding*) and general support for European integration. To a lesser extent it is also defined by two items categorized as *binding*: punishment for the violation of EU deficit rules and tax raising powers for the EU. However, the latter cannot be clearly associated with that factor, indicated by the cross-loadings on Factor 1 and 4. The third factor is about solidarity. It is defined by the national item on social security benefits for foreigners and the European item on financial help for other EU member states, thus capturing the *bonding* component. The fourth factor captures socio-economic aspects. Two EU items with an economic reference - tax power for the EU and EU protection for farmers - show small loadings on this factor as well.

Regarding the relation of European integration to the established economic and cultural conflict lines, *binding*, *bounding*, and general EU support are clearly more culturally related, than economically. The *binding* aspect builds a common factor with the national cultural items. Parties strongly align their standpoints regarding aspects of existing authority and competence expansion with their positions on the cultural conflict line. The first factor is also only weakly correlated with the economic factor (0.25). The second factor is also culturally embedded, indicated by its relatively strong correlation with the first, cultural factor (0.39). It is not positively correlated with the economic dimension, but negatively associated (-0.26), suggesting that economically left parties tend to be sceptical regarding an expansion of European foreign, security, and defense policies. This likely reflects their (former) programmatic commitments to peacekeeping and opposition to war. The third factor shows a stronger economic reference. It combines a European item on financial solidarity with a national socio-economic item. It is also almost equally correlated with the cultural (0.39) and the economic dimension (0.35).

Table 4.2: Factor analysis of the party data, largest loadings printed in bold

	Cultural & <i>binding</i>	<i>bounding</i> & Gen. support	Solidarity (<i>bonding</i>)	Economic
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.87			
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.72			
Restrictive immigration policy	0.70			
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.67	0.36		
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.60			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.56			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.51			
Veto power member states	0.48	0.39		
EU sec. & defense policy		0.95		
EU one voice foreign policy		0.75		
Europ. integration good thing		0.63		
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.62		
EU responsibility patrolling borders	-0.43	0.61		
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.58		
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.44	-0.33	-0.36
Tax raising power for EU	0.30	0.38		0.36
Soc. security benefits foreigners			1.00	
Fin. solidarity member states			1.00	
State intervention in economy				0.69
Unemployment benefits				0.66
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	0.32			0.61
Increase of retirement age				0.50
EU protection for farmers				0.22
Interfactor Correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	1.00	0.39	0.39	0.25
F2		1.00	0.24	-0.26
F3			1.00	0.35
F4				1.00
SS loadings	4.83	4.34	2.73	2.44
Proportion Var	0.21	0.19	0.12	0.11
Cumulative Var	0.21	0.40	0.52	0.62
Proportion Explained	0.34	0.30	0.19	0.17
Cumulative Proportion	0.34	0.64	0.83	1.00

Overall, the party level analyses have demonstrated the importance of treating European integration as a multidimensional issue.⁵³ Parties structure their standpoints regarding European integration based on aspects of *binding*, *bounding*, and *bonding*.⁵⁴ General

⁵³This is also supported by additional analyses in the Appendix (Table 4.6). There, I present a reduced factor analysis. Only considering the national items and general EU support leads to a two-dimensional solution.

⁵⁴The only exceptions to this pattern are the items on the distribution of asylum seekers, violation of deficit rules, and tax raising power for the EU. The item on the proportional distribution of asylum seekers is theoretically classified as belonging to the *bonding* component, but is bundled with other *binding* items empirically. Even though this item relates to solidarity among member states, it also refers to whether the EU should have the power to implement such a regulation. The second exception is the punishment if deficit regulations are violated. Theoretically classified as *binding*, it is surprisingly integrated into the *bounding* component. The item on European taxation competences loads on the first, second, and third factor with at least 0.3., illustrating the complex embedding of this issue in economic and cultural conflict structures.

EU support, aspects of *binding*, and *bounding* tend to be more culturally embedded, while European financial solidarity also exhibits a strong economic relation. Thus, the results highlight the intertwining of national and European policies. Moreover, national and European issues cluster thematically. For instance, Factor 1 combines national items on the environment and immigration with support for the EU Green Deal and an EU-wide distribution scheme for asylum seekers. Similarly, Factor 3 links solidarity-related items at both the national and European levels.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the relationship between the extracted factors and the ideological left–right dimension. Factor 1 (cultural and *binding*) and Factor 3 (solidarity (*bonding*)) display the expected J-shaped pattern: Support is strongest among moderately left-leaning parties, while opposition is concentrated among the most right-wing parties. This indicates that pro- and anti-European positions on these dimensions align with parties that have strong cultural profiles, green parties on one end of the spectrum and radical right parties on the other (see Figure 4.2). The pattern differs for Factor 2, where party positions follow a U-shape: Parties at the ideological extremes are least supportive of general integration, a common European foreign, security and defense policy, and support for Ukraine. This contradicts the recent finding of Holesch et al. (2024) that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has altered radical left parties’ foreign policy stances, but rather underlines that they remain supportive of Russia and sceptical toward foreign peace missions (Wagner et al., 2018).

Figure 4.1: Loess trend lines with the ideological left-right dimension and F1, F2, F3 (grey areas display 95% confidence intervals)

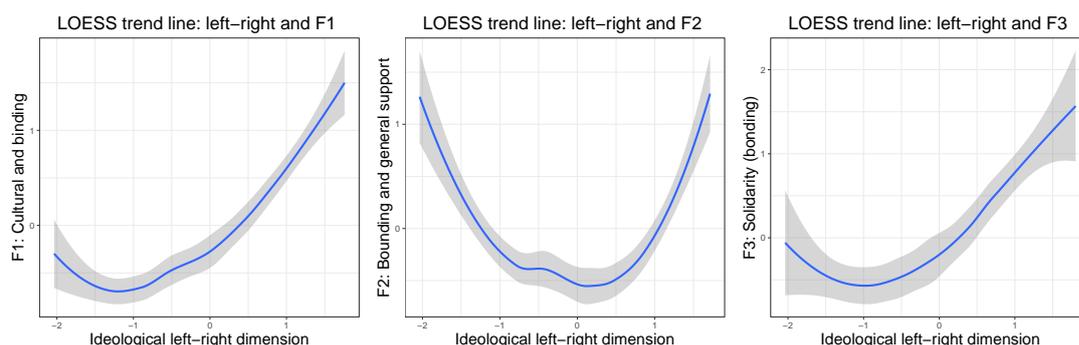
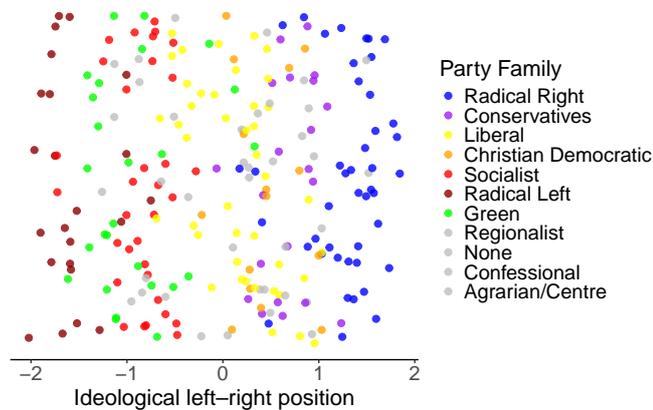


Figure 4.2: Ideological left-right positions by party family based on data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024



4.4.2 Voter Level

I now move on to the results of the citizen preferences, which are structured by six dimensions (Table 4.3). The first factor is mainly on power expansion to the European level. To a lesser extent it is defined by the increase of retirement age, the environment, and EU protection for farmers. The second factor is strongly defined by immigration. It encompasses items from the national cultural and socio-economic domain, as well as aspects of European foreign, security, and defense policy. Interestingly, the items on European foreign, security, and defense politics load negatively on this factor, with anti-immigration citizens favor more EU competences in security and defense. The third factor is on the war in Ukraine, reflecting one specific *bounding* aspect. The fourth factor is defined by the item on same-sex marriages, a variety of European policies regarding European authority and penalties, tapping into the *binding* component, and the proportional distribution of asylum seekers. The fifth factor is on general EU support. The sixth factor is an economic one, also including European financial solidarity.

The results demonstrate a complex structure of citizens' preferences. I do not find a purely national cultural factor, but different aspects of the cultural dimension build distinct factors together with certain aspects of European integration. This finding is in line with existing research, showing that cultural issues do not crystallize into a distinct bundled factor among citizens (Kurella & Rapp, 2025; Wheatley & Mendez, 2021), and that European and national issues are intertwined (e.g. Kuhn & Stoeckel, 2014; Ladrech, 2002; Toshkov, 2024). As for the parties, items cluster along content-related dimensions, e.g. the national environmental item loads together with the item on the European Green Deal, the national immigration items together with European border creation, and European financial solidarity with national economic items, supporting the argument that national policies are increasingly Europeanized.

