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National Dimensions of Conflict and the Mobilization of Euroscepticism by the Extreme Populist Left and Right

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Abstract: This paper investigates to which degree political parties in the fifteen old EU member states have mobilized Euroscepticism. Contrary to the prevailing view, neither national politics, nor orientations regarding Europe are one-dimensional. From this perspective, the EU-issue does not necessarily crosscut national lines of conflict. Rather, economic and cultural forms of Euroscepticism map quite nicely onto the state-market cleavage and the new cultural dimension structuring party systems in Western Europe. In principle, therefore, the congruence of European and national preference spaces favors the representation of differing preferences over Europe. Furthermore, the empirical analysis based on individual-level data from the European Value Study shows that a potential for parties to differentiate their appeals with respect to Europe exists throughout the continent. I argue theoretically and show empirically that the configuration of the party system conditions the manifestation of Euroscepticism. The manifestation of Euroscepticism results from an interaction between parties' ideological credentials and the strategic room to maneuver. Due to a variety of factors, the mainstream left and right downplay the issue of European integration and tend to take Europe-friendly positions. The representation of citizens holding Eurosceptic views therefore remains the domain of the extreme left and right, who can easily link the EU-issue to their respective core ideologies. Thus, cultural anxieties over European integration are only voiced where an extreme right-wing populist party is present, while the extreme left mobilizes exclusively on economic Euroscepticism. The paper concludes by discussing the desirability of a politicization of the integration process in normative terms. I claim that by instilling mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness, the politicization of the EU in the national political arena might actually be a good thing, as it may bolster the legitimacy of the integration process. The paper therefore discusses why, given the ease with which national parties can assimilate the EU-issue into their programmatic appeal, we see so little conflict and debate over Europe.

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National Dimensions of Political Conflict and the
Mobilization of Euroscepticism by the Extreme
Left and Right

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Introduction

In recent years, skepticism towards the European Union (EU) among mass publics has become increasingly apparent. The failure of the constitutional treaty to gain majority support in France and the Netherlands, as well as the defeat of the Lisbon treaty in Ireland, have marked the definite end of the “permissive consensus” among European publics that allowed European integration to proceed apace since the late 1950s. As Hooghe and Marks (2008) put it, the “permissive consensus” has given way to a “constraining dissensus”, implying that it has become difficult for elites to ignore public opinion on European integration.

At the same time, disagreement exists on how well party systems at the national and the EU-level are equipped to represent citizens’ preferences over the future directions of European integration. On the one hand, scholars have early on pointed to the opposition against the EU from parties situated at the “periphery” of party systems (*e.g.*, Taggart 1998), namely, from the extreme left and right. On the other hand, to the degree that these parties advocate an “opposition of principle”, as Mair (2007) has feared, this may not be conducive to making decision-makers respond to public preferences in the European domain. If, however, party systems come to reflect different conceptions of Europe (in terms of the *polity*-dimension) and diverging options in terms of *policy* at the EU-level, then compromise may be possible. This is likely to happen if parties are able to link the EU-issue to their core ideology. The ensuing politicization of European integration may then contribute to making elites more responsive, enhancing the legitimacy of the project. Since most of the mainstream parties to date share a pro-European consensus, this paper is concerned above all with the representation of Euroscepticism, or, put differently, with the preferences of those citizens that disagree with the EU in its current form.

Similarly to what is the case for political parties (Stratham and Koopmans 2009, Helbling, Höglinger, and Wüest 2010), citizens are likely to have reasons for being critical of the EU. From a theoretical point of view, two forms of Euroscepticism stand out as particularly important, because they are related to salient conflicts at the national level. A first form of Euroscepticism stems from the perception that *market building in the EU* has committed national governments to a liberalizing thrust in economic policy making, endangering the achievements of national welfare states. Consequently, as long as “positive integration” does not prevail over “negative integration” (Scharpf 1996), citizens with strong state interventionist attitudes will oppose further efforts at European integration. A second source of opposition is *culturally and politically based*, and reflects a somewhat more fundamental concern with the establishment of a supranational European polity. This is because the integration process clashes with the orientations of citizens that hold traditionalist or communitarian conceptions of community. Rather than national identity simply being more salient to some than to others, citizens adhere to differing conceptions of national identity, some of which are compatible with European integration, while others are not.

Each of these forms of Euroscepticism is related to one of the dimensions prevalent in national politics in Western Europe. I therefore start out by briefly depicting how the major dimensions of conflict in Western European party systems have been transformed in recent decades. The resulting two-dimensional political space leads to what may be called a “natural association” between national and European political preference spaces. The driving force of party system change in the advanced countries of Western Europe are new value conflicts that result from the mobilization of the New Left, and the counter-mobilization of the extreme populist right. Because this process is specific to the old EU-member states, the analysis is restricted to these fifteen countries.

The first part of this paper spells out these arguments in more detail. Using the latest wave of the *European Value Survey*, which has recently become available, I then show, first, that citizens do not fear the consequences of European integration to the same degree across member states. However, a potential for parties to differentiate their positions exists throughout Europe. Whether or not contrasting attitudes regarding European integration are actually mobilized, then, depends on the strategic choices of political parties. Given the mainstream consensus on Europe and the quasi-absence of single-issue parties campaigning on European issues, the pre-existing configuration of the party system is crucial in this respect. My claim is that the full mobilization of economic and cultural forms of opposition to European integration depends on the existence of a split both within the left and within the right of the political spectrum. While the analysis reveals that the cultural and economic dimensions are not completely distinct, it shows that if both a party off the left-wing mainstream and an extreme populist right party is present, a “division of labor” occurs. Consequently, the extreme populist right primarily mobilizes cultural Euroscepticism, while the extreme left thrives mostly on the perceived threat the EU poses to national welfare regimes.

I focus on the politicization of the European integration process by national political parties because it is at the national level that representatives are elected who decide over the future shape of the European union (Mair 2000). However, as national parties join together to form groups in the European parliament as a function of their core ideology (McElroy and Benoit 2007, 2010), this analysis has implications for political representation in the European parliament as well. I conclude by discussing the normative implications of a stronger politicization of the European integration process. On the one hand, the extreme populist right clearly poses a threat to liberal democracy at the national level. On the other hand, the politicization of the process of European integration, by instilling mechanisms of

accountability and responsiveness, may in fact enhance the legitimacy of the EU in the longer run.

The Association Between National and European Preference Spaces

Does the European integration dimension crosscut national conflicts?

