

Party Policy and Party Group Affiliation in the European Parliament*

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Abstract

Partisan politics in the European Parliament is organized around transnational party groupings, made up of national EU political parties that have chosen to affiliate with EP party groups. In the 2004 EP elections, more than 260 national parties from 25 member states competed to elect 732 MEPs, who in turn were organized into seven main EP political groups. Despite a large literature on party politics in the EU, almost no previous work has addressed the political basis for the organization of EP party groups, relying instead on extremely general statements about party family. Our paper explores patterns of political affiliation and contestation in the EP, based on the policy platforms of EP groups and national parties. First, we construct empirical measures of policy positions and the structure of policy contestation in the EU, comparing the national and EU levels. Second, we explain national party affiliation with EP groups as a function of policy, comparing these to estimates of party family. Our data consist of national political party policy positions from the Benoit and Laver (2005) expert surveys, European party group policy positions from an original expert survey conducted by the authors, and additional original data compiled by the authors on party group and party family membership. Our findings suggest that a) policy competition in the EP is a straightforward extension of national party politics, and b) that national party organization into EP groups is driven by policy, explaining the fundamental underlying force driving EP group affiliation.

Key Words: Party Competition, Policy Positions, European Parliament, Expert Surveys, Party Switching.

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1. Two levels of European party competition

Party politics in the European Union is characterized by competition at two different levels. At the *national* level, political parties contest national and local elections before national electorates, competing for office and policy within their own national contexts. At a *transnational* level, national parties also compete in elections to the European Parliament (EP), the legislative body of the European Union elected directly since 1979. National political parties remain the basic organizational unit at both the national and European levels, controlling access to European ballots, representing policy, and organizing election campaigns. National political parties also form the primary constituent units of political or party groups in the European Parliament, the fundamental organizational unit of that body. These EP party groups have considerable influence over office and policy at the European level, and their goals may be compatible or conflicting with the interests of national member parties (Hix 2004). EP party groups also formulate their own policy positions and seek to control important positions and legislative goods at the European level, yet remain fundamentally conglomerations of national level parties (Kreppel 2004, 977). A key question then concerns the calculus of affiliation by which national political parties join or switch between EP party groups. On what basis do national political parties become members of EP party groups? If substantial switching of national parties between EP party groups occurs, what motivates switching? Directly addressing these questions is the main objective of this paper.

As an interesting and emerging phenomenon, party competition in the EU has received a great deal of scholarly attention, yet significant lacunae exist in explaining the full dynamic of competition at the national and European levels. Political competition in Europe is something traditionally studied at the national level. Studies of voter behavior and outcomes in European elections have mainly confirmed the national orientation of European elections, consigning European Parliament elections to “second-order” status, mainly extending national political contestation in symbolic referendums on governing party support (e.g. Marsh 1998; Reif and Schmitt 1980). Another research strand examines national party positions on European issues, focusing on what national factors explain party support for EU integration (e.g. Taggart 1998;

Dietz 2000; Marks, Wilson and Ray 2002; Ray 2003; Marks and Wilson 1999), whether party positions towards the EU are independent or integrated with positions on traditional left-right political issues (e.g. Steenbergen and Marks 2004), or whether national political parties have changed their policies to become more favorable to the EU (Daniels 1998; Moxon-Browne 1999). Another research strand focuses on the rise and organization of party groups or “europarties” at the European level (Hix 1996; Raunio 1997; Kreppel 2002) and the direct effects of these new organizations on national parties (e.g. Bardi 2002; Damm 1999; Dietz 1997; Niedermayer 1997).

Yet the dynamic of affiliation by national parties into EP party groups has received scant attention. Party groups in the EP have been analyzed in terms of voting cohesion (Hix, Noury, and Roland 2005; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999) but never, at least using systematic empirical evidence, in terms of the cohesion of their constituent national members. And while McElroy (2005) has examined individual MEP switching among party groups, no study to date has examined the basis on which national political parties decide to affiliate or disaffiliate with EP party groups. The conventional wisdom, usually no more than an unexamined assumption, is that national party affiliation in transnational party groups, including the European Parliament, is driven by historical tradition and a party’s set of core principles, usually represented by *party family*. Rooted in cleavage theory, party families categorize parties based on long-standing, “essential and indelible” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 24) issue associations and positions that arise from basic political cleavages in which they are grounded. EP party groups are then the organizational units formed to “broadly represent the policy positions of...the classic European ‘party families’.” Yet party family explanations of EP party groups cannot explain several striking outcomes. First, national parties (as well as individual MEPs) quite frequently switch EP party groups, while remaining constant in terms of party family. Second, national party members of EP party groups clearly have heterogeneous positions on multiple dimensions of policy, something which cannot be captured by broad categories of party family. Finally, many national parties do not belong to clearly definable party families, either because their organizational basis does not correspond to the classic cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967)—a situation characterizing

many of the parties from the 12 post-communist member states—or because they are formed primarily around new (single) issues such as Europe or immigration.