Table 4.3: Factor analysis of citizen data considering different aspects of European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold

	Power expansion (<i>binding</i>)	Immigration, economic (solidarity) and <i>bounding</i>	Ukraine (<i>bound- ing</i>)	Cultural & nat. duties and penalties (<i>bind- ing</i>)	General EU sup- port	Econo- mic & <i>bond- ing</i>
Tax raising power for EU	0.65					
Power expansion EP	0.49					
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.48					
Increase of retirement age	-0.43					0.22
Renew. energy / higher costs	0.35					
EU protection for farmers	0.24					
Restrictive immigr. policy		0.66				
Soc. programs / higher taxes		0.39				
Soc. sec. benefits foreigners		0.32				
EU border patrolling		-0.67				
EU sec. & def. policy		-0.50	0.28			
EU one voice foreign policy		-0.31		0.26	0.26	
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.96			
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.59			
Sanctions violation rule of law				0.65		
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers				0.43		
Legisl. same-sex marriages				0.43		
Veto power member states				0.34		
Punish violation EU def. rules		-0.26		0.34		
Europ. integration good thing					0.45	
Extent Europ. integration					0.41	
State intervention in economy						0.57
Unemployment benefits						0.49
Fin. solidarity EU members					0.31	0.46
Interfactorcorrelations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F 1	1.00	0.17	0.37	0.42	0.42	0.27
F 2		1.00	0.01	-0.05	0.05	-0.04
F 3			1.00	0.42	0.34	0.01
F 4				1.00	0.39	0.27
F 5					1.00	0.21
F 6						1.00
SS loadings	1.99	1.82	1.80	1.77	1.14	1.14
Proportion Var	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.08	0.16	0.23	0.31	0.36	0.40
Proportion Explained	0.21	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.12	0.12
Cumulative Proportion	0.21	0.39	0.58	0.76	0.88	1.00

Citizens distinguish between different aspects of European integration, demonstrating the importance of understanding European integration as a multidimensional issue.⁵⁵ The ‘three B’ framework fits the citizen structure quite well, however with some exceptions.⁵⁶ Citizens clearly separate aspects of competence transfer to the European level (*binding*, Factor 1 and 4) from general support for European integration (Factor 5), and different aspects of European foreign, security, and defense policies (Factor 2 and 3). They even distinguish between different aspects of *binding*. The first factor is more about competence expansion to the European level, the fourth about the role of nation states within the European multi-level system, e.g. sanctions for and duties of member states.

The results demonstrate that, overall, European integration tend to be culturally anchored at the citizen level, however with some peculiarities. Aspects of competence passage to the European level (Factor 1 and 4) are clearly more culturally embedded. Factor 1 is more strongly correlated with Factors 3, 4, and 5 (0.37-0.42) than with the economically oriented Factors 2 and 6 (0.17 - 0.27) and also includes the item on environmental policy. Factor 4 is also more strongly correlated with Factors 1, 3, and 5 (0.39-0.42) than with Factors 2 (-0.05) and 6 (0.27) and includes the cultural item on same-sex marriages. Also support for Ukraine (Factor 3) is associated with the remaining European and cultural factors (0.34-0.42) and not correlated with the economic ones (0.01). General support for European integration (Factor 5) is also culturally embedded, indicated by the larger interfactor correlations with the European and cultural dimensions (0.34-0.42) than with the economic related ones (0.05 - 0.21). Contrary, the aspect of European financial solidarity is aligned with the economic dimension (Factor 6). Still, the item’s cross-loading on the general EU support dimension underscores how even economic facets of European integration are not unrelated to cultural considerations. However, Factor 2 illustrates that issues such as immigration, which are theoretically classified as cultural, also load together with economic aspects. This emphasizes that not only different aspects of European integration can have economic and cultural components, but also national level items cannot always be easily attributed to only the cultural or economic conflict line (Gerber et al., 2017; Katsanidou & Jungmann, 2025).

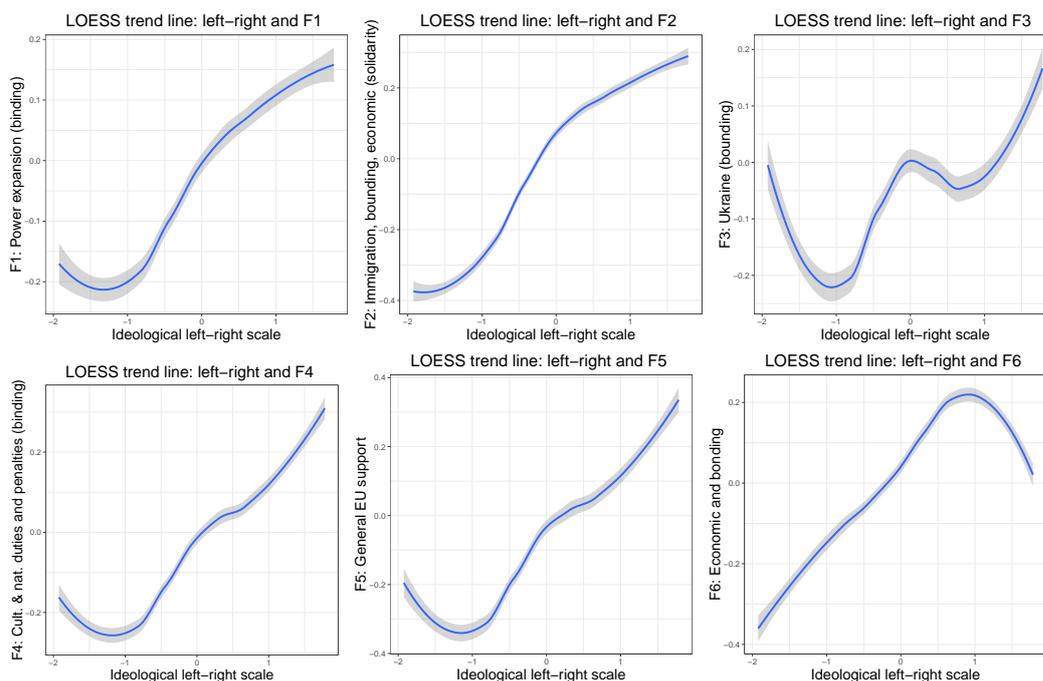
Figure 4.3 illustrates how the extracted factors relate to the ideological left–right dimension. Factors 1, 4, and 5 display the expected J-shaped pattern. Support for power expansion and national duties and penalties (*binding*) as well as general EU support is

⁵⁵This is also emphasized by the additional analysis only considering the national items and those on general EU support, leading to a less-dimensional solution (see Table 4.7 in the Appendix.)

⁵⁶As for the parties, the item on the proportional distribution of asylum seekers is not associated with the *bounding* component.

strongest among moderate left-leaning citizens and lowest among those on the far right. Support for Ukraine follows a broadly similar, though less clear, J-shape: Moderate left-leaning citizens are the most supportive, the far right the least, yet far left and centrist citizens are more neutral. Factor 2 aligns in an almost linear way with the ideological left–right dimension. Individuals with pronounced leftist stances are most supportive of immigration and least supportive of a common foreign, security, and defense policy including stronger EU responsibility for border patrolling, whereas the most right-leaning citizens take the opposite stance. Attitudes toward state intervention, unemployment benefits, and European financial solidarity (Factor 6) display an inverted J-shaped pattern, with the far left being the most supportive and moderate right-leaning citizens the most opposed. Overall, these results suggest that culturally related aspects of European integration attract strongest support from the moderate left (Factor 1,3,4, and 5), while economically related aspects find their highest support (Factor 6) or highest rejection (Factor 2) among radical left citizens.

Figure 4.3: Loess trend lines with the ideological left-right dimension and F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6 (grey areas display 95% confidence intervals)



4.4.3 Discussion of the findings

The results have demonstrated that citizens hold differentiated attitudes regarding the complex issue of European integration and are able to distinguish between different policy areas.⁵⁷ Investigating the multidimensionality of European integration from a

⁵⁷Still, the interpretation of the citizen results is more complex than for the parties. However, given the complexity of European integration and citizens' limited detailed knowledge on that matter (Hobolt,

polity perspective adds value by revealing the underlying structuring principles through which citizens and parties envision different types of Europe. Overall, preferences can be mapped along three dimensions: authoritative control and problem-solving capacities at the European level (*binding*), European solidarity (*bonding*), and external border creation (*bounding*), with citizens holding a more dimensional structure than parties (Hypothesis 1). Yet there are notable peculiarities with regard to the *bounding* component. Most strikingly, citizens articulate a distinct immigration factor that aligns with economic aspects and with preferences for a common European foreign, security, and defense policy, whereas preferences regarding aid to Ukraine remain detached from this dimension. Citizens favoring liberal immigration policies oppose European efforts in security, defense, and border protection, while anti-immigration citizens support European efforts in foreign, security, and defense policies, probably due to anticipated effects on immigration rates. Contrary, at the party level, general support for European integration, supportive stances for Ukraine and a common European foreign, security, and defense policy are bundled, with ideological extreme parties being least supportive. This creates a representation gap: Citizens on the right are generally favorable toward strengthening European border protection and security and defense policies, while right-leaning parties oppose such efforts.