There is contradictory evidence on the degree to which diverging preferences over Europe are represented by political parties, or have even resulted in a transformation of the dimensions underlying party systems. On the one hand, Mair (2000) has argued that the impact of Europe on national party systems has been quite limited, as it has not led to the formation of new political parties, and because it has not disrupted the prevailing mechanics of party competition. In a similar vein, van der Eijk and Franklin (1996, 2004) have famously termed the diverging preferences over Europe in mass publics a “sleeping giant”. This assumes, however, that the EU-dimension crosscuts the dominant left-right dimension of conflict at the national level (*e.g.*, Steenbergen and Marks 2004; Bartolini 2005, Hooghe and Marks 2008, Green-Pedersen 2010).

A different line of scholarship provides evidence that national political conflicts are structured not by a single left-right divide, but by an economic and by a cultural dimension (Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Warwick 2002, Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Bornschier 2010a, 2010b; for a partially contrasting view, see van der Brug and van Spanje 2009). From this perspective, one comes to different conclusions. According to Kriesi et al. (2006, 2008), the EU-issue has been integrated into the national dimensions of conflict and has contributed to transforming them. Yet, Europe is only a salient issue in some party systems, and not in others. Likewise,

Hooghe et al. (2002) and Marks et al. (2006) show that parties on the extreme left and extreme right take Eurosceptic positions in line with their ideological credentials. In both cases, the issue of European integration is either not disruptive at all for national party systems, or it has transformed national politics long ago.

This transformation is limited, however, to those cases in which the association between national dimensions and European issues in voter preferences is actually exploited by political parties. While this is, in principle, a result of parties' strategic choices, not all parties have the same degree of freedom to choose. Overall, there is a strong discrepancy between the growing impact of decision-making at the European level and the limited space parties devote to the issue in their manifestoes, leading Pennings (2006: 268) to conclude that parties deliberately underemphasize Europe. The mobilization of Euroscepticism is therefore conditional on the presence of parties of the extreme left and right. Although Euroscepticism is not their prime concern, as data on the media coverage of election campaigns shows (see Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Bornschieer 2010a), these parties are able to integrate the European integration issue into their broader program. Thus, while debates over Europe may not be very prominent in national politics, voter preferences over European integration may be more important to national voting decisions than is often assumed. And rather than cutting across national conflicts, European integration may actually contribute to reinforcing them. I therefore start out by depicting the nature of the transformation of West European party systems in the past decades and then hypothesize how the EU-issue relates to the transformed political space. The empirical analysis will then assess to which degree parties have mobilized contrasting preferences over Europe.

The two-dimensional political space and the politicization of European integration

That political space in Western European party systems is more than one-dimensional may in fact not be very new, since these party systems have historically been structured by two cleavages, namely, class and religion. Since the 1970s, however, the religious or cultural dimension has been transformed in ways to make the integration of EU-issues relatively straightforward. This evolution of the cultural dimension has occurred in two steps. A first restructuring of political space occurred as a consequence of the mobilization of the New Social Movements of the left in the 1970s and 1980s (Kitschelt 1994). Spurred by the educational revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the diffusion of universalistic values has led these actors to call for individual autonomy and the free choice of lifestyles. While a conservative counter-potential was already present at the attitudinal level in the 1970s (Sacchi 1998), it was only in the late 1980s that a conservative counter-movement to the libertarian left gained momentum. Framing the question of identity and community in terms of “us” and “the other”, it was spearheaded by the extreme populist right, but emerged also in countries in which such parties failed to break into the party system. As a consequence, a new cultural conflict emerged, where the one side holds *universalistic* visions of community and advocates individual autonomy, while the other advocates *communitarian* conceptions of community. Adhering to the latter view, the populist right wants to preserve those traditional communities in which common moral understandings have developed, and that are seen as threatened by multicultural society (Bornschieer 2010a).

The rising importance of the supranational EU polity in political life across Europe establishes a new political community in which collectively binding decisions are taken. Citizens holding libertarian-universalistic values will presumably not find this threatening. Not only are they characterized by a cosmopolitan outlook, they are also likely to support the “exportation” of the democratic principle to the European level, where a substantial part

of political decision making now takes place. For this reason, the forefront of the New Left, and in particular Green voters, will be strongly in favor of European integration, and are unlikely to express fears of losing their identity as a consequence of this process. For those adhering to traditionalist-communitarian conceptions of community, on the other hand, the situation is different. For them, European integration further threatens the autonomy of the national political community that these citizens already see as endangered by the application of universalistic principles on the part of autonomous state agencies such as constitutional courts. Hence, the extreme populist right is expected to strongly oppose European integration for cultural or identity-related reasons. In particular, this party family's "ethnopluralist" ideal of preserving the distinctive traditions of national cultures (Betz 2004; Betz and Johnson 2004, Antonio 2000), clashes with the project of European integration. For these reasons, extreme right voters are expected to differ significantly from the followers of mainstream parties, which at times occupy a position similar to that of the extreme right, for example by opting for restrictive immigration policies. However, while there may be congruence in terms of some issues, only the extreme populist right practices an elaborate traditionalist-communitarian discourse and is located at the extreme of the new cultural dimension (see Bornschier 2010a, 2010b).

The association between positions along the *state-market cleavage and opposition to the EU* is even more straightforward than is the case with regard to cultural opposition. Although often justified in technocratic terms, market integration in the EU is actually a highly political process, and the desired degree of economic market regulation at the European level is likely to depend on preferences regarding the welfare state and economic liberalism. Hence, the degree of market regulation at the European level, and the extent of harmonization is desired in social and fiscal policy could be debated on quite easily using the vocabulary of left and right in terms of the state-market cleavage prevalent throughout Europe. Citizens have

difficulties in seeing the substantial political differences between parties in terms of policy-making at the EU-level, however (van der Brug and van der Eijk 1999). Most likely, this is due (1) to the lack of transparent and intelligible chains of responsiveness between national publics and policy-making at the European level, and (2) to the fact that mainstream parties do not present alternative policies or political visions for the European level. Consequently, they do not provide their voters with cues that would link their preferences at the two levels. For these reasons, the mobilization of economic Euroscepticism is conditional on the presence of a party off the mainstream left.

To which degree the European project is neo-liberal in essence is of course a matter of debate. While Marks et al. (2006: 164) have argued that integration now follows a model of “regulated capitalism”, Höpner and Schäfer (2010) have claimed that we have entered a new, “post-Ricardian” phase, in which market integration comes to threaten the viability of member states’ distinct economic varieties of capitalism. The hotly debated service directive is a case in point. The fact that the mainstream left has not unequivocally condemned liberalizing measures such as this one opens a window of opportunity for Communist or left-of-the-mainstream parties to mobilize economically motivated resistance against Europe. For convenience I will label these parties “extreme left”, since they are located at the state-interventionist extreme of the party spectrum along the state-market divide.