Our paper directly addresses this lacuna by constructing and testing an explanation of the nature of two-level political contestation and party affiliation in the European Union. In contrast with previous explanations of transnational party group membership, we base our investigation on empirical data on the policy positions of national political parties and of the EP party groups. Our expectation is that the fundamental driving force behind national party affiliation in European Parliament party groups will be policy coherence: National political parties will therefore affiliate with EP party groups whose policy platforms are closest to their own on the most important national policy dimensions. Conversely, EP party groups will also attempt to maintain a degree of policy coherence among their national party members. At the national level, we also expect national parties to experience pressures from the demands of contesting European elections to drive coherence in policy platforms developed for domestic and national elections. Furthermore, we expect pressures towards policy coherence from both national and EP levels to increase, as the European legislature grows in power and importance.

Our paper proceeds as follows. First, we characterize the organization of political competition at the national and European levels, especially the mechanisms available to EP party groups for maintaining policy coherence among its members. Next, we characterize the European policy space, comparing the association of policy dimensions at the national and European levels. We then examine the politics of EP party group choice and affiliation in the European Parliament, in the process highlighting the superiority of our policy position based approach compared with classic cleavage and party family based approaches. Finally, in order to contrast our policy-driven approach to previous explanations based on party family, we demonstrate the failure of policy positions to explain party family categories.

2. The Organization of Party Politics in the EP

Political Groups in the European Parliament

Just as with parties in national parliaments, political or *party groups* in the European Parliament (EP) form the backbone of legislative organization and decision making, acting as the gatekeepers to legislative amendments and the vast bulk of interruptive and procedural motions in the assembly. Unlike national parties, political groups in the EP do not form governments; however, political group size determines membership of committees and all other key Parliamentary decision-making bodies. Furthermore, the legislative function of the EP has steadily grown in importance. Some 60 per cent of national legislation originates at the European level (Nugent 2003 in Poguntke et. al. 2003), a further indication that national governments are yielding control to the European arena in a range of important policy domains.

Since its inception in 1957, political groups in the EP have been officially recognized in the rules of procedure, and have received financial support for administrative costs from the Parliamentary budget. Seven political groups currently exist in the EP, representing over 180 different political parties from the 25 member states. These political groups vary significantly in their degree of institutionalization. Several, such as the European People's Party (EPP) and the Party of European Socialists (PES), have been in existence for over 50 years but others, such as the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE) are much younger. The largest party, the EPP, has representatives from all 25 member states, comprising a total of 268 representatives from 42 different national political parties. At the other end of the spectrum, the Union for a Europe of Nations (UEN) has just 27 members from only 6 states of the EU. Table 1 provides details of the party groupings in the European Parliament, along with the number of national members they had in June, 2004.

[Table 1 about here]

Party groups in the EP have become increasingly cohesive and powerful over time. Levels of voting cohesion have been rising across parliamentary sessions, especially for the three largest political groups, despite increases in the size of the EP and the number of member states (Raunio, 1997; Hix et al 2005). The increasing importance of the political

groups in the EP is not unrelated to the concomitant increase in powers of the Parliament itself. Once a purely consultative institution, the EP is now a co-legislator with the European Council for the roughly 70 percent of legislation that is currently adopted within the co-decision framework.

In elections to the European Parliament, party groups adopt policy platforms and issue manifestos just as any national political party tends to. The largest groups translate their election manifestos into most European languages, for dissemination among voters of all member states. The ELDR, for instance, translated its 2004 European election manifesto into 17 languages, and the EPP into 19 languages. National parties are not obligated to adopt their EP group's positions when formulating their own manifestos, either for national or European elections, yet the availability of the EP party group manifestos makes any such differences quite clear. Yet once in the European Parliament, MEPs elected by national parties are organized into EP party groups, who are then issued voting instructions by MEPs and subject to the MEP party whip. Party groups have mechanisms to punish MEPs who vote against the party group instructions, whether on individual initiative or (more likely, see Hix 2004) because of national party instructions. Party groups may demote members from important committee or rapporteur positions as punishments (McElroy 2005) or at an extreme may even expel MEPs from their party groups (**verify**). Strong divergences in policy positions between national member parties and the EP party groups could therefore cause consistent conflicts between national party and EP party group voting positions. Hix's (2004, 208) analysis of roll-vall votes from the 1999-2004 Parliament, for instance, for instance, showed that 10.3% of MEPs disobeyed their party group's instructions in order to vote with their national party. MEPs nonetheless vote more often along party group lines than along national lines, however, and this cohesion has increased over time (Hix, Noury and Roland 2005; Attina 1990). Consequently, the high and increasing cohesion of MEP voting behaviour suggests that the policy cohesion of national party members of EP party groups—policy cohesion measured independently from voting behavior, that is—should also be high.

National party membership in EP party groups

At the national level, political parties continue to fulfill all of the classic functions of political parties, including representation, government formation, and articulation of policy platforms. Parties not only contest national elections, however, they also contest European elections. The overwhelming majority of viable European candidates are recruited and sponsored by national political parties, who act as the principal gatekeepers to the European electoral arena (Mair 2000, 38). National parties also join EP party groups, usually as a bloc.¹ In European elections, most national parties issue European election manifestos targeted specifically at their national electorates. These national party, European manifestos stand alongside the European election manifestos of the EP party groups with which they are affiliated. (Appendix B provides a full listing of which national parties were affiliated with which EP groups in June 2004.)

Because of these different broadcast venues for a national party's policy platform, we expect that parties will attempt to minimize the incongruence between their policy positions represented in the national and European arenas. When it comes to EP party group policy positions on issues of the greatest domestic importance, national parties will attempt to steer these, when possible, toward their own most preferred policies. National parties will also be motivated to become members of party groups whose policy platforms are closest to their own.