Evidence supports Hypothesis 2: General support for European integration is more culturally embedded for both citizens and parties, however it does not constitute a separate dimension for parties. Regarding the embedding of the ‘three Bs’, the relation to economic and cultural issues is complex (Hypothesis 3). At the party and citizen level, financial solidarity is more economically related. *Binding* aspects are more culturally related at both the party and citizen level. *Bounding* is more culturally related at the party level, while it is more complex in public opinion. Aid for Ukraine is culturally embedded, but aspects of a common foreign, security, and defense policy form a distinct factor with immigration and economic aspects. This also illustrates that, at the citizen level, the boundary between national economic and cultural issues is less clearly defined.

With some exceptions, factors encompassing EU aspects exhibit a J-shaped pattern along the ideological left-right dimension (Hypothesis 4). This suggests that the strongest support for European integration is found among green and social-liberal parties and citizens, while the strongest opposition comes from the radical right. Such patterns support the view that competition over European integration is increasingly structured along the poles of the new cultural conflict line, extending also to more specific aspects of integration. Even radical left parties and citizens tend to show moderate support for various (2007), they hold surprisingly structured and nuanced opinions.

aspects of integration, indicating that the traditional U-shaped pattern of Euroscepticism has become outdated regarding some aspects of European integration. Important exceptions are found in the case of *bounding* and general EU support at the party level, which mirrors the well-known U-shape, as well as a linear (*bounding*) and inverted J-shaped pattern (*bonding*) at the citizen level. In the case of general EU support and support for Ukraine, this leads to representation gaps. Radical left and radical right parties are sceptical towards general integration, while there is no evidence of general Euroscepticism among left-leaning voters. Moreover, left-leaning parties tend to more strongly reject supportive policies for Ukraine than ideologically similar voters.

4.4.4 Country analyses

This section analyses the citizen structure at the country level.⁵⁸ In the pooled analysis, the *binding* component splits into two factors: one capturing power expansion and another capturing national duties and penalties. This two-factor solution is found across all North and West European countries as well as Spain. In some cases, however, additional dimensions emerge: In Sweden, Belgium, and Ireland, the European Green Deal constitutes a separate environmental factor. By contrast, the two-factor *binding* solution does not fit the remaining Southern and Central-Eastern European countries. Here, *binding* is either captured by a single dimension (Hungary), occasionally complemented by an environmental dimension (Greece, Italy, Poland), or lacks a clear structure altogether (Portugal, Romania). There is a tendency for *binding* aspects to be more culturally anchored in most NWE and CEE countries, whereas in SE countries the evidence is more mixed or linked to economic considerations. Nonetheless, even in NWE and CEE, *binding* aspects intersect in complex ways with domestic economic and cultural issues.

Turning to *bonding*, the pooled pattern is broadly replicated in the country analyses. The two solidarity items, financial solidarity and a European-wide distribution scheme for asylum seekers, rarely load together. An exception is Portugal, where both are clustered with economic issues. In most North and West European countries, asylum redistribution is linked to national duties and penalties (Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands). In Southern Europe, it is instead associated with border patrolling, foreign, security, and defense policy, and immigration (Greece, Spain, Italy). In Central-Eastern Europe, no consistent pattern emerges. Financial solidarity, meanwhile, clusters with *binding* and general support in several North and West European countries (Sweden, Finland, Austria, the Netherlands, Ireland), but is more strongly tied to economic aspects in Southern and Central-Eastern countries (e.g., Greece, Spain, Portugal, Latvia, Poland, Romania) as well as in France.

⁵⁸See Table 4.11 to 4.26 in the Appendix.

Regarding *bounding*, military aid and EU membership for Ukraine consistently load together, often forming a distinct factor; only in Austria, Hungary, and Romania the structure is less clear. The remaining aspects of *bounding* typically cluster with immigration and economic issues, such that citizens with anti-immigration and anti-redistribution preferences tend to support a common European foreign, security, and defense policy. Some exceptions remain: In Greece, these aspects are bundled with general EU support and immigration; in Spain, Italy, and Poland, they are linked to immigration but not economic issues; while in Romania and Hungary, they form a distinct factor of their own.

A consistent pattern across countries is the absence of a bundled cultural conflict line. In none of the cases do all three national cultural items load together, nor does a distinct cultural dimension emerge from one or two items. This mirrors the pooled analysis and points to a close intertwining of citizens' cultural preferences with various aspects of European integration, and to some extent also with economic issues. By contrast, a separate national economic dimension appears in some countries (Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Italy, Hungary), mostly weakly correlated with the remaining factors. Where no distinct economic dimension exists or not all economic items are captured by it, these issues in Northern and Western Europe tend to cluster with immigration and/or European border control. The pattern differs in Southern and Eastern Europe, where economic aspects occasionally load together with other facets of European integration.

The country-level analyses also illustrate how crisis exposure shapes the structure of public opinion. In all EU member states bordering Ukraine, thus directly affected by refugee movements, the two items related to Ukraine cluster with attitudes toward social security benefits for foreigners or support for an EU-wide distribution scheme for asylum seekers. Similarly, in Italy, Greece, and Spain, countries most affected by refugee arrivals across the Mediterranean, preferences for European border control load together with support for an EU-wide asylum distribution scheme. Support for Hypothesis 5 is limited. There appears to be a tendency for the various aspects of European integration to be more culturally embedded in NWE countries and more economically embedded in SE countries, while evidence for CEE is more mixed. Nonetheless, considerable variation exists within these regions, and in most countries, European issues interplay in complex ways with domestic economic and cultural factors.

4.5 Conclusion

The European Union has evolved from a project of trade liberalization into a compound polity that reaches deeply into questions of national identity and state sovereignty. As integration has expanded into these cultural domains, the once technocratic process has become increasingly politicized, making European issues more salient and polarized (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This paper argued that such enduring politicization has stimulated more fine-grained and differentiated preferences toward European integration among both citizens and parties. While existing research highlights the multidimensionality of citizens' EU attitudes (e.g. Boomgaarden et al., 2011; De Vreese et al., 2019; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022), much less is known about whether parties exhibit a similar differentiation and how these multidimensional preferences relate to national conflict structures. As issues once considered purely national, such as immigration or environmental policy, are now increasingly shaped at the European level, domestic and European politics have become deeply intertwined. Examining how different aspects of European integration are structured within these national conflict lines is therefore crucial not only for identifying potential representation gaps but also for understanding how European issues are politicized and integrated into domestic party competition.

Factor analyses conducted on party and citizen datasets from 2024, show that, overall, citizens' and parties' preferences are structured along three dimensions: competence expansion, external borders, and solidarity. Most aspects of integration are more culturally than economically embedded, except for financial solidarity and, to some extent, foreign, security, and defense policy. In relation to ideology, competence expansion and solidarity follow a J-shaped pattern at the party level: Green and social-liberal parties are the strongest supporters, while radical right parties are the most opposed. This pattern is also found at the citizen level for power expansion and general support for European integration. This supports recent findings that the traditional U-shaped relationship between ideology and EU support is outdated (Grabbe, 2024; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022), at least regarding some aspects of European integration. Especially the aspect of competence transfer to the European level is politicized at both ends of the cultural conflict line, with radical right and culturally progressive parties and citizens opposing each other.

However, representation gaps exist. Pro-immigration and economically left-leaning citizens oppose a stronger European role in security and defense, whereas anti-immigration and economically right-leaning citizens are more supportive of joint European efforts in foreign, security, and defense policies, a pattern not mirrored at the party level as right-leaning parties oppose stronger European efforts in security and defense. Moreover,

radical-left parties are considerably more sceptical of European integration in general, and of support for Ukraine in particular, than their potential voters with comparable ideological profiles.

Regional patterns also emerge. European integration tend to be more strongly associated with economic aspects in Southern Europe, in North-Western Europe with cultural aspects and in Central-Eastern Europe the evidence is more mixed. Country variation also becomes evident with respect to differences in crisis exposure. For instance, in Mediterranean countries preferences on European border control cluster with support for an EU-wide asylum distribution scheme, suggesting that crises can reconfigure how specific aspects of integration are perceived. Accordingly, a severe economic crisis could potentially reinforce economic dimensions of European integration.