The Mobilization of Two Distinct Forms of Euroscepticism

As this discussion makes clear, the resistance against European integration from the extreme left and populist right has clear ideological foundations and does not stem from these parties’

outsider status within national political competition. Contrary to the purely historical cleavage approach taken by Marks and Wilson (2000), however, I argue that positions regarding the EU cannot solely be deduced from parties' cleavage position, but are a result of their ideological credentials *in interaction with the strategic context of competition in the party system*. Thus, mainstream parties of the left and right are generally favorable to the integration process. As government parties, they have participated in the making of the European polity, committing them to a pragmatic stance. Thus, while the electorates of left-wing parties should be somewhat more concerned with the economic implications of European integration than those of right-wing parties, both electorates are likely to be heterogeneous and thus to exhibit rather centrist positions on average. Similarly, a modest difference with respect to the cultural implications of integration is expected, in line with parties' positions along the cultural divide. The extreme right and left, on the other hand, faces no such dilemma between ideological credentials and pragmatism, as long as it does not participate in government.

Two further factors make it easier for parties of the extreme left and right to take a clear position on the question of European integration than for the mainstream parties. For one thing, they tend to be less divided internally than the latter (*c.f.*, Franklin et al. 1996; Bartolini 2005; Kriesi et al. 2006, Hooghe and Marks 2008). Pennings (2006) shows that more strongly divided parties avoid mentioning Europe in their manifestoes. In part, this is due to cross-pressures resulting from the fact that mainstream parties tend to mobilize along both national dimensions of conflict, resulting in contradictory positions regarding European integration. As Marks et al. (2002: 587) point out, conservative parties can be expected to strongly support economic integration, while opposing further efforts at political integration due to their concern for national sovereignty. Social Democrats represent the mirror image of the Conservatives, since they are much more skeptical regarding economic integration than they are with regard to establishing a supranational polity. Again, extreme left parties, to the

degree that they attach greater importance to economic policies than to cultural matters, presumably face less of a dilemma. The situation is even clearer for the extreme populist right, which clearly mobilizes only along one dimension, namely, the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian line of conflict. Furthermore, populist right parties can define their policy stances without prolonged internal debate due to its hierarchical internal structure.¹

Consequently, while Europe is unlikely to fundamentally transform the dimensions that structure national conflicts, it may affect the balance of power within the left and right ideological blocks: On the one hand, it can shift votes from the mainstream left to the extreme left, and on the other, center-right parties may lose the Eurosceptic segments of their electorate to the extreme populist right. Consequently, the mobilization of Euroscepticism by the extreme left and right does not occur alone as an effect of reciprocal cueing between parties and their constituencies (Steenbergen et al. 2007, de Vries and Edwards 2009). In line with the perspective developed by Kriesi et al. (2006), the differentiation of party stances regarding Europe also opens the way for genuine *realignments* within the left and right ideological blocks. The precondition for European integration to affect voting choices at the national level, however, is that the issue is salient to voters and that partisan conflict exists (de Vries 2007). In the next section, I present some evidence for the presence of contrasting orientations regarding Europe among mass publics. In the following section, I then analyze to which degree these orientations are structured by party choice.

¹ Evidence for both propositions can be found in Bornschier (2010b).

The Dimensionality of Orientations Regarding the European Union and the Potential for Contestation of European Integration

A study of the relationship between national conflicts and orientations regarding the European Union has thus far been severely limited by the paucity of appropriate data. Few cross-national surveys feature both detailed information on voter attitudes vis-à-vis European integration, as well as respondents' party preference. Luckily, the 2008 wave of the *European Value Study*, which has recently become available, features both. The analysis presented in this paper includes respondents from those member states of the EU prior to the Eastward enlargement for which data is available in the first release. Because data from Italy, Sweden, and Great Britain is still lacking, these countries are excluded from the analysis. On the other hand, I include Switzerland where, despite not being a EU-member, Euroscepticism has been a driving force of party system transformation in the 1990s (Kriesi et al. 2005).

The first step in the analysis is to verify whether orientations regarding the EU are indeed structured by the economic and cultural dimensions postulated above. The *European Value Study* features a number of commonly used items as to whether respondents fear a loss of social security, a loss of culture, their country having to pay more and more to the EU, a loss of power in the world, and a loss of jobs. Contrary to expectations, factor analysis reveals responses to these items to be structured by a single dimension. This is surprising since an earlier analysis (Bornschiefer forthcoming), using *Eurobarometer* data from 1996, and based on a larger number of items, revealed clearly distinctive factors tapping cultural or identity-related fears, concerns over the implications of integration for national welfare states and for economic crises in general, as well fears related to the eastward enlargement of the EU. That said, a similar analysis using *Eurobarometer* data from 2004, when eastward enlargement was

off the table, already showed a tendency for the economic and cultural dimensions to become more strongly integrated (ibid.).

Since these results may be driven by the different number of items available in the three surveys, I base the following analysis over time on those items featured in all surveys, and which on theoretical grounds can be clearly be assigned to the economic and cultural dimensions, respectively. The first asks respondents whether they fear a loss of social security, while the second inquires whether respondents consider European integration a threat to their culture and identity. Table 1 shows the correlation between the two items in 1996, 2004, and 2008. From the earliest point in time on, the two aspects are significantly correlated, which as such is perhaps not that surprising. However, the strengthening of the correlation over time is puzzling. After all, one may have speculated that with integration moving ahead, citizens are becoming more aware of the process, enhancing their capacity to assess its various consequences independently. Consequently, the economic and cultural dimensions should become more independent. Instead, Table 1 shows a growing association between fears over the welfare state and the loss of identity. Apparently, citizens’ increasingly either come to like or to dislike the EU as a whole. Separate analyses at the country level reveal no significant differences in this association (results not shown here).