One characteristic of national party policy positions is that they change, sometimes dramatically, over time. Detailed studies of manifesto content, through the Comparative Manifestos Project, have documented significant movement in party positions by major parties in the post-war period (Budge and Klingemann 2001). If political parties affiliate with EP party groups on the basis of policy congruence, then movement of national party positions implies that EP party group membership should also change over time. Indeed, studies of party switching in the European Parliament have shown just this: that EP party group composition is quite dynamic. Not only is are EP groups characterized by a high frequency of party switching (McElroy 2003), but also much of this switching occurs when national

¹ Some exceptions exist, for instance French MEPs from *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* divided between the EPP and UEN in the 1999-2004 Parliament.

political parties decide to change EP group affiliations, bringing all their MEPs along with them. Table 2 documents some notable party switches in recent EP sessions. The Democratic Social Democratic Party (PSD) in Portugal, for instance, switched from the Liberal LDR party group to the European People's Party (EPP) in 1994. We are still compiling full data on national party switching from the period 1979-2004, but preliminary evidence suggests that 40% of all national member parties have switched EP party groups at one point or another.

Shortcomings of the Party Family Explanation of Party Group Affiliation

As an explanatory variable, party family has serious shortcomings when it comes to explaining the dynamics of national party affiliation with EP party groups. First, party family is an essentially static characterization, while national party policy, EP party policy, and (most importantly) EP group affiliation are clearly dynamic phenomena. Party competition in the EP changes yet families do not, since party families are defined by “essential and indelible” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 24) issue associations and positions that arise from the basic political cleavages in which they are grounded. Families do not change, in other words, although policy positions and political affiliations clearly do. In Hix and Marsh's (2005) coding of party family—which we use for our analysis of party family below—they observe that their party family variables do not change over time, and they do not expect party family to change between elections. Our previous observation that EP party group membership does change between elections, therefore, implies that party family is unable to explain the full picture of party group membership.

Second, the very notion of party family does not carry over well into the young party systems of the nearly third of EU's member states that emerged from one-party communism just 15 years before joining. In Hungary, for instance, the Christian Democratic KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) has been characterized as populist, the populist MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) has been classified as Christian Democratic, and the (originally) liberal Fidesz (Federation of Young Democrats, later Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party) allegedly changed into a populist, right-of-center party. Attempting to classify party families in Poland—where even keeping track of the current list of parties and party names is not for the faint-hearted—is even more problematic. In short, party family categories

developed from cleavage patterns in Western European democracies mean something very different—if anything at all—when applied to the eight post-communist EU members.

Finally, even in Western European party systems, party family is only a general category and often masks important differences in policy positions among its members, especially on “new politics” issues such as the environment and Europe. Party family may combine with “new politics” cleavages to summarize political parties’ ideological orientations (Marks, Wilson, and Ray 2002, 586), but it still forms an extremely poor measure of multidimensional policy positions, especially when superior measures are available.² Families may explain the circumstances of a party’s birth, in other words, but they cannot what parties go on to do when they grow up, especially in a world as strange and new as the European Union.

3. Data: Policy Positions of Parties and Party Groups

The data used in this paper come from expert surveys of the policy positions of European party groups conducted by the authors from April to June 2004, and on expert surveys of the policy positions of European national parties reported in Benoit and Laver (2006). The survey of the EP party group positions is extensively reported in McElroy and Benoit (2005). The EP survey of experts was conducted from April to June 2004, just before the June 2004 elections to the newly expanded European Parliament. The survey solicited 36 experts on the European Union and the European Parliament, obtaining a total response of 24 or 67%.

Each party group was scored a 20-point scale presenting two extremes of policy. Substantive policy dimensions covered in the survey included a set of four “core” dimensions deployed in every country in the Benoit and Laver data: increase spending v. reduce taxes; the relative liberalism of “social” policy; pro-growth v. pro-environmental policy; and pro- v. anti-deregulation. Also included were a set of three questions about EU integration covering party stances towards the scope of EIU authority, national control versus federalism, and approach towards collective security. A full list of the question wordings and dimensions is provided in Appendix A. Following the Benoit and Laver (2006) methodology, we also measured the relative policy salience of each dimension to each political group. The results were therefore easily comparable to the Benoit and Laver data, which we employed for all

² Would it be worthwhile referring to the multinomial logit results here from the Grenada paper?

measures of party policy at the national level for the EU-25 countries, covering a total of 146 of the 182 EU member state parties affiliated with EP party groups in June 2004 (see Appendix B for a full listing).

4. The European Policy Space

Expectations

Before we compare national party positions to positions on the same issues of the transnational party groups, we should first establish that national and European parties inhabit the same general policy space. While some have expected that European-level issues should be confined to matters relating to the institutional and political development of the EU itself, such as the CFSP or common currency (Thomassen and Schmidt 1997), we expect that the more the Union integrates the more we should expect it to be concerned with the issues that define national party competition, like any other federal entity. Indeed, suggests Hix (2004), the closest analogy for parliamentary parties in the EP is to parties in the United States Congress, with different U.S. states represented by state delegations formed into political parties at the federal level. Transnational parties, just as do national political parties in the U.S. federal system, structure legislative behavior for political actors with different constellations of policy preferences but located in the same fundamental political space (cf. Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991). If this portrayal of the two-level system of European political competition holds, then we should expect to observe that the policy space at the national and translation level have a basically similar structure.