The analyses are not without limitations. One important point to consider is that the results of factor analyses crucially depend on the items included. I used an encompassing dataset covering multiple aspects of European integration; still, these represent selected items, and coverage of the economic and cultural domains is limited. Consequently, the estimated number of dimensions likely represents a lower bound. The paper shows that focusing solely on general support for European integration overlooks important variation and that only by accounting for its multidimensionality specific representation gaps can be identified. However, why parties and citizens structure European preferences in a certain way is beyond the scope of this paper. Future research should explore how contextual conditions, individual predispositions, and party characteristics shape the structuring of these multidimensional standpoints.

References

- Baute, S., Meuleman, B., Abts, K., & Swyngedouw, M. (2018). Measuring attitudes towards Social Europe: A multidimensional approach. *Social Indicators Research*, *137*(1), 353–378.
- Beaudonnet, L., & Hoyo Prohuber, H. (2024). Being European, the nationalist way: Europe in the discourse of radical right parties. *Party Politics*, *30*(3), 519–530.
- Blauberger, M., Naurin, D., Sedelmeier, U., & Wunsch, N. (2025). The multi-level politics of countering democratic backsliding: state of the art and new research directions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *32*(2), 323–340.
- Boomgaarden, H. G., Schuck, A. R., Elenbaas, M., & De Vreese, C. H. (2011). Mapping EU attitudes: Conceptual and empirical dimensions of Euroscepticism and EU support. *European Union Politics*, *12*(2), 241–266.
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2009). Revisiting the nature of the beast—politicization, European identity, and postfunctionalism: a comment on Hooghe and Marks. *British Journal of Political Science*, *39*(1), 217–220.
- Braun, D., Hutter, S., & Kerscher, A. (2016). What type of Europe? The salience of polity and policy issues in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics*, *17*(4), 570–592.
- Braun, D., Jabra, D., & Pollex, J. (2025). Climate Change and Political Parties: Higher Salience and More Diversification Over Climate Change in the 2024 EP Elections? In M. Kaeding, M. Müller, & A. Hoppe (Eds.), *The 2024 European Parliament Elections: A Turn to the Right in the Shadow of War* (pp. 121–130). Springer.
- Braun, D., Popa, S. A., & Schmitt, H. (2019). Responding to the crisis: Eurosceptic parties of the left and right and their changing position towards the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*, *58*(3), 797–819.
- Caramani, D. (2015). *The Europeanization of politics: The formation of a European electorate and party system in historical perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carrieri, L. (2021). *The impact of European integration on West European politics: Committed pro-Europeans strike back*. Springer Nature.
- Cleveland, W. S. (1979). Robust locally weighted regression and smoothing scatterplots. *Journal of the American statistical association*, *74*(368), 829–836.
- Coman, E. (2017). Dimensions of political conflict in West and East: An application of vote scaling to 22 European parliaments. *Party Politics*, *23*(3), 248–261.
- De Vreese, C. H., Azrout, R., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2019). One size fits all? Testing the dimensional structure of EU attitudes in 21 countries. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *31*(2), 195–219.

- De Vries, C. E., Hakhverdian, A., & Lancee, B. (2013). The dynamics of voters' left/right identification: The role of economic and cultural attitudes. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1(2), 223–238.
- De Wilde, P. (2011). No polity for old politics? A framework for analyzing the politicization of European integration. *Journal of European integration*, 33(5), 559–575.
- Dickson, Z. P., & Hobolt, S. B. (2025). Going against the grain: Climate change as a wedge issue for the radical right. *Comparative Political Studies*, 58(8), 1733–1759.
- Dolezal, M., Eder, N., Kritzing, S., & Zeglovits, E. (2013). The structure of issue attitudes revisited: A dimensional analysis of Austrian voters and party elites. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*, 23(4), 423–443.
- Easton, D. (1975). A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British journal of political science*, 5(4), 435–457.
- Ferreira da Silva, F., Reiljan, A., Cicchi, L., Trechsel, A. H., & Garzia, D. (2023). Three sides of the same coin? comparing party positions in VAAs, expert surveys and manifesto data. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(1), 150–173.
- Ferrera, M. (2023). The European Union and cross-national solidarity: safeguarding 'togetherness' in hard times. *Review of Social Economy*, 81(1), 105–129.
- Ferrera, M., Kriesi, H., & Schelkle, W. (2024). Maintaining the EU's compound polity during the long crisis decade. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31(3), 706–728.
- Filip, A. (2021). The Evolution and Trends of Eurosceptic Success. In A. Filip (Ed.), *Eurosceptic Contagion: The Influence of Eurosceptic Parties in West-European Party Systems* (pp. 65–87). Springer.
- Foster, C., & Frieden, J. (2021). Economic determinants of public support for European integration, 1995–2018. *European Union Politics*, 22(2), 266–292.
- Gerber, A. S., Huber, G. A., Biggers, D. R., & Hendry, D. J. (2017). Self-interest, beliefs, and policy opinions: Understanding how economic beliefs affect immigration policy preferences. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(1), 155–171.
- Goldberg, A. C., van Elsas, E. J., & De Vreese, C. H. (2021). Eurovisions: An exploration and explanation of public preferences for future EU scenarios. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(2), 222–241.
- Golosov, G. V. (2020). Useful, but not necessarily idiots: The ideological linkages among the putin-sympathizer parties in the European parliament. *Problems of post-communism*, 67(1), 53–63.
- Grabbe, Y. (2024). Ideology, Euroscepticism and the (misleading?) U-Curve—a Comparative Study of German and French Parties. *Young Journal of European Affairs*, 4, 8–38.

- Haughton, T. (2014). Money, margins and the motors of politics: The EU and the development of party politics in Central and Eastern Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(1), 71–87.
- Hobolt, S. B., & De Vries, C. E. (2016). Public support for European integration. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19(1), 413–432.
- Hobolt, S. B., Popa, S. A., & van der Brug, W. (2025). European democracy in action? The 2024 European Parliament elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–16.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Tilley, J. (2014). *Blaming Europe?: Responsibility without accountability in the European union*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Wratil, C. (2017). Public opinion and the crisis: the dynamics of support for the euro. In D. Ioannou, P. Leblond, & A. Niemann (Eds.), *European Integration in Times of Crisis* (pp. 94–112). Routledge.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2007). Taking cues on Europe? Voter competence and party endorsements in referendums on European integration. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(2), 151–182.
- Holesch, A., Zagórski, P., & Ramiro, L. (2024). European radical left foreign policy after the invasion of Ukraine: shifts in assertiveness towards Russia. *Political Research Exchange*, 6(1), 2350245.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British journal of political science*, 39(1), 1–23.
- Hutter, S., & Grande, E. (2014). Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5), 1002–1018.
- Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton University Press.
- Jankowski, M., Schneider, S. H., & Tepe, M. (2023). How stable are ‘left’ and ‘right’? A morphological analysis using open-ended survey responses of parliamentary candidates. *Party Politics*, 29(1), 26–39.
- Jordan, A., Liefferink, D., & Fairbrass, J. (2004). The Europeanization of national environmental policy: A comparative analysis 1. In J. Barry, B. Baxter, & R. Dunphy (Eds.), *Europe, Globalization and Sustainable Development* (pp. 130–151). Routledge.
- Katsanidou, A., & Jungmann, N. (2025). Rethinking political space in Europe: the modernisation and globalisation dimensions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–24.
- Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

- König, T., Marbach, M., & Osnabrügge, M. (2017). Left/Right or U? Estimating the Dimensionality of National Party Competition in Europe. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(3), 1101–1105.
- Kriesi, H. (2016). The politicization of European integration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54, 32–47.
- Kriesi, H., Ferrera, M., & Schelkle, W. (2021). The theoretical framework of SOLID: A research agenda. *Working Paper Series*.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921–956.
- Kuhn, T., & Stoeckel, F. (2014). When European integration becomes costly: the euro crisis and public support for European economic governance. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(4), 624–641.
- Kurella, A.-S., & Rapp, M. (2025). Unfolding GAL-TAN: the multi-dimensional nature of public opinion in Western Europe. *West European Politics*, 1–26.
- Kutiyski, Y., Krouwel, A., & van Prooijen, J.-W. (2021). Political extremism and distrust: Does radical political orientation predict political distrust and negative attitudes towards European integration? *The Social Science Journal*, 58(1), 1–16.
- Ladrech, R. (2002). Europeanization and political parties: towards a framework for analysis. *Party politics*, 8(4), 389–403.
- Ladrech, R. (2014). Rethinking the Relationship between Europeanization and European Integration. In R. Coman, T. Kostera, & L. Tomini (Eds.), *Europeanization and European Integration: From Incremental to Structural Change* (pp. 15–28). Springer.
- Lindqvist, J., & Dornschneider-Elkink, J. A. (2024). A political Esperanto, or false friends? Left and right in different political contexts. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(2), 729–749.
- Lupton, R. N., Myers, W. M., & Thornton, J. R. (2015). Political sophistication and the dimensionality of elite and mass attitudes, 1980- 2004. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(2), 368–380.
- Mader, M., Olmastroni, F., & Isernia, P. (2020). The Polls—Trends: Public Opinion Toward European Defense Policy and Nato: Still Wanting it Both Ways? *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 84(2), 551–582.
- Marks, G., & Steenbergen, M. (2002). Understanding political contestation in the European Union. *Comparative political studies*, 35(8), 879–892.
- Marks, G., & Steenbergen, M. R. (2004). *European integration and political conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