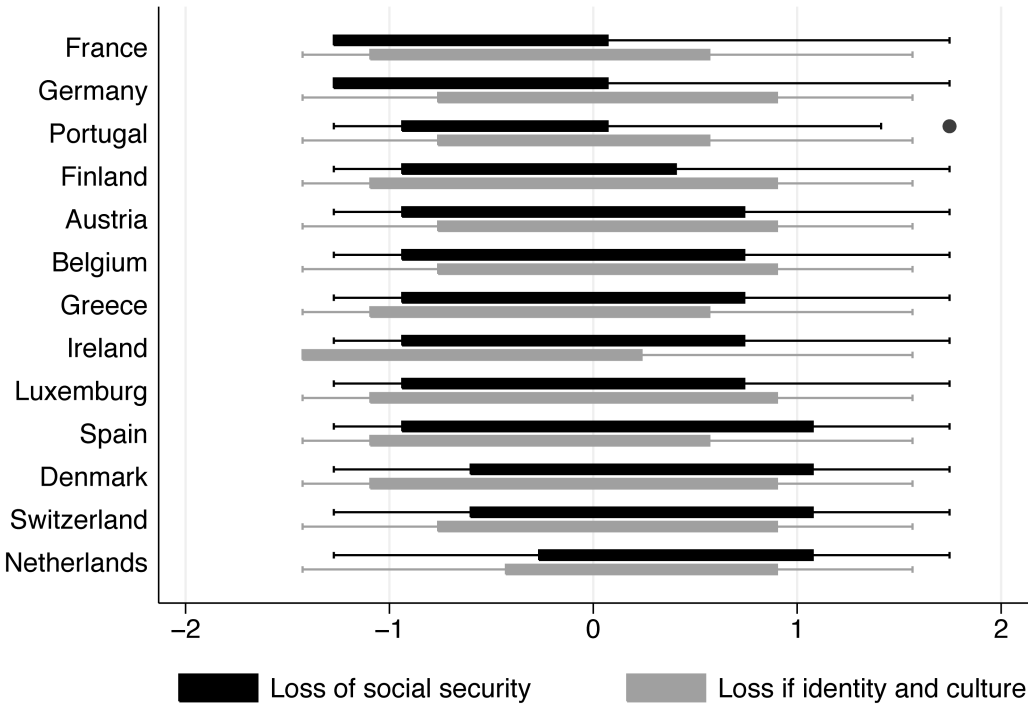
Table 1: Pairwise correlation between fears pertaining the loss of social security and the loss of national identity and culture as a consequence of building the EU (respondents of the 15 old member countries)

Year	Coefficient	Significance	N
1996	0.32	0.000	56’514
2004	0.38	0.000	14’127
2008	0.57	0.000	32’694

Data sources: *Eurobarometer* 44.2bis “Megasurvey” (1996), *Eurobarometer* 62 (2004), *European Value Study* (2008)

When we move from the individual-level association between the two items to the distribution of responses across countries, a number of contrasts emerge. First of all, national publics differ in their level of fears. Figure 1 shown boxplots indicating the distribution of respondents, where negative values indicate strong fears, while positive values indicate low levels of concern. Countries are arranged by the strength of their populations’ economic fears, revealing some important differences, with the German and French publics being most worried about their national welfare regime, while the Dutch are least concerned. We also see that welfare concerns are more prevalent in some countries, while identity-related ones are more important in others. Ireland stands out for having the population most fearful of losing their identity as a consequence of European unification.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents regarding economic and cultural threats in Western Europe



Source: *European Value Study 2008*

Two important conclusions emerge from the results in Figure 1. Most striking is the lack of a clear link between the diffusion of Eurosceptic attitudes on the one hand, and their political manifestation on the other. Thus, while similar levels of concern over the welfare state characterize the Germans and the French, Eurosceptic mobilization has only played an important role in one context. In France, the EU has not only been widely discussed in the referendum campaign on the constitutional treaty, but where issues related to the EU have been quite prominent in election campaigns since the late 1980s (Bornschieer 2008). In Germany, by contrast, the EU-issue has been far less prominent (Dolezal 2008, Bornschieer 2010b). At the same time, and this is the second conclusion, there are significant differences *within* each country, indicating that some citizens have more concerns than others.² Consequently, while particularly favorable conditions for Eurosceptic mobilization would appear to exist in countries where publics are on average more skeptical of the integration process, conditions for parties to differentiate their appeals exist *throughout* the old EU member states.

Contrasting Patterns in the Mobilization of Dissent

With the data at hand, we cannot assess party strategies directly, but we can gauge to which degree their electorates differ in their orientations regarding Europe. Strong contrasts indicate that parties have attracted voters based on their EU-positions, while weak differences would indicate that they either do not care about the issue, or deliberately downplay it to avoid a reconfiguration of partisan preferences.³ Although the economic and cultural dimensions were

2 The whiskers of the boxplots indicate an almost identical range of responses across countries, reflecting that respondents are distributed over all response categories. Nonetheless, the boxes point to important differences in the location of the majority of respondents across countries.

3 Divergent positions of party electorates could also imply that orientations regarding the EU overlap

not found to be independent of one another, it nonetheless makes sense to analyze them separately for several reasons. First of all, a correlation merely indicates covariance, and not that economic and cultural fears are equally strong for each individual. Thus, it is highly plausible that some electorates will stand out for their economic fears, and other for their perception of cultural threat. Secondly, and related, the association may in fact not be equally strong for those supporting the rather EU-friendly mainstream parties and those voting for parties that explicitly mobilize either cultural or economic Euroscepticism. Contrary to the former, the latter may actually have specific reasons for not liking the EU. Finally, a number of studies have found voters' cultural and economic motives to be distinct (Hooghe and Marks 2004, McLaren 2006, Bornschier 2008), or political parties to frame the EU-issue either in cultural, or in economic terms (Helbling et al. 2010, Hooghe and Marks 2008, Marks and Wilson 2000).

Accordingly, party electorates are positioned in political space using their mean position regarding the economic and the cultural components of Euroscepticism.⁴ The items are standardized separately for each country, which means that the crossing-point of the two dimensions corresponds to the mean of the distribution of respondents of a country.⁵ The analysis reveals three distinct country patterns showing how the configuration of the party system conditions the manifestation of Euroscepticism. I discuss each of these patterns in turn, starting with those countries in which a single division, mostly within the right, is

completely with national dimensions of conflict; consequently, electorates could diverge without parties even talking about the EU. However, the presence of cases such as that of Spain, where electorates hardly differ, renders this hypothesis implausible.

- 4 In order to determine party choice, I use respondents' indication which party they would vote for if an election were held the day after. Those that declare that they would not vote were asked which party they felt closest to. I have combined both items to construct the party preference variable. This procedure boosts the support for anti-system parties of the extreme right that sometimes could not be positioned otherwise.
- 5 The standardization procedure means that the distances between electorates cannot be compared across countries, since the standard deviation along each dimension is 1 for every country. In theory, this inflates the differences between respondents in countries with feeble polarization and decreases them where publics are highly polarized. In practice, Figure 1 shows that country differences in polarization are not very large, and that, consequently, this problem is of minor importance. The advantage of this procedure is that the location of electorates is shown relative to the distribution of respondents in the respective country.

present. Then I turn to those party systems in which both an alternative to the mainstream right and the mainstream left exists. Finally, I present those cases in which the mobilization of Euroscepticism has been weak or altogether absent. These differing patterns do not seem linked in any clear way to the differences in political potential put in evidence in Figure 1, underlining the crucial importance of political agency in the mobilization of latent political potentials.