In other words, we should expect issues that do relate to the “European” level to be fully integrated into national level competition. Furthermore, policy competition at the European level should reflect policies formulated and contested at the national level, in a similar dimensional space. As the transnational, European political arena grows in significance, we expect the organization of its party and policy competition in its representative institutions—primarily the European Parliament—to reflect policy representation at the national level. At the same time, policy contestation at the national level will also become more similar at the European level, in response to the transnational organization of policy contestation from the

European arena, such as membership in European party groups who formulate their own Europe-wide policy platforms. We expect, therefore, that the organization of policy contestation at the national level will gradually converge into similar patterns of policy competition on main issues, as the growth of the European project of political and economic integration further creates a common policy environment. By convergence we do not mean that different national party positions will converge, but rather that the *organization* of policy contestation will converge, as a common *dimensions* of policy emerge on which parties compete in different countries at both the domestic and European levels.

The Consistency of National and European Policy Positions

Our first comparison concerns the match between policy positions held by national member parties, and those held by their party groups in the European Parliament. Table 3 summarizes the mean positions of both the EP groups and the mean of the national member party positions on six specific dimensions of policy, plus a general left-right dimension. The results show a generally good correspondence of positions between EP groups and the mean of their national member parties. On the general Left-Right dimension of policy, the party groups are ranked in the same order at both levels, with the positions between party groups and national party means statistically indistinguishable for every party grouping. Similar results were observed for Taxes v. Spending, the most important economic dimensions of policy, and for EU Authority and Immigration, the two most salient transnational issues. The most important exceptions on these dimensions were for the GUE, whose position was more pro-Integration than the mean of its national member parties, and the UEN and EDD, whose positions were considerably more extreme anti-Integration than the mean of their national member parties. On the other two dimensions, environmental policy and social liberalism, there was excellent correspondence between party group positions and the means of their national member party positions.

[Table 3 about here]

For the general Left-Right dimension, Figure 1 depicts the correspondence between party groups and member parties graphically. Each dot represents the mean policy position, and the bars a 95% confidence interval. The mean positions for the EP party groups come from the

expert placements, while the mean positions for the national member parties come from the mean expert placements of the parties in each party group. The left-right space appears to consist of four sets of party groups. First, the GUE and Verts appear on the far left, with a small degree of overlap in their 95% confidence intervals. Second, the PES inhabits the moderate centre left. Third, two political groups, the ELDR, and the EPP form a grouping with a substantial degree of overlap just right of the center. Finally, the UEN and the EDD occupy the solid right position, with their positions being statistically indistinguishable.

In terms of comparing the national and European levels, Figure 1 reinforces the correspondence observed in Table 3. Of all the party groups, only the EPP position differs between the European and national levels: The EPP in the EP seems more centrist than the mean left-right position taken by the national parties making up the EPP.

[Figure 1 about here]

Politics in the European arena has been described as two-dimensional, consisting of not just a left-right dimension but also an orthogonal dimension of EU integration versus national sovereignty (Hix and Lord 1997; Marks and Steenbergen 2004). Figure 2 plots national and euro-parties in this two-dimensional space, using the placements from the EU Authority dimension. Each party or party group is represented by a circle whose size is proportional to the party size. More important differences emerge, especially on the European dimension, namely the more pro-Integration stance of the GUE than its median national party member, and especially the more anti-Integration stance of the UEN than its median national party member. For the other party groups, however, the euro-party position corresponds neatly to the median national member party position. For the left-right dimension, Figure 2 shows the same information as in Figure 1, albeit in a different fashion.³

[Figure 2 about here]

It deserves reiteration that the policy positions of the national party members and the EP group positions are drawn from completely separate expert surveys, ranked by different experts, often in different languages.

³ The EDD was excluded from the analysis as we had only 3 expert surveys at the national level for their constituent parties.

A Common Structure of Policy Contestation

The “Europeanization” of political contestation does not imply a convergence of issue positions among national actors, but rather a convergence of the organization of policy contestation between the European and national arenas. In other words, we expect to observe that political dimensions are associated with one another in the same ways across both arenas. The expert survey positions provide a means to map the organization of policy contestation, using the technique of factor analysis to analyze the correlation of issue positioning with underlying factors. By estimating the number of these factors and analyzing their principal components, we can draw conclusions about and compare political contestation in both the national and European arenas.

We view the issue of the number of latent factors and their principal components as open-ended questions to be explored. Previous research into the dimensionality of policy competition in the European political space draws mixed conclusions about whether the EU policy space is uni-dimensional or instead consists of two or possibly more dimensions. The EP policy space has previously been described as uni-dimensional with the traditional left-right or “regulation” dominating (Tsebelis and Garrett 2000; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999) or one-dimensional with geo-political pressures defining the principal axis of competition (Hoffman 1966; Moravcsik 1998). As noted above, however, other scholars describe the European policy space as consisting of two dimensions, a left-right dimension composed of economic and socio-political issues from the domestic arena, and an orthogonal dimension of EU integration versus national sovereignty (Hix and Lord 1997). Variations on the two-dimensional characterization relate to whether positions on EU integration are significantly correlated with left-right (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2001, Gabel and Hix 2004) or whether positioning on the two dimensions is independent.