- Meijers, M. J., Bremer, B., Kuhn, T., & Nicoli, F. (2025). Partisan cueing and preferences for fiscal integration in the European Union. *West European Politics*, 1–27.
- Oana, I.-E., Ronchi, S., & Truchlewski, Z. (2023). EU Resilience in times of COVID? Polity maintenance, public support, and solidarity. *Comparative European Politics*, 21(4), 419–426.
- Otjes, S., & Katsanidou, A. (2017). Beyond Kriesiland: EU integration as a super issue after the Eurocrisis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(2), 301–319.
- Pellegata, A., & Visconti, F. (2024). Mapping citizens, voters, and parties' preferences on European solidarity across EU member states. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 1–16.
- Powell, E. N., & Tucker, J. A. (2014). Revisiting electoral volatility in post-communist countries: New data, new results and new approaches. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(1), 123–147.
- Preacher, K. J., & MacCallum, R. C. (2003). Repairing Tom Swift's Electric Factor Analysis Machine. *Understanding Statistics*, 2(1), 13–43.
- Prosser, C. (2016). Dimensionality, ideology and party positions towards European integration. *West European Politics*, 39(4), 731–754.
- Raik, K., Blockmans, S., Osypchuk, A., & Suslov, A. (2024). EU policy towards Ukraine: Entering geopolitical competition over European order. *The International Spectator*, 59(1), 39–58.
- Rapp, M. (2025a). How important is European integration for pro-European voters in times of politicization? *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 66(3), 545–573.
- Rapp, M. (2025b). Ignorance, Contagion or pro-European backlash? Europhile parties' strategies from 1999 to 2024. *Working Paper*.
- Reif, K., & Schmitt, H. (1980). Nine second-order national elections—a conceptual framework for the analysis of European Election results. *European journal of political research*, 8(1), 3–44.
- Reinl, A.-K., & Braun, D. (2023). Who holds the union together? Citizens' preferences for European Union cohesion in challenging times. *European Union Politics*, 24(2), 390–409.
- Reinl, A.-K., & Wallaschek, S. (2024). All for one, and one for all? Analysing party positions on EU solidarity in Germany in challenging times. *Government and Opposition*, 59(1), 73–90.
- Rekker, R., & van der Brug, W. (2023). Generations and the changing character of support for european unification in the netherlands: a research note. *Acta Politica*, 58(2), 448–460.
- Risse, T., Cowles, M. G., Caporaso, J., et al. (2001). Europeanization and domestic change: Introduction. In M. Green Cowles, J. Caporaso, & T. Risse (Eds.),

- Transforming Europe: Europeanization and domestic change* (pp. 1–20). Cornell University Press Ithaca, NY.
- Rovny, J., & Polk, J. (2019). New wine in old bottles: Explaining the dimensional structure of European party systems. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 12–24.
- Rovny, J., Polk, J., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Marks, G., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2025). The 2024 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on political party positioning in Europe: Twenty-five years of party positional data. *Electoral Studies*, 97, 102981.
- Schäfer, C., Popa, S. A., Braun, D., & Schmitt, H. (2020). The reshaping of political conflict over Europe: from pre-Maastricht to post-‘Euro crisis’. *West European Politics*, 44(3), 531–557.
- Schäfer, I. (2025). Groups of Individual Attitudes Towards Cultural Issues in Europe: A Unidimensional Conflict? *Political Studies Review*, 14789299241311760.
- Slothuus, R., & Bisgaard, M. (2021). How political parties shape public opinion in the real world. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 896–911.
- Sorace, M. (2025). The Europeanisation of policy preferences: cross-national similarity and convergence 2014–2024. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–25.
- Stecker, C., & Tausendpfund, M. (2016). Multidimensional government-citizen congruence and satisfaction with democracy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(3), 492–511.
- Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., & De Vries, C. E. (2007). Who’s cueing whom? Mass-elite linkages and the future of European integration. *European Union Politics*, 8(1), 13–35.
- Thomson, C., Mader, M., Münchow, F., Reifler, J., & Schoen, H. (2023). European public opinion: united in supporting Ukraine, divided on the future of NATO. *International Affairs*, 99(6), 2485–2500.
- Toshkov, D. (2024). Political Ideology, Policy Attitudes and Public Support for European Integration. *Working Paper*.
- Toshkov, D., & Krouwel, A. (2022). Beyond the U-curve: Citizen preferences on European integration in multidimensional political space. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 462–488.
- Toygür, I., & Sojka, A. (2025). Does climate policy backlash fuel Eurosceptic vote? Exploring the link in the European Parliament elections. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–27.
- The Treaty of Rome. (1957).
- Van den Hoogen, E., Daenekindt, S., de Koster, W., & van der Waal, J. (2022). Support for European Union membership comes in various guises: Evidence from a correlational class analysis of novel dutch survey data. *European Union Politics*, 23(3), 489–508.

- Van der Brug, W., & Van Spanje, J. (2009). Immigration, Europe and the ‘new’ cultural dimension. *European Journal of Political Research*, 48(3), 309–334.
- Van der Eijk, C., & Rose, J. (2015). Risky business: factor analysis of survey data—assessing the probability of incorrect dimensionalisation. *PloS one*, 10(3), 1–31.
- Van Elsas, E., & Van Der Brug, W. (2015). The changing relationship between left–right ideology and euroscepticism, 1973–2010. *European Union Politics*, 16(2), 194–215.
- Visconti, F., & Pellegata, A. (2024). European Solidarity Takes the Field: The Dimensional Structure of Political Competition in the European Union After the Polycrisis. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- Wagner, W., Herranz-Surrallés, A., Kaarbo, J., & Ostermann, F. (2018). The party politics of legislative–executive relations in security and defence policy. In T. Raunio & W. Wagner (Eds.), *Challenging executive dominance: Legislatures and foreign affairs* (pp. 20–41). Routledge.
- Wang, C., & Moise, A. D. (2023). A unified autonomous Europe? Public opinion of the EU’s foreign and security policy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(8), 1679–1698.
- Wheatley, J., & Mendez, F. (2021). Reconceptualizing Dimensions of Political Competition In Europe: A Demand-side Approach. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 40–59.
- Whitefield, S., & Rohrschneider, R. (2019). Embedding integration: How European integration splits mainstream parties. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 25–35.
- Wilson, T. L., & Hobolt, S. B. (2015). Allocating responsibility in multilevel government systems: Voter and expert attributions in the European Union. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 102–113.

Appendix

Appendix A: Item wording

Table 4.4: Items related to the national level used for factor analyses

Item Wording	Socio-Economic	Cultural
Social programs should be maintained even at the cost of higher taxes.	x	
The state should intervene directly to control rising prices of basic commodities.	x	
Retirement age should be raised in order to make the pension system more sustainable.	x	
The state should provide stronger financial support to unemployed workers.	x	
All foreigners legally residing in COUNTRY should receive the same social security benefits as nationals.	x	
The legislation of same sex marriages is a good thing.		x
Immigration into COUNTRY should be made more restrictive.		x
Renewable sources of energy (e.g. solar or wind energy) should be supported even if this means higher energy costs.		x

Appendix B: Factor extraction

Table 4.5: Results of suggested factors to extract based on different methods

Analysis	Parallel Analysis	Kaiser-Criterion
Citizen model reduced	5	3
Citizen model extended	8	6
Party model reduced	2	2
Party model extended	3	4

Appendix C: Factor analyses only including general EU support

Table 4.6: Factor analysis of the party data only considering general support for European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold

	Cultural and gen. EU support	Economic
Restrictive immigration policy	0.74	
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.73	
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.71	
European integration good thing	0.67	-0.34
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.49	
State intervention in economy		0.67
Increase of retirement age		0.65
Unemployment benefits	0.31	0.64
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	0.38	0.61
Interfactor Correlations	F1	F2
F1	1.00	0.21
F2		1.00
SS loadings	2.64	1.90
Prop. Variance	0.29	0.21
Cum. Variance	0.29	0.50
Prop. Explained	0.58	0.42
Cum. Proportion	0.58	1.00

Table 4.7: Factor analysis of the citizen data only considering general support for European integration, largest factor loadings printed in bold