Party systems featuring a single division

The *presence of an extreme right-wing populist party* manifestly favors the expression of cultural Euroscepticism, as the configurations of electorates in Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium in Figure 2 show. In *Austria*, both parties of the populist right – the Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) – mobilize an electorate that is distinct from mainstream voters in terms of its pronounced perception of cultural threat. The difference between the mainstream left and right electorates is more modest and mostly a product of parties' positions along the state-market cleavage: The voters of the conservative ÖVP differ from those of the Social Democrats (SPÖ) mainly in terms of their economic fears. The Greens and the Liberal Forum (LIF), on the other hand, in line with their libertarian-universalistic convictions, stand out for their pro-European sentiments.

In *Switzerland*, the electorate of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) is positioned similarly to that of the populist right in Austria. This mirrors the Eurosceptic discourse of the SVP, which played an important role in the SVP's rise to the strongest party in Switzerland in the 1990s, when Switzerland's relationship to the EU was one of the most hotly debated issues. While extreme left voters exhibit somewhat more Eurosceptic attitudes than those supporting the mainstream left, which emerges as quite pro-European, the former's electorate has remained rather marginal.

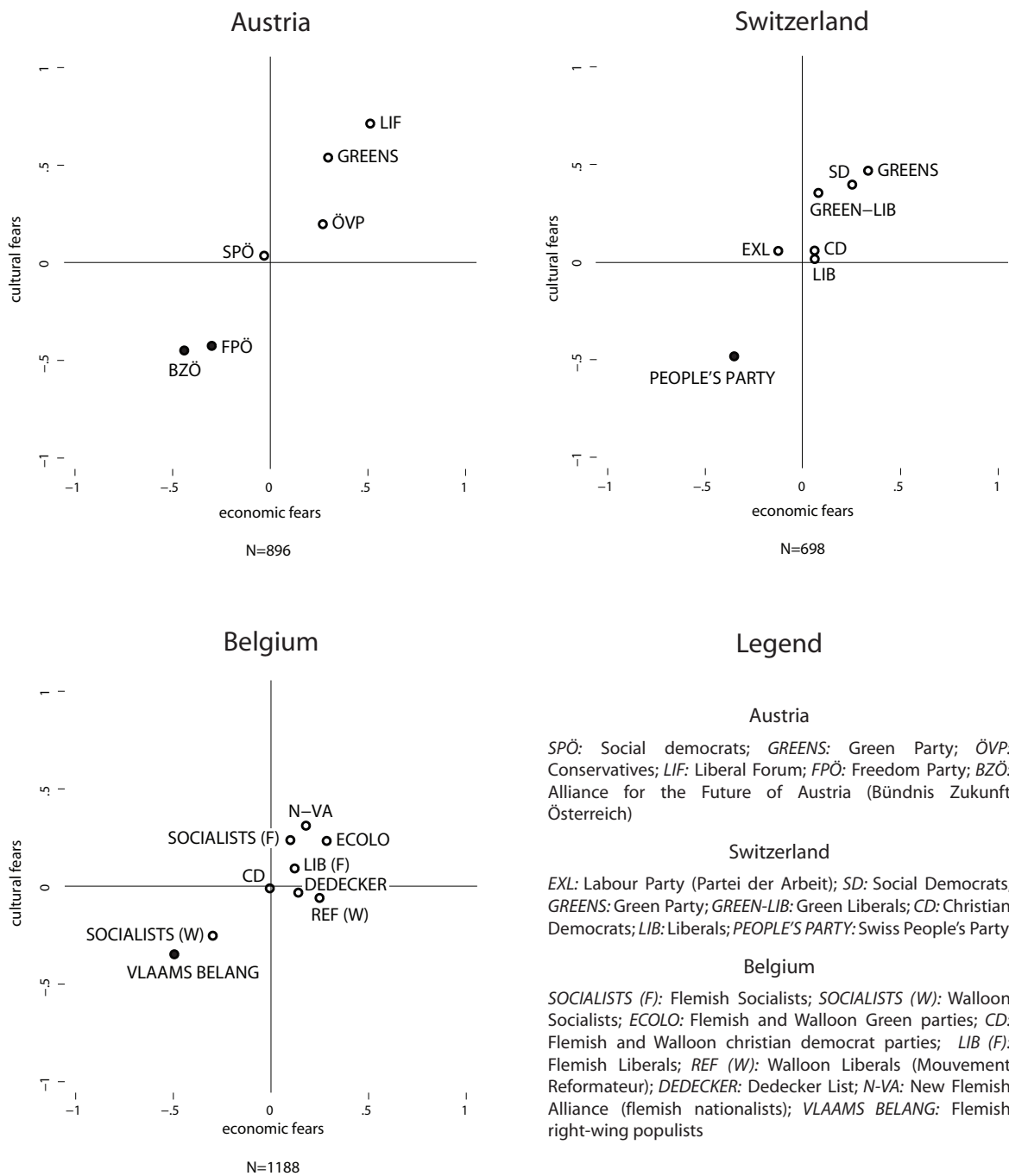


Figure 2: The structuring of economic and cultural fears regarding the EU by party choice – Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium

Finally, the configuration in *Belgium* confirms the pattern prevalent in the preceding two countries, but with an additional nuance. While the right-wing populist Vlaams Belang rallies Eurosceptic voters in the Flemish part of the country, as we would expect, the Socialists mobilize a similar electorate in Wallonia. In the absence of a viable extreme right challenger in this part of the country, Eurosceptic voters, who in other contexts would opt for a party of the extreme populist right, support the Socialists. In Flanders, on the other hand, the Vlaams Belang occupies the corresponding political space. Treating the Flemish and the Walloon party systems as separate illustrates that left and right parties can to some degree serve as functional equivalents in the mobilization of Euroscepticism. However, as we shall see in a minute, this is only the case where there is *no competition* between left and right for Eurosceptic voters.

Although the cases of Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium provide evidence for the hypothesis that the extreme populist right mobilizes cultural Euroscepticism, the electorates of these parties also stand out for their fears related to the welfare state. Once more, this casts doubt on the extreme right's neo-liberal credentials, as claimed by Kitschelt (1995). Indeed, the two dimensions seem closely linked, as most electorates lie on a single line spanning from Eurosceptic to pro-European sentiments. A very similar fusion of cultural and economic Euroscepticism exists in *Greece* (results not shown). Here, however, it is the Communist party that rallies an electorate that is equally distinct in terms of economic and cultural Euroscepticism. According to my hypothesis, this is due to the lack of a right-wing populist party integrating cultural Euroscepticism into its defense of traditional values and communities. As we shall see in the discussion of the next group of countries, the situation differs where a split is present not only on the political right, but also on the left of the political spectrum. Here, cultural and economic fears related to Europe are rallied by distinct parties, resulting in a division of labor in terms of the mobilization of Euroscepticism.