[Table 4 about here]

In Table 4 we have used principal components factor analysis to group and separate the constituent policy dimensional scorings into orthogonal factors. In order to explore the issue of what policy dimensions were grouped with left and right, we also included the general left-

right dimension. We have analyzed policy contestation among four subgroups: EP party groups; all EU-25 national parties; the non-post-communist national parties; and post-communist national parties.⁴ In every analysis, we observe that two factors clearly emerge (having eigenvalues well above 1.0), with the first explaining between .60 and .49 of the total variance, and the two factors combined explaining between .78 and .85 of the total variance.

The bottom part of the table provides the varimax-rotated factor loadings for the constituent policy dimensions plus the general dimension of left-right, with the higher rotated loadings for each of the two factors highlighted in boldface. Unlike many exploratory factor analyses, these results show a remarkably unambiguous result: Left and right issues cluster into two orthogonal component sets, one related to classic national left and right issues from national party politics, and the second related clearly to EU issues. Moreover, the general left-right dimension is clearly associated with the first factor. In the analyses which include the left-right dimension, this variable loads very strongly with the first factor, which bundles together the classic economic dimensions of national-level left-right policy, including taxes v. spending, deregulation, and the environment. The second factor represents a clearly EU dimension, with parties grouping themselves independently into pro-integration stances on one hand, and Euro-skeptic positions on the other.⁵ Social policy is the only ambiguous variable, splitting between the two factors and even loading somewhat higher on the second factor in the national party analyses.

Some minor exceptions are visible with regard to social policy, which loads partly on the second factor in all cases, and primarily on the second factor in the case of post-communist parties. *Immigration* (and *Nationalism* for post-communist countries) also is associated with the second factor. This is not entirely surprising, however, since immigration and migration are closely associated with the expansion of the European Union among older member states, and the issue of nationalism with EU expansion among the post-communist countries.

⁴ All national party analyses use national parties (and their expert survey mean scores) as the units of analysis, while the EP party group analysis uses respondent placements of parties as the unit, since otherwise only 6 cases (for the 6 EP groups) could be analyzed. National parties were also weighted by their votes shares, while the EP scores were not, although tests using weighted factor analyses for the EP groups indicate almost no difference. Finally, French parties were not included in any national analyses since the Left-Right dimension was not used in the French expert surveys.

⁵ We have tested the robustness of these results in a variety of additional ways, such as excluding the left-right dimension from the factor analysis, and then regressing the left-right placements on the factor scorings. These results (not shown) strongly confirm those in Table 4.

[Figures 3 and 4 about here]

If the policy space is structured in the same way in both the national and European arenas, then we expect national and euro-parties to be located along the same underlying latent dimensions of policy. That this is in fact the case we observe in Figures 3 and 4. Figure 3 shows the agreement between the national and euro-parties scored on the first factor from model (4) of Table 4. Without having included Left-Right in the model, the first factor emerges as clearly corresponding to the general Left-Right dimension from the expert surveys. Furthermore, the EP party group scorings on this dimension lie squarely along its main axis. Only the UEN and the EDD are slightly outside of the main fitted line, and this is probably explained by their special definition as “anti-Europe” euro-parties.

In Figure 4, we plot the scored second factor against the EU Authority positions from the expert surveys. Once again we see that the second latent dimension of policy contestation clearly corresponds to positions on European integration, and that the patterns of the euro-parties are entirely typical of that of their national member constituents.

The conclusion is that political Left and Right have a stable and common meaning in the European context, and that this meaning does not differ substantially between the European Parliament and national arenas. “Left and right” in the European Union means primarily a bundle of economic issues related to taxes v. spending, deregulation, and relative priority for economic growth versus environmental protection. Secondly, there is also a partial association with positions on social liberalism and immigration policy, but these latter two dimensions are also associated with a position on pro- versus anti-European integration. Pro versus anti-European integration forms the second dimension of politics, and this holds true for both EP party groups and national EU parties.

From these results we draw two conclusions. First, political contestation in both the European and national arenas occurs on two broad dimensions. The first represents the classic national policy issues associated with left and right, namely economic policy, as well as a bundle of relatively newer issues such as the environment and immigration. The second dimension consists of support for EU integration, relating directly to the authority and institutions of the European Union itself, as well as immigration policy and (partially) social

liberalism. Our results thus provide strong support for the two-dimensional model of policy competition, based on two orthogonal dimensions consisting on one hand of classic issues of left-right economic policy, and support for European integration on the other. These two latent factors explain more than three-quarters of the variance in party positions on specific policy dimensions in all of the models we tested.

The second major conclusion has to do with the remarkable similarity in results between the national and European arenas. The organization of policy contestation in the European arena almost perfectly matches that found in the national arenas, with only slight differences to be found regarding the relative association of immigration and social liberalism with the two factors. The European political space, in other words, bundles the same (primarily economic) left-right issues contested at the national level. In the context of this paper, we view these results as providing strong support for the idea of a similar policy space between the national and domestic arenas in EU politics.

The correspondence we observe between national party members and their EP group positions provides strong evidence that policy clearly matters in the constitution of parliamentary groups at the European level, although it is not definitive evidence of policy-driven affiliation, which we estimate using conditional logit models of membership in the next section.