	Gen. EU support and cultural	Immigration & social security	Economic
Europ. integration good thing	0.80		
Extent Europ. integration	0.66		
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.51		
Soc. security benefits for migrants	0.35	0.32	
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.31		
Restrictive immigration policy		0.77	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes		0.36	
State intervention in economy			0.70
Unemployment benefits			0.40
Increase of retirement age	-0.31		0.22
Interfactor Correlations	F1	F2	F3
F1	1.00	0.48	0.13
F2		1.00	-0.06
F3			1.00
SS loadings	1.73	0.97	0.76
Prop. Variance	0.17	0.10	0.08
Cum. Variance	0.17	0.27	0.35
Prop. Explained	0.50	0.28	0.22
Cum. Proportion	0.50	0.78	1.00

Appendix D: Robustness check with listwise deletion of missing values

Table 4.8: Factor analysis of the party data, listwise deletion

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.81			
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.80			
Restrictive immigration policy	0.78			
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.70			
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.68			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.63			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.63			
Unemployment benefits	0.62			0.37
Veto power member states	0.55	0.34		
Tax raising power for EU	0.43			0.31
EU sec. & defense policy		0.86		
EU one voice foreign policy	0.32	0.69		
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.67		
EU responsibility patrolling borders	-0.46	0.64		
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.59		
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.42		-0.41
Europ. integration good thing	0.31	0.49		
Soc. security benefits foreigners			1.00	
Fin. solidarity member states			1.00	
State intervention in economy				0.82
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	0.48			0.48
Increase of retirement age				0.47
EU protection farmers				0.37
F1	1.00	0.30	0.35	0.12
F2		1.00	0.23	-0.38
F3			1.00	0.22
F4				1.00
SS loadings	5.65	3.83	2.54	2.14
Proportion Var	0.25	0.17	0.11	0.09
Cumulative Var	0.25	0.41	0.52	0.62
Proportion Explained	0.40	0.27	0.18	0.15
Cumulative Proportion	0.40	0.67	0.85	1.00

Table 4.9: Factor analysis of the voter data, listwise deletion

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Tax raising power for EU	0.66					
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.50					
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.48					
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.38					
EU protection farmers	0.26			-0.24		
Sanctions violation rule of law		0.71				
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers		0.45				
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.39				
Veto power member states		0.35				
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.34				
EU one voice foreign policy		0.33				
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.96			
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.60			
EU sec. & defense policy			0.29	-0.47		
Restrictive immigration policy				0.67		
Soc. security benefits foreigners				0.31		
EU responsibility patrolling borders				-0.66		
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes				0.39		
State intervention in economy					0.58	
Increase of retirement age	-0.44				0.21	
Unemployment benefits					0.49	
Europ. integration good thing						0.40
Extent Europ. integration						0.37
Fin. solidarity member states					0.43	0.38
F1	1.00	0.45	0.39	0.18	0.27	0.39
F2		1.00	0.45	-0.04	0.25	0.39
F3			1.00	0.01	0.02	0.31
F4				1.00	-0.02	0.03
F5					1.00	0.20
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.12	1.99	1.85	1.77	1.14	1.05
Proportion Var	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04
Cumulative Var	0.09	0.17	0.25	0.32	0.37	0.41
Proportion Explained	0.21	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.11	0.11
Cumulative Proportion	0.21	0.41	0.60	0.78	0.89	1.00

Appendix E: Robustness check party analyses based on the same subset of countries as in the citizen dataset

Table 4.10: Factor analysis of the party data based on the same subset of countries as in the citizen data

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.83			
Restrictive immigration policy	0.70			
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.64			
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.63	0.40		
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.56			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.52			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.45	0.33		
EU sec. & defense policy		0.91		
EU one voice foreign policy		0.78		
EU responsibility patrolling borders	-0.46	0.56		
Veto power member states	0.34	0.56		
Europ. integration good thing	0.35	0.52		
Tax raising power for EU		0.50	0.31	0.32
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.49		-0.36
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.49		
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.33	-0.45	-0.45
Soc. security benefits foreigners			0.99	
Fin. solidarity member states			0.99	
Unemployment benefits	0.32			0.65
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	0.35			0.64
State intervention in economy				0.63
Increase of retirement age				0.53
EU protection farmers				0.11
F1	1.00	0.42	0.33	0.27
F2		1.00	0.20	-0.29
F3			1.00	0.32
F4				1.00
SS loadings	4.47	4.28	2.90	2.65
Proportion Var	0.19	0.19	0.13	0.12
Cumulative Var	0.19	0.38	0.51	0.62
Proportion Explained	0.31	0.30	0.20	0.19
Cumulative Proportion	0.31	0.61	0.81	1.00

Appendix F: Country-level results

Table 4.11: Factor analysis Sweden

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Restrictive immigration policy	0.76					
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.54	0.33				
EU responsibility patrolling borders	-0.72					
Power expansion Eur. Parliament		0.69				
Tax raising power for EU		0.65				
Extent Europ. integration	0.32	0.47				
Europ. integration good thing	0.32	0.42				
EU one voice foreign policy		0.40				
Fin. solidarity member states		0.36				
Sanctions violation rule of law			0.80			
Veto power member states			0.56			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers			0.51			
Punish violation EU deficit rules			0.44			
Renewable energy vs. higher costs				0.77		
Comply with EU Green Deal				0.69		
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes				0.41		
EU military aid to Ukraine					0.91	
EU enlargement Ukraine					0.54	
EU sec. & defense policy	-0.38				0.45	
State intervention in economy						0.73
Unemployment benefits						0.46
Increase of retirement age						0.33
Legislation same-sex marriages						
EU protection farmers						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	0.20	0.13	0.52	0.02	0.04
F2		1.00	0.34	0.42	0.24	0.12
F3			1.00	0.45	0.57	0.09
F4				1.00	0.25	0.14
F5					1.00	-0.09
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.33	2.33	2.07	1.99	1.72	1.10
Proportion Var	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.10	0.19	0.28	0.36	0.43	0.48
Proportion Explained	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.17	0.15	0.10
Cumulative Proportion	0.20	0.40	0.58	0.76	0.90	1.00

Table 4.12: Factor analysis Finland

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.65					
Tax raising power for EU	0.60					
Extent Europ. integration	0.43					
Fin. solidarity member states	0.41					0.31
Europ. integration good thing	0.38					
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.79				
EU sec. & defense policy		0.62				
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.44				
Restrictive immigration policy			0.69			
Soc. security benefits foreigners			0.42			
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes			0.38			0.31
EU responsibility patrolling borders		0.31	-0.50			
Punish violation EU deficit rules			-0.33		0.32	
Renewable energy vs. higher costs				0.91		
Comply with EU Green Deal				0.44		
Sanctions violation rule of law					0.72	
Veto power member states					0.40	
Unemployment benefits						0.59
State intervention in economy						0.52
Increase of retirement age						0.31
Legislation same-sex marriages						
EU one voice foreign policy						
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers						
EU protection farmers						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	0.31	0.25	0.43	0.38	0.06
F2		1.00	0.04	0.28	0.52	-0.04
F3			1.00	0.31	0.10	0.03
F4				1.00	0.30	0.03
F5					1.00	0.02
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.08	1.86	1.74	1.52	1.31	1.06
Proportion Var	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.04
Cumulative Var	0.09	0.16	0.24	0.30	0.35	0.40
Proportion Explained	0.22	0.19	0.18	0.16	0.14	0.11
Cumulative Proportion	0.22	0.41	0.59	0.75	0.89	1.00

Table 4.13: Factor analysis Austria

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Tax raising power for EU	0.78			
EU military aid to Ukraine	0.68			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.66			
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.64			
EU enlargement Ukraine	0.65			
Veto power member states	0.50			
Extent Europ. integration	0.49			
Unemployment benefits	0.46			0.35
Fin. solidarity member states	0.36			
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.35			0.31
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.34			
Sanctions violation rule of law		0.77		
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers		0.51		
EU one voice foreign policy		0.42		
Europ. integration good thing	0.38	0.40		
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.49		
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.38		
EU responsibility patrolling borders			0.72	
EU sec. & defense policy			0.45	
Restrictive immigration policy			-0.73	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes			-0.50	
State intervention in economy				0.41
Increase of retirement age	-0.67			
EU protection farmers				
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	1.00	0.58	-0.15	0.23
F2		1.00	0.13	0.14
F3			1.00	-0.07
F4				1.00
SS loadings	4.97	2.74	2.03	0.88
Proportion Var	0.21	0.11	0.08	0.04
Cumulative Var	0.21	0.32	0.41	0.44
Proportion Explained	0.47	0.26	0.19	0.08
Cumulative Proportion	0.47	0.73	0.92	1.00