The presence of alternatives to the mainstream left and right: A division of labor in the mobilization of Euroscepticism

With the emergence of alternatives to the mainstream left and of extreme right parties on the right of the political spectrum in various countries across Europe, more and more party systems are now equipped to represent citizen's diverging views on European integration. While this was only the case in France some years ago (Bornschier forthcoming), party systems in the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland now also feature a split both within the left and the right. Figure 3 shows only the configurations of France, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Because the Finnish configuration is similar to that found in Denmark, it is not shown for reasons of space.

In *France*, the voters of the Communist PCF and of the various parties of the extreme left stand out for their economic fears, while the Front National mobilizes the hard core of cultural Eurosceptics. Two national-conservative formations, "Hunting, Fishing, Nature, and Tradition" and "Movement for France" (grouped together under CPNT/MPF) compete with the Front National in rallying cultural Euroscepticism. The mainstream left and right occupy predictable positions and differ more strongly in their economic than in their cultural anxieties, while the heirs to the traditionally pro-European Union for French Democracy (UDF) – François Bayrou's "Modem" and the "New Centrist Party" – harbor the electorate most confident with the EU. Overall, the distribution of electorates in the two-dimensional space is curvilinear, and the electorates of the Eurosceptic formations of the extreme left and right are clearly distinguishable.

The situation is similar in *the Netherlands*, where the voters of Geert Wilder's Freedom Party and those of Rita Verdonk's Group ("Proud of the Netherlands"), both spin-offs from the liberal-conservative VVD, profess distinctive levels of cultural Euroscepticism. The Socialists, on the other hand, do not differ from the mainstream left in their cultural concerns.

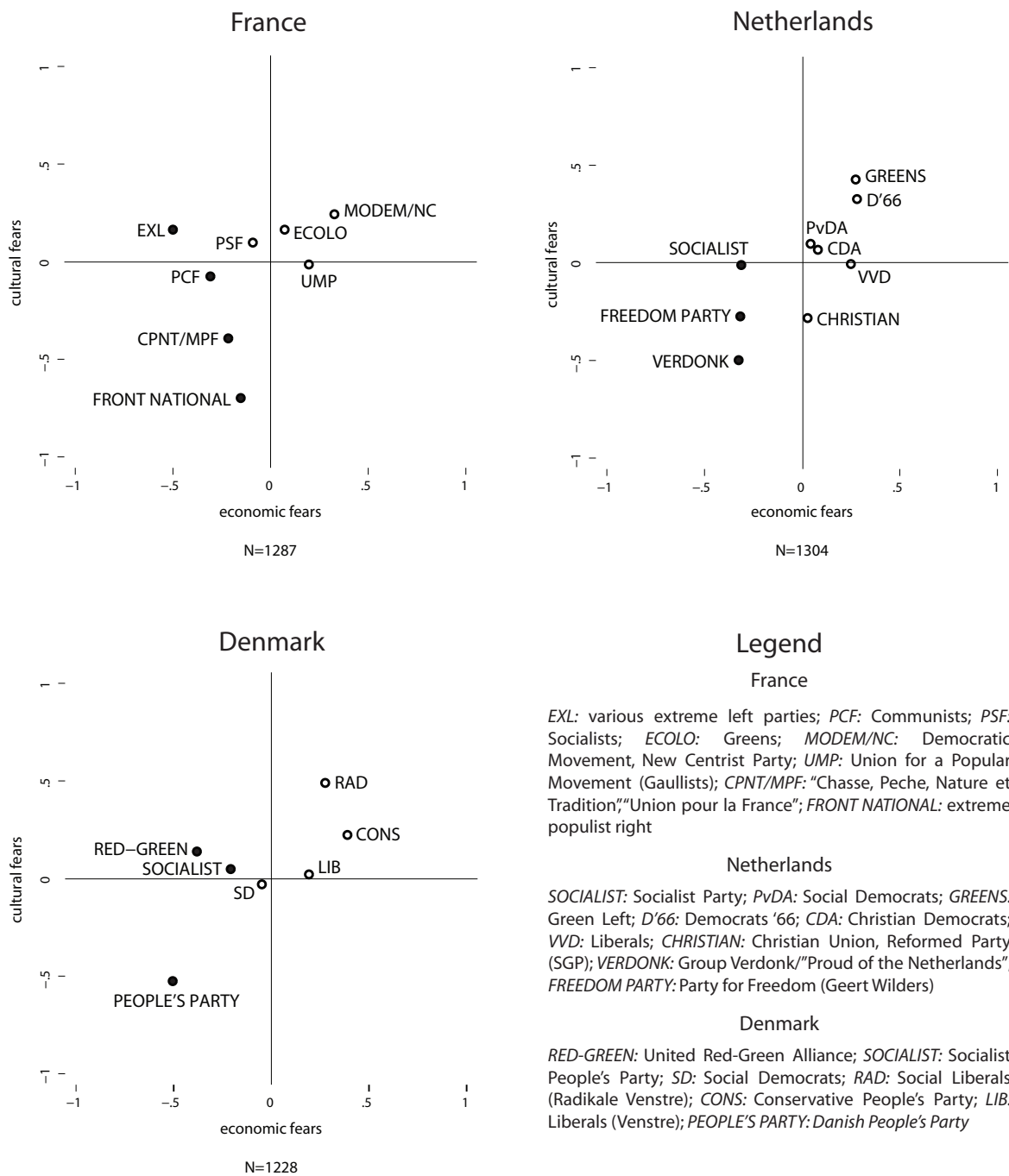


Figure 3: The structuring of economic and cultural fears regarding the EU by party choice – France, the Netherlands, and Denmark

Rather, they seem to present a clear alternative for those fearing that the Netherlands will be forced to cut back on its welfare state as a consequence of EU membership. While the mainstream parties – the Worker’s Party (PvdA), the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the liberal-conservatives (VVD) – do not rally voters that stand out in terms of their attitudes regarding Europe, D’66 and Green voters appear particularly pro-European.