5. Explaining EP party group affiliation

The results from the previous section suggest that the contested policy spaces at the national and European level are broadly similar. With this knowledge we proceed in this section to examine the basis on which national political parties choose to affiliate with political groups in the European Parliament. By comparing the distance between national political parties and their EP party groups, we expect to uncover a fundamental logic of policy coherence which drives national party affiliation at the European level.

Figure 2 from the previous section clearly showed that while the policy positions of euro-parties are generally close to their national members' median positions, there is nonetheless considerable heterogeneity within euro-party grouping. In each EP party group, there are clearly some national parties whose positions are far from their party group's. We

observed previously that the UEN's position on Europe was considerably more Euro-skeptic than most of its member parties. Conversely, the Greens (Verts) party group is more pro-Europe than its member parties. Finally, the wide scatter of points for the ELDR indicates the diversity of parties in this grouping, as evidenced by the wide spread of points on both dimensions. Some of the political groups do indeed cover a reasonably wide range of the political spectrum and clearly contain national parties within their ranks that are less ideologically compatible than others. It is quite possible, however, that a national party may be quite far from its political group mean on a given dimension but it may nonetheless still be the nearest EP party mean to their own ideal point. In what follows we map and explore this question using a discrete choice model.

To test the determinants of group affiliation further we have fitted a conditional logit regression model of party group choice to the absolute distance between a national party's policy position and the policy position of the EP group on the same dimension. The estimation is based on a discrete choice model, each national party choosing between J potential political groups in the EP. We utilize a conditional choice model as it is, in many situations in the social sciences with unordered dependent variables, the most preferred technique. In particular, the conditional choice model is preferable when a choice among alternatives involves functions of the alternatives rather than characteristics of the individual making the choice. The CL model allows the choice set to vary from case to case. Unordered choice models, such as the CL, can be motivated by a random utility model (Green 200:858). The corresponding utility function associated with the j th choice in this mixed model is given by

$$U_{ij} = z'_{ij}\alpha + x'_i\beta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where z_{ij} refers to the choice varying covariates and x_i refers to individual varying covariates

In our model the independent variable is purely choice-related, consisting of the absolute difference between the national party's mean point (on a given dimension) and the mean policy position of the political group under consideration. The variable, thus, takes on different values dependent on the response category for each national party.

$$\text{DISTANCE}_{ij} = |\text{EPparty}_j - \text{Nationalparty position}_i|$$

[Table 5 about here]

The results of the conditional logit model are presented in Table 5. The first model represents the results for all of the national parties represented in the EP in June 2004. Columns two and three differentiate between non post-communist and post-communist countries. Given the very recent membership of the national parties from post communist countries it is reasonable to expect more “noise” in this sample. There may be a learning curve when it comes to political group affiliation and it is not unusual to witness parties from new member states changing affiliation within the first couple of years of joining the EU. The coefficients on the model indicate the overall effect of the choice specific characteristics. For instance, *Tax Spending* measures the absolute distance between an observation (a national party) and a given political group on this dimension. Looking at column one we see that all of the variables are in the expected direction and five of the six are significant (*EU Authority*, *Left-Right*, *Social*, *Environment* and *Deregulation*) at the 0.05% level. In all three models, using only the measures of policy distance on the six dimensions chosen—and excluding any national, party, party family, electoral, size, or other variables of any kind—our simple model correctly predicted 69% of the party group memberships of the national parties.⁶

The coefficients on the CL model indicate the overall impact of the party specific characteristics on the likelihood of choosing a party. This effectively means that as the absolute distance of the national party’s mean increases from that of the European political group in question, the less likely this party is to be chosen. As the distance between a national party and an EP political group increases on the Left Right dimension, the less likely this party will affiliate with it (negative sign on the L-R variable). The nearer a Euro-group choice is to the individual political party the more likely it is to choose it. Increasing the distance by one unit for a given political group choice on the *Left-Right* dimension decreases the odds of choosing that party by a factor of .80 (20%). It is worth reiterating that these effects are

⁶ If we also consider as “correct” predictions those cases who were in effect too close to call – in other words whose probabilities were within two or even one standard error of their actual group – then this figure is substantially higher.

dependent only on the political group specific traits. Regardless of the individual characteristics of a national party, it will choose a political group that is ideologically consistent with its own policy positions. The results in column two and three are broadly similar to those for the full data set, though *Left-Right* and *Deregulation* are no longer significant predictors of Euro-party choice for the post communist parties, though both variables are in the predicted direction. These results for the post-communist countries are particularly striking when one bears in mind that these political parties had only joined the EP a mere two months prior. Policy clearly matters and drives political group affiliation in the EP.

[Table 6 about here]

In order to illustrate the sorts of predictions generated by the policy proximity model of party group affiliation, we list the “misfits” in Table 6. This table compares the EP party groups of each national party predicted by the model, to their actual EP party groups. It also compares the predicted conditional probability for both predicted and actual groups, along with a ratio of the two. The higher the ratio of the predicted to actual probability, the greater the misfit of the national party. Off the charts is the Partido Nacionalista Vasco in Spain, who is strongly (probability .83) predicted to be in the EPP but is instead in the almost (from the model) impossible situation of being in the Verts euro-party. The British Conservative Party is also predicted to belong in the similarly Euro-skeptic EDD, instead of the EPP where it maintains associate membership. In fact, all of the main British parties are predicted to be in euro-parties other than the ones of which they are actually members. While policy clearly acts as a fundamental attractor for national political parties, therefore, it does not – and can hardly be expected to – tell the entire story. As we see in the British case, some parties are “stuck” in policy inappropriate EP party groups for non-policy political reasons: Since the Labour Party is supposed to represent the working classes, it would be too politically damaging at home for it to join the Liberal party group, even if under Blair the Liberal group is more congruent with Labour’s policies. Likewise, it would be very difficult for the leader of the Liberal Democrats to explain to his domestic constituents why it was joining the Socialist euro-party group, since it is supposed to be liberal (in the European sense) rather than a party of the left and working