Table 4.14: Factor analysis Belgium

	F1	F2	F3	F4	MR5	F6
Restrictive immigration policy	0.75					
Unemployment benefits	0.44					
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.43		0.34			
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	0.41					
EU one voice foreign policy	-0.33		0.31			
EU sec. & defense policy	-0.49					
EU responsibility patrolling borders	-0.72					
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.90				
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.64				
Sanctions violation rule of law			0.59			
Europ. integration good thing			0.40			
Veto power member states			0.37			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers			0.36			
Tax raising power for EU				0.75		
Power expansion Eur. Parliament				0.60		
Renewable energy vs. higher costs					0.76	
Comply with EU Green Deal					0.33	
State intervention in economy						0.65
Increase of retirement age						0.32
Legislation same-sex marriages						
Extent Europ. integration						
Punish violation EU deficit rules						
Fin. solidarity member states						
EU protection farmers						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	0.02	-0.01	0.21	0.15	-0.18
F2		1.00	0.43	0.40	0.42	-0.04
F3			1.00	0.38	0.38	0.22
F4				1.00	0.42	0.01
F5					1.00	0.05
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.34	1.79	1.73	1.72	1.15	0.91
Proportion Var	0.10	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.04
Cumulative Var	0.10	0.17	0.24	0.32	0.36	0.40
Proportion Explained	0.24	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.12	0.09
Cumulative Proportion	0.24	0.43	0.61	0.79	0.91	1.00

Table 4.15: Factor analysis Germany

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Tax raising power for EU	0.70			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.61			
EU protection farmers	0.55			
Fin. solidarity member states	0.49			
Unemployment benefits	0.49			
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.45		0.31	
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.43			
Sanctions violation rule of law		0.74		
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers		0.57		
EU one voice foreign policy		0.48		
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.43		
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.41		
EU sec. & defense policy		0.39	-0.36	0.32
Europ. integration good thing		0.37		
Restrictive immigration policy			0.77	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes			0.46	
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.35		0.42	
Extent Europ. integration			0.33	
EU responsibility patrolling borders			-0.62	
EU military aid to Ukraine				0.64
EU enlargement Ukraine	0.35			0.38
State intervention in economy	0.34			-0.43
Increase of retirement age	-0.35			-0.38
Veto power member states				
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	1.00	0.40	0.39	0.39
F2		1.00	0.01	0.39
F3			1.00	0.18
F4				1.00
SS loadings	3.49	2.72	2.42	1.72
Proportion Var	0.15	0.11	0.10	0.07
Cumulative Var	0.15	0.26	0.36	0.43
Proportion Explained	0.34	0.26	0.23	0.17
Cumulative Proportion	0.34	0.60	0.83	1.00

Table 4.16: Factor analysis France

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Tax raising power for EU	0.56				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.52				
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.49				
Extent Europ. integration	0.43				
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.42				
Increase of retirement age	-0.43				
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.87			
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.57			
Europ. integration good thing		0.37			
Restrictive immigration policy			0.74		
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes			0.48		
Soc. security benefits foreigners			0.35		
EU protection farmers			-0.31		
EU sec. & defense policy			-0.57		
EU responsibility patrolling borders			-0.68		
Sanctions violation rule of law				0.71	
Veto power member states				0.45	
Punish violation EU deficit rules	0.35			0.39	
EU one voice foreign policy				0.36	
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers				0.31	
State intervention in economy					0.54
Unemployment benefits					0.50
Fin. solidarity member states					0.34
Legislation same-sex marriages					
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	0.48	0.13	0.42	0.23
F2		1.00	0.09	0.37	0.09
F3			1.00	-0.09	0.07
F4				1.00	0.41
F5					1.00
SS loadings	2.45	2.30	2.15	1.94	1.13
Proportion Var	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.10	0.20	0.29	0.37	0.42
Proportion Explained	0.25	0.23	0.22	0.19	0.11
Cumulative Proportion	0.25	0.48	0.69	0.89	1.00

Table 4.17: Factor analysis Netherlands

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Tax raising power for EU	0.74				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.71				
Comply with EU Green Deal	0.45				
Extent Europ. integration	0.43				
Renewable energy vs. higher costs	0.42				
Europ. integration good thing	0.36				
Fin. solidarity member states	0.32				
Increase of retirement age	-0.39				
Sanctions violation rule of law		0.72			
EU one voice foreign policy		0.48			
Veto power member states		0.47			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers		0.39			
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.34			
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.34			
Restrictive immigration policy			0.74		
Soc. security benefits foreigners			0.46		
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes			0.34		-0.33
EU responsibility patrolling borders			-0.66		
EU protection farmers			-0.31		
EU military aid to Ukraine				0.89	
EU enlargement Ukraine				0.65	
EU sec. & defense policy			-0.34	0.36	
State intervention in economy					0.50
Unemployment benefits					0.37
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	0.34	0.44	0.41	0.01
F2		1.00	-0.01	0.55	0.14
F3			1.00	0.11	-0.22
F4				1.00	-0.08
F5					1.00
SS loadings	2.64	2.13	2.08	1.98	0.76
Proportion Var	0.11	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.03
Cumulative Var	0.11	0.20	0.29	0.37	0.40
Proportion Explained	0.28	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.08
Cumulative Proportion	0.28	0.50	0.71	0.92	1.00

Table 4.18: Factor analysis Ireland

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
EU military aid to Ukraine	0.87					
EU enlargement Ukraine	0.64					
Tax raising power for EU		0.58				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament		0.49				
EU one voice foreign policy		0.41				
Increase of retirement age		-0.44				
Legislation same-sex marriages		-0.33				
Sanctions violation rule of law			0.51			
Europ. integration good thing			0.44			
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.32	0.34			
Fin. solidarity member states			0.33			
EU responsibility patrolling borders				0.66		
EU sec. & defense policy	0.33			0.38		
Restrictive immigration policy				-0.71		
Soc. security benefits foreigners				-0.36		
Extent Europ. integration				-0.33		
Renewable energy vs. higher costs					0.77	
Comply with EU Green Deal					0.40	
Unemployment benefits						0.70
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes					0.37	0.41
State intervention in economy			0.31	0.31		0.32
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers						
Veto power member states						
EU protection farmers						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	0.35	0.46	-0.05	0.45	0.21
F2		1.00	0.33	-0.04	0.35	0.26
F3			1.00	0.11	0.35	0.25
F4				1.00	-0.24	-0.10
F5					1.00	0.31
F6						1.00
SS loadings	1.96	1.91	1.81	1.69	1.58	1.16
Proportion Var	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.08	0.16	0.24	0.31	0.37	0.42
Proportion Explained	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.11
Cumulative Proportion	0.19	0.38	0.56	0.73	0.89	1.00

Table 4.19: Factor analysis Greece

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
EU one voice foreign policy	0.55					
EU responsibility patrolling borders	0.54	-0.40				
EU sec. & defense policy	0.53					
Europ. integration good thing	0.50					
Extent Europ. integration	0.44					
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.39			0.33		
Restrictive immigration policy		0.69				
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.59				
Soc. security benefits foreigners		0.59				
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes		0.32				
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.86			
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.67			
State intervention in economy				0.62		
Unemployment benefits				0.45		
Fin. solidarity member states				0.43		
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.34			0.37		
Increase of retirement age				0.42		
Punish violation EU deficit rules					0.41	
Tax raising power for EU					0.63	
Power expansion Eur. Parliament					0.45	
Renewable energy vs. higher costs						0.74
Comply with EU Green Deal						0.44
EU protection farmers						0.31
Veto power member states						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	-0.12	0.19	0.31	0.33	0.26
F2		1.00	0.20	-0.11	0.11	0.10
F3			1.00	-0.12	0.36	0.49
F4				1.00	0.03	-0.03
F5					1.00	0.41
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.06	1.77	1.58	1.50	1.24	1.20
Proportion Var	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.09	0.16	0.23	0.29	0.34	0.39
Proportion Explained	0.22	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.13	0.13
Cumulative Proportion	0.22	0.41	0.58	0.74	0.87	1.00

Table 4.20: Factor analysis Spain

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.64					
Punish violation EU deficit rules	0.50					
Europ. integration good thing	0.44					
EU protection farmers	0.37					
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.35					
EU military aid to Ukraine		0.80				
EU enlargement Ukraine		0.73				
EU responsibility patrolling borders			0.67			
EU sec. & defense policy			0.45			
EU one voice foreign policy			0.41			
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers			0.41			
Restrictive immigration policy			-0.51			0.33
Tax raising power for EU				0.54		
Power expansion Eur. Parliament				0.50		
Comply with EU Green Deal				0.36		0.33
Increase of retirement age				-0.39		
State intervention in economy					0.71	
Fin. solidarity member states					0.31	
Unemployment benefits					0.51	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes						0.56
Legislation same-sex marriages						
Renewable energy vs. higher costs						
Extent Europ. integration						
Veto power member states						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	0.37	0.28	0.38	0.35	0.15
F2		1.00	0.24	0.43	0.10	0.15
F3			1.00	0.05	0.04	-0.28
F4				1.00	0.24	0.21
F5					1.00	0.14
F6						1.00
SS loadings	1.86	1.64	1.64	1.52	1.31	1.28
Proportion Var	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.08	0.15	0.21	0.28	0.33	0.38
Proportion Explained	0.20	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.14	0.14
Cumulative Proportion	0.20	0.38	0.56	0.72	0.86	1.00