Denmark presents an especially interesting case since an earlier analysis showed the electorates of the Socialists and the Left-Green Alliance to be concerned not only over the implications of European integration for the Danish welfare state, but also about their identity and culture (Bornschiefer forthcoming). This situation has changed in the late 2000s, concomitant to the emergence of the Danish People’s Party and its mobilization of a distinctively Eurosceptic electorate in cultural terms, as Figure 3 shows. While this goes hand in hand with a concern over the economic integration, the electorate of the populist right is situated at a considerable distance from left-wing voters who see the Danish welfare state in danger due to European integration. The Red-Green Alliance and the Socialists, on the other hand, differ mainly from the centrist Social Democrats along the economic dimension. All in all, the position of Danish party electorates differs considerably along both dimensions, and parties seem to have clear profiles with respect to EU-issues. These positions are in line with the location of party voters along the national economic and cultural dimensions of conflict.

Cases with a weak politicization of Euroscepticism

Although electorates now differ considerably in their orientations regarding the EU in many countries, Europe has still had a quite limited impact in a other party systems. This can either be the case due to a lack of alternatives to the mainstream left and right, or because outsider parties simply have made no effort to attract voters that disagree with the mainstream parties’

pro-European consensus. Figure 4 shows voters' European orientations in Spain, Ireland, and Germany.

In *Spain*, where Figure 1 showed identity-related fears to be relatively widespread and to prevail over economic concerns, the lack of an alternative to the mainstream right means that there is no party to mobilize cultural Euroscepticism. On the other hand, an alternative exists to the Socialist Workers' party, namely, the United Left (Izquierda Unida). However, this party seems to have made no effort to attract economic Eurosceptics. As a result, the electorates of the major parties lie very close to one another close to the center of the distribution. While the Spanish party system also features a number of regionalist parties, their electorates cannot be represented due to a limited number of observations. The *Portuguese case* is basically similar to that of the other countries in this group, and especially Spain, and for this reason is not shown. Here, too, there is only a modest differentiation between electorates along both dimensions, despite the presence of a divided left that could, in principle, mobilize economic Euroscepticism.

The *Irish configuration* also shows a very limited differentiation between electorates in terms of their outlooks regarding Europe. Given the strong Euroscepticism evidenced in the defeat of the Lisbon treaty, and to the widespread fears over the loss of identity and culture shown in Figure 1, this is rather surprising. Parties seem unable or unwilling to adopt a clear position with respect to Europe in line with their ideological position. While there is thus a peculiar absence in the mobilization of Euroscepticism, we see in Figure 4 that the same is not true of the strongly pro-European camp: Green voters, in line with the convictions generally held by the followers of this party family, stand out for being unconcerned about the implications of European integration.

Finally, *Germany* to some degree represents a puzzle. Fears concerning the welfare state are widespread in the German public, as we have seen. What is more, with the Left Party, the

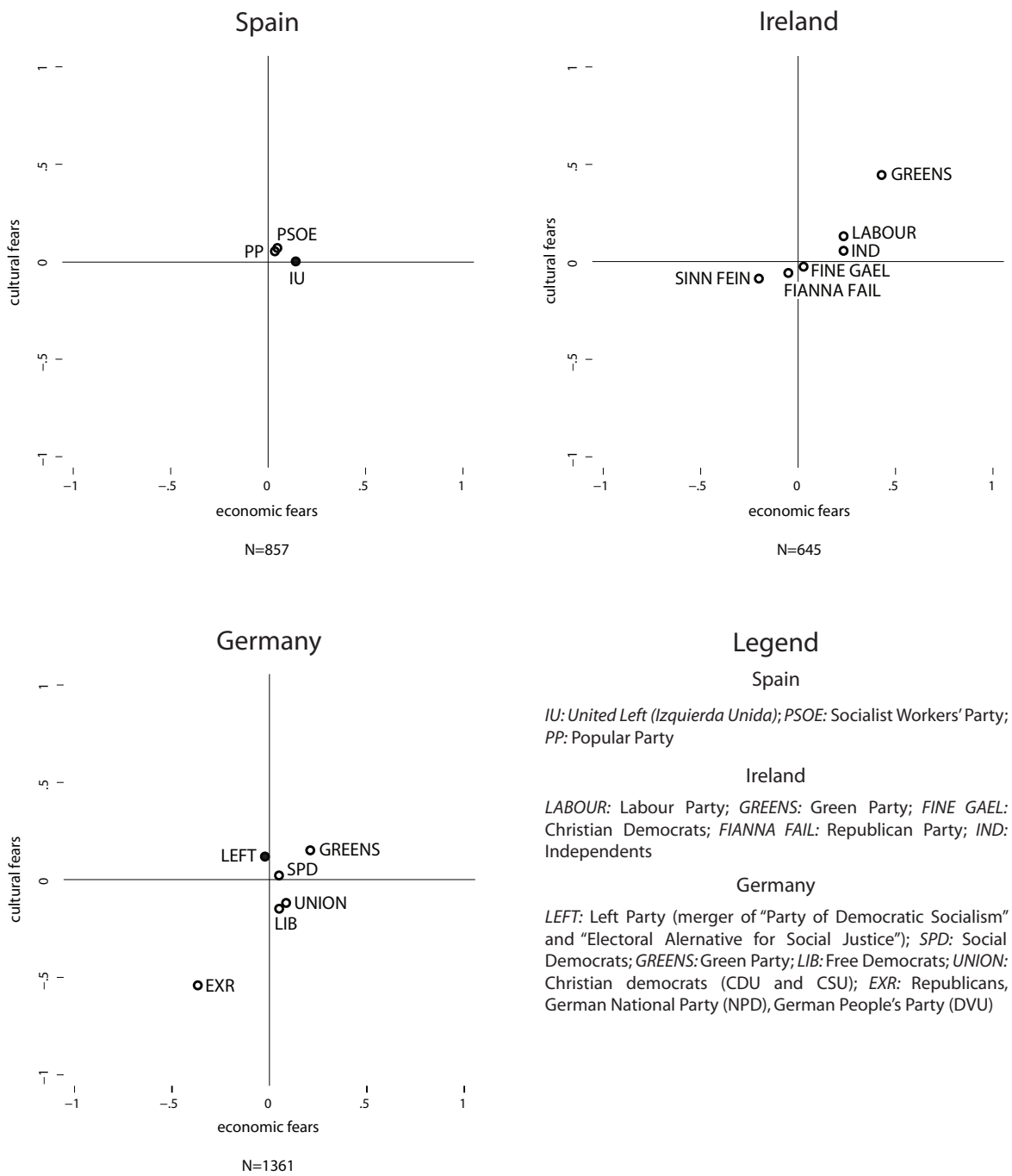


Figure 4: The structuring of economic and cultural fears regarding the EU by party choice – Spain, Ireland, and Germany

party system features a party predisposed to mobilize these concerns, yet the electorates of the Social Democrats and of the Left Party differ little along the economic dimension of European integration. The cultural potential, on the other hand, is rather limited in Germany, as Figure 1 shows, and there is only a modest difference between the Union parties and the left in this respect, while the Greens again rally the most pro-European electorate. The extreme right attracts voters who are quite distinct from those of the other parties in exhibiting strong identity-related fears. However, this electorate is much smaller than that of the populist right in other countries. Because of their outmoded program and their ties to the fascist past, the parties of the extreme right are highly unlikely to attract more than the hard core of xenophobic authoritarians (Bornschieer 2010b). Overall, the Eurosceptic potentials therefore remain largely unmobilized in Germany.