classes. Finally, for simpler political reasons, a party of major importance like the British Conservatives may have stuck with the EPP, despite its more EDD-like views, simply because the EDD is a marginal group in the European Parliament, and as such would not enjoy the same spoils to offer the large Conservative delegation as can the much larger EPP.

6. Policy positions and party families

In this paper our emphasis has been on the convergence of policy contestation between the national and European arenas, based on policy positions of national and European parties on multiple dimensions. A closely related concept found in previous work has examined this and related questions using the concept of *party family*, a categorization of parties based on long-standing, “essential and indelible” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 24) issue associations and positions that arise from basic political cleavages in which they are grounded. In the party family view of political parties, cleavages such as class, religion, and center/periphery location described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) combine with “new politics” cleavages to summarize political parties’ ideological orientations (Marks, Wilson, and Ray 2002, 586). These orientations filter party responses to new issues and have been used to explain such outcomes as party policy towards EU integration (e.g. Marks, Wilson, and Ray 2002).

One problem with the concept of party family as an operational variable, however, is that despite its wide use, the classification of party family remains underspecified. Despite years of research there exists no golden index of party family affiliations. While some parties—such as socialists—are easy to categorize (which may account in part for the over propensity of comparative studies of these parties), this unfortunately does not apply to the majority of parties. Much of these classifications depend on arbitrary decisions, and any comparison of party family indices will reveal quite significant, even startling, differences. This problem is exacerbated when one attempts to extend the concept of party family beyond its Western European base. For instance, there are large numbers of parties in Eastern Europe that cannot easily be classified in terms of party families either because they do not share an ideological heritage or associational links with their west European counterparts. There is much disagreement on what even constitutes a party family. For example do agrarian and centre

parties form one or two party families? Nonetheless, the associations between party family and policies towards European integration has been used to conclude that political contestation in the European arena is largely driven by cleavage patterns (Marks and Wilson 2000; Marks, Wilson, and Ray 2000).

Cleavages are essentially static sociopolitical phenomena, suggesting extremely stable party family categories. Our analysis thus far, however, points not to long-standing historical and sociopolitical orientations, but instead to more short-term and dynamic party policy positions as driving the process of Europeanization of European political competition. To compare the usefulness of party family with the multidimensional measures of policy employed here, we explore the policy similarities of party family. If policy positioning—shown clearly in the previous section to drive national parties' affiliation in the European arena—is poorly related to party families, then we will conclude that party family is problematic when used as a variable to explain the organization of political contestation. One of the main problems with the party family approach to classification is that it is static, we know that parties change policies but the party family assignment remains unaltered. Although a party that formed in the post war period has the words Christian Democrat in its title, this does not necessarily mean that it retains such a policy platform fifty years down the line. Some of these parties are probably now parties of the right while others are actually centrist.

In order to test if any of the main dimensions of competition in Europe bundle together in party families we fitted a multinomial logit regression to policy positions with the unordered party family as the dependent variable. This allows us to explore whether any of the main dimensions of competition in Europe (as identified in previous sections) can predict party family successfully. If Christian Democrats cannot be identified in terms of any of the main dimensions of competition in Europe, what possible leverage does the classification provide?

[Table 7 about here]

We use the party family index created in a recent study by Hix and Marsh (2005) as our dependent variable. This particular index was chosen due to its inclusion of all of the Eastern

European countries that are now represented in the EP.⁷ The formulation of the multinomial logit model is quite easy and the results of our analysis are presented in Table 6. Each parameter estimate is the predicted marginal effect of the explanatory variables (in this case policy position on one of five key dimensions of competition) on the log odds ratio of the six party families and the Socialists – the baseline category.

The parameter estimates in Table 7 demonstrate, intriguingly, that the principal dimension of competition in Europe, Left-Right, is not significant for a single party family. The only significant variable is the *Social* dimension (which represents attitudes on issues such as abortion and homosexuality) for parties classified as “Conservative” or “Christian Democrat” and the *Environment* for the Greens. There is not a single significant variable for the party families defined as “Right”, “Liberal”, “Regional” or “Left” (with Socialist as the base category), which poses problematic questions for those who see these party families as quite distinct. Furthermore, the coefficients for the most obvious and important dimensions of contestation, such as *Taxes v. Spending*, *Deregulation*, and *EU Authority* are not statistically significant for any party family. These results seem very clear: Party family is not systematically related to party positions on specific policy dimensions. We might correctly classify a Green party based on observing an extreme pro-Environment score. Likewise, we might correctly label a Christian Democrat or Conservative party based on their extreme opposition to liberal attitudes on homosexuality, euthanasia, or abortion. But based on other policy positions, then without knowing the historical origins and social context of party, we would be unable to determine party family any better than simply guessing. The conclusion is party family that is a static and ultimately uninformative summary of policy, and should be used only when more direct and informative measures of policy are unavailable.