Table 4.21: Factor analysis Portugal

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Europ. integration good thing	0.63				
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.63				
EU one voice foreign policy	0.43				
Restrictive immigration policy		0.72			
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes		0.38			
Soc. security benefits foreigners		0.34			
EU responsibility patrolling borders		-0.69			
EU sec. & defense policy		-0.43			
Punish violation EU deficit rules		-0.35			
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.97		
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.60		
Tax raising power for EU				0.67	
Power expansion Eur. Parliament				0.38	
Comply with EU Green Deal				0.37	
EU protection farmers				0.32	
Increase of retirement age				-0.49	
State intervention in economy					0.57
Unemployment benefits					0.45
Fin. solidarity member states					0.44
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers					0.35
Renewable energy vs. higher costs					0.33
Legislation same-sex marriages					
Extent Europ. integration					
Veto power member states					
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	-0.14	0.50	0.24	0.45
F2		1.00	-0.15	0.04	-0.20
F3			1.00	0.29	0.21
F4				1.00	0.04
F5					1.00
SS loadings	1.93	1.85	1.71	1.42	1.41
Proportion Var	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06
Cumulative Var	0.08	0.16	0.23	0.29	0.35
Proportion Explained	0.23	0.22	0.21	0.17	0.17
Cumulative Proportion	0.23	0.45	0.66	0.83	1.00

Table 4.22: Factor analysis Italy

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
EU responsibility patrolling borders	0.76					
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.50			0.39		
EU sec. & defense policy	0.40		0.38			
Restrictive immigration policy	-0.71					
Tax raising power for EU		0.68				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament		0.46				
EU one voice foreign policy		0.40				
Veto power member states		0.36				
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.35				
Increase of retirement age		-0.34				
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.85			
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.70			
Sanctions violation rule of law				0.51		
Europ. integration good thing				0.51		
Soc. security benefits foreigners				0.44		
State intervention in economy					0.58	
Unemployment benefits					0.56	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes					-0.45	
Renewable energy vs. higher costs						0.60
Comply with EU Green Deal						0.49
Legislation same-sex marriages						0.31
Extent Europ. integration						
Fin. solidarity member states						
EU protection farmers						
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	1.00	-0.01	-0.04	-0.13	0.18	-0.23
F2		1.00	0.51	0.36	0.13	0.41
F3			1.00	0.27	-0.07	0.31
F4				1.00	0.24	0.31
F5					1.00	0.27
F6						1.00
SS loadings	2.08	1.87	1.83	1.65	1.26	1.25
Proportion Var	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.09	0.16	0.24	0.31	0.36	0.41
Proportion Explained	0.21	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.13	0.13
Cumulative Proportion	0.21	0.40	0.58	0.75	0.87	1.00

Table 4.23: Factor analysis Hungary

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.76				
Punish violation EU deficit rules	0.61				
Veto power member states	0.56				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.50				
EU one voice foreign policy	0.38				
Tax raising power for EU	0.36		0.35		
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes	-0.45				
Europ. integration good thing		0.74			
Extent Europ. integration		0.67			
Soc. security benefits foreigners		0.45			
Fin. solidarity member states		0.35			
Restrictive immigration policy		0.31			
Comply with EU Green Deal			0.51		
EU military aid to Ukraine			0.45		
EU enlargement Ukraine			0.42		
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers			0.38		
Increase of retirement age			-0.48		
EU responsibility patrolling borders				0.62	
EU sec. & defense policy				0.62	
EU protection farmers				0.38	
State intervention in economy					0.69
Unemployment benefits					
Legislation same-sex marriages					
Renewable energy vs. higher costs					
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	0.64	0.33	0.13	-0.03
F2		1.00	0.51	0.00	-0.25
F3			1.00	-0.25	-0.17
F4				1.00	0.29
F5					1.00
SS loadings	2.74	2.30	1.91	1.40	0.92
Proportion Var	0.11	0.10	0.08	0.06	0.04
Cumulative Var	0.11	0.21	0.29	0.35	0.39
Proportion Explained	0.29	0.25	0.21	0.15	0.10
Cumulative Proportion	0.29	0.54	0.75	0.90	1.00

Table 4.24: Factor analysis Latvia

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
EU enlargement Ukraine	0.83				
EU military aid to Ukraine	0.80				
EU sec. & defense policy	0.57				-0.35
Sanctions violation rule of law		0.62			
Power expansion Eur. Parliament		0.56			
Veto power member states		0.52			
Europ. integration good thing	0.36	0.41			0.33
Extent Europ. integration		0.41			0.31
EU one voice foreign policy	0.35	0.37			
Punish violation EU deficit rules		0.36			
Renewable energy vs. higher costs			0.62		
Tax raising power for EU			0.59		
Comply with EU Green Deal			0.56		
Legislation same-sex marriages			0.32		
EU protection farmers		-0.32	0.47	0.32	
Increase of retirement age			-0.58	0.31	
State intervention in economy				0.44	
Unemployment benefits				0.44	
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes				-0.62	
Fin. solidarity member states				0.45	
Restrictive immigration policy					0.49
Soc. security benefits foreigners					0.36
EU responsibility patrolling borders					-0.53
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers					
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	0.55	0.24	0.08	-0.18
F2		1.00	0.30	0.17	-0.03
F3			1.00	0.12	0.20
F4				1.00	-0.19
F5					1.00
SS loadings	2.76	2.44	2.37	1.65	1.48
Proportion Var	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.07	0.06
Cumulative Var	0.11	0.22	0.32	0.38	0.45
Proportion Explained	0.26	0.23	0.22	0.15	0.14
Cumulative Proportion	0.26	0.49	0.71	0.86	1.00

Table 4.25: Factor analysis Poland

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.84				
Europ. integration good thing	0.66				
Extent Europ. integration	0.63				
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.57	0.31			
Veto power member states	0.53				
Punish violation EU deficit rules	0.50				
Legislation same-sex marriages	0.49				
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers	0.40				
Tax raising power for EU		0.67			
Comply with EU Green Deal		0.53			
Renewable energy vs. higher costs		0.40			
Increase of retirement age		-0.39			
EU sec. & defense policy			0.78		
EU responsibility patrolling borders			0.65		
EU one voice foreign policy			0.49		
EU protection farmers			0.34		
Restrictive immigration policy			-0.37		
EU military aid to Ukraine				0.71	
EU enlargement Ukraine				0.67	
Soc. security benefits foreigners				0.35	
State intervention in economy					0.66
Unemployment benefits					0.45
Fin. solidarity member states					0.34
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes					
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.00	0.56	0.23	0.38	-0.03
F2		1.00	-0.09	0.31	0.06
F3			1.00	0.22	0.22
F4				1.00	-0.04
F5					1.00
SS loadings	3.74	2.01	1.91	1.65	1.09
Proportion Var	0.16	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05
Cumulative Var	0.16	0.24	0.32	0.39	0.43
Proportion Explained	0.36	0.19	0.18	0.16	0.10
Cumulative Proportion	0.36	0.55	0.74	0.90	1.00

Table 4.26: Factor analysis Romania

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Europ. integration good thing	0.65			
Extent Europ. integration	0.59			
EU enlargement Ukraine	0.51	0.38		
Sanctions violation rule of law	0.48			
EU military aid to Ukraine	0.42	0.37		
Soc. security benefits foreigners	0.40			
Restrictive immigration policy	0.37		-0.36	
Comply with EU Green Deal		0.66		
Tax raising power for EU		0.56		
Legislation same-sex marriages		0.48		
EU wide distr. of asyl. seekers		0.39		
Power expansion Eur. Parliament	0.38	0.38		
Increase of retirement age		-0.65		
EU responsibility patrolling borders			0.66	
EU sec. & defense policy			0.56	
EU one voice foreign policy			0.54	
State intervention in economy				0.66
Unemployment benefits				0.45
Fin. solidarity member states				0.37
Soc. programs vs. higher taxes				-0.51
Renewable energy vs. higher costs				
Punish violation EU deficit rules				
Veto power member states				
EU protection farmers				
Interfactor correlations	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	1.00	0.38	0.42	0.13
F2		1.00	0.20	0.00
F3			1.00	0.42
F4				1.00
SS loadings	2.78	2.61	1.99	1.51
Proportion Var	0.12	0.11	0.08	0.06
Cumulative Var	0.12	0.22	0.31	0.37
Proportion Explained	0.31	0.29	0.22	0.17
Cumulative Proportion	0.31	0.61	0.83	1.00