Conclusion: Summary and Implications for Democratic Representation

In this paper, I have derived predictions on Eurosceptic mobilization based on parties' ideological credentials, and their capacity to credibly offer an alternative to the direction European integration has taken thus far. Because the EU is the project of the governing parties, mainstream parties of the left and right do not differ significantly in their posture regarding the integration process, and harbor electorates that are heterogeneous in their preferences, and thus on average quite centrist. As Mair (2007) has pointed out, the mainstream parties' strategy has been to de-politicize integration and thereby to deliberately "sedate" Franklin and van der Eijk's (1996, 2004) "sleeping giant", the Eurosceptic potential prevalent in European societies.

At least at the national level, Europe has not triggered the emergence of parties exclusively taking issue with European integration. However, the number of party systems predisposed to represent differing orientations regarding the EU has increased with the emergence of new right-wing populist parties, as well as the more recent successes of parties off the left-wing mainstream. Right-wing populist parties have taken an increasingly Eurosceptic stance because they defend a conception of community and justice that fits uneasily with the establishment of supra-national political authority in the EU. The opposition of those supporting parties off the mainstream left is rooted in these voters' state-interventionist credentials that fit uneasily with the route market integration has taken in the EU. They have thus come to denounce the mainstream parties' claim that there is no alternative to the policy imperatives deriving from the European level, including liberalizing policies and the reduction of budget deficits.

Among the fifteen old member states of the EU, only France exhibited a dual split within the left and the right of the political spectrum a decade ago, but we now find a similar situation in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Finland. While the economic and cultural implications of European integration are theoretically distinct, in the minds of voters, they turn out to be rather closely related, as the empirical analysis has revealed. Nonetheless, this paper shows that it is fruitful to look separately at the cultural and economic dimensions of voter orientations regarding Europe. Hence, the opportunity to choose, and the ensuing processes of reciprocal cuing between parties and voters, results in the extreme populist right primarily mobilizing cultural Euroscepticism, while the electorate of the extreme left stands out for its concern over the national welfare state. Consequently, the configuration of the party system is crucial in determining not only *whether* Euroscepticism is mobilized, but also *how* it is mobilized. It can be mobilized in economic terms, in cultural terms, or the two aspects can be meshed. The analysis clearly underlined the autonomous role of politics in the

manifestation of latent political potentials: There is no clear relationship between the presence of Eurosceptic attitudes in the population and their political manifestation in the party system.

These findings have important implications for the legitimacy of the EU and for the future of the integration process. If preferences over Europe were to cut across national dimensions of conflict, then parties mobilizing Euroscepticism would be likely to represent a principled opposition against the integration project. What is more, congruent representation along the European integration dimension would diminish the quality of representation along the lines of conflict salient at the national level. In reality, however, the two logics of opposition against the EU map onto the economic and cultural dimensions of conflict prevalent in national party systems across Western Europe, favoring democratic representation. Discussions over the future shape of the European Union could therefore easily come to form part of national political conflicts. Debates concerning the proper extent of market regulation and over social integration can simply be extended to the European realm. Thus, rather than engaging in unproductive take-it-or-leave-it debates over Europe, parliaments and publics could discuss *which kind of Europe* they can agree on. Presumably, this would be one of the most promising roads to legitimizing the European project. The analysis presented in this paper shows that at least in the old EU-member states, party systems are ready to structure debates of this kind. In an increasing number of countries, citizens are given the chance to choose parties that mirror their preferences over Europe. Why, then, do we not see more conflict and more public discussion over Europe?

Presumably, the problem does not lie at the European level, as there might not even be a large representation deficit in the European parliament: If national and European policy dimensions are intrinsically related, as I have argued, and since national parties join together in European party federations with other parties that share their core ideologies (McElroy and Benoit 2007, 2010), the EP probably mirrors citizen preferences quite well. Of course it may

be a source of malaise that citizens are unaware of this fact. Given voters' levels of cognition, van der Brug and van der Eijk (1999) note that any representation that exists in the EP is more the effect of coincidence than of deliberate choices on the part of voters. However, the European level might not be the one best suited to promote debates over the future of Europe, since the European parliament is responsible for everyday policy-making, while constitutive issues are decided on by national governments in the council of ministers and the European council (Mair 2000). It is national politicians who decide about the future of the integration process. Thus, differing options as to the shape of the European polity – whether it should come to constitute a federal system or whether it should be loosened to resemble a “Europe of nations”, as the populist right would have it – must be presented to voters at the national level. Similarly, different conceptions of economic governance must be disputed at that level as well, as a change of direction would require the modification of the treaties.

In fact, the weakest link is probably that between popular preferences in EU matters and national elites, dampening conflict on Europe. First of all, as Mair (2000) has argued, the personnel in Bruxelles consists of politicians elected at the national level, and the lack of competition for office at the European level is likely to make voters apathetic. Furthermore, voters are unable to see a connection between their voting choices and the decisions in the council of ministers or the European council due to the lack of transparency in the decision-making of these institutions. Thus, neither citizens, nor their national representatives, nor the European parliament can take sides in disputes within these bodies, for example in the case of a conflict between center-left and center-right governments in economic policy-making. What is more, these bodies are highly unrepresentative due to an in-built majoritarian bias. As Manow and Döring (2008) show empirically, the council of ministers has a pro-integration leaning as compared to national legislatures. This is due to the fact that Eurosceptic parties do not govern, and thus are not represented in the council of ministers or in the European

council. As the authors note, this finding runs counter to the received wisdom picturing the Council as the bulwark of national interest.

Thus, for all the potential representation of diverging preferences over Europe that this paper has put in evidence, the institutional context of policy-making at the European level serves to limit the formation and reproduction of political alignments structured by contrasting visions of Europe. The consequence is that national publics use referenda to voice their concerns over European integration. This makes it difficult for elites to understand what the reasons for public discontent are, and it does not help to propose the same treaties again until majority support is ensured. Referenda thus do not serve to bolster the legitimacy of the EU. It would be more promising to risk the politicization of the EU at the national level. To achieve this, it would perhaps suffice to make discussions in the council of ministers public, allowing national parties and European party federations to take sides in conflicts over European integration.

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