8. Discussion

Our look at the organization of political contestation in the European Union has examined two arenas. In the European arena, represented by the directly election institution of the European Parliament, political contestation is centered around party groups, who control the

⁷ Results using the classification from Marks, Wilson and Ray (2002) of West European parties do not differ substantially.

organization of committees and other legislative resources, and formulate their own policy platforms for European elections. In the domestic national arena, national political parties remain both the main unit of political organization and important gatekeepers and actors to the European arena, recruiting most MEPs from their own ranks, and choosing with which EP party groups they will affiliate. Our findings show that political contestation, as measured by issue salience, issue bundling, and the calculus of party group affiliation, is substantially similar in both arenas. Even given the extraordinary national diversity of the national political systems of the expanded 25-member European Union—including eight states that were under communist control just 15 years before their first European elections in 2004—we find a convergence in the structuring of political contestation between the national and European arenas.

We also found strong evidence that political contestation in both arenas is broadly two-dimensional, consisting of a primarily economic left-right dimension alongside a distinct dimension of support for EU integration. This pattern was observed at the national level and reflected directly in the European Parliament.

In order to examine the relationship between national parties and their European Party parent groups we predicted EP group membership to the estimated policy distances between national parties and the EP groups they might have joined. The results strongly indicate that proximity of a party group to a national party's policy platform determines the likelihood that the national party will be affiliated with that EP group. Parties tend not to affiliate with party groups that are farther from their own preferred positions.

Finally, because national party positions, and probably also EP party group positions on policy, change over time, we expect the calculus of national party affiliation in the European arena to be dynamic rather than static. We feel that this explains why party family is a poor measure to apply to studies of political contestation in the EU, because party family is static rather than dynamic. As our results have also shown, party positions on policy, which drive our results for party affiliation in the European arena, are very poor predictors of party family.

Despite the fact that we have successfully demonstrated that policy underlies national party affiliation with transnational EP party groups – something never before systematically

examined in any literature – our picture has been essentially static rather than dynamic. Future research into the calculus of party affiliation in the European arena should focus on changes over time, especially national party switching between groups during the period 1979-2004. The authors are currently collecting this dataset, but the practical challenges are enormous (we have burned out at least two graduate students set to the task) and probably explain why this phenomenon has never before been systematically investigated. But the area of is sufficient theoretical and substantive importance (and graduate students thankfully plentiful enough) that the full dynamic picture deserves to be investigated.

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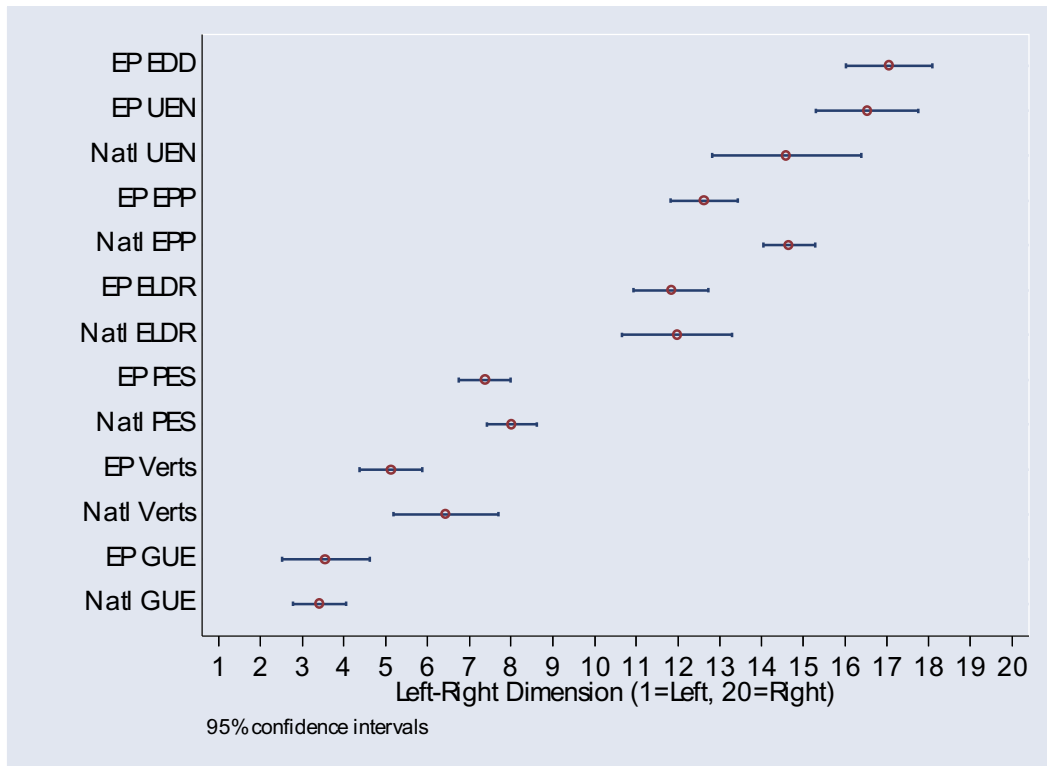


Figure 1. European Party Groups and National Members on the General Left-Right Scale

Data represent mean expert placements on left-right for EP groups, and weighted means of national party score means for national parties. Bars are 95% confidence intervals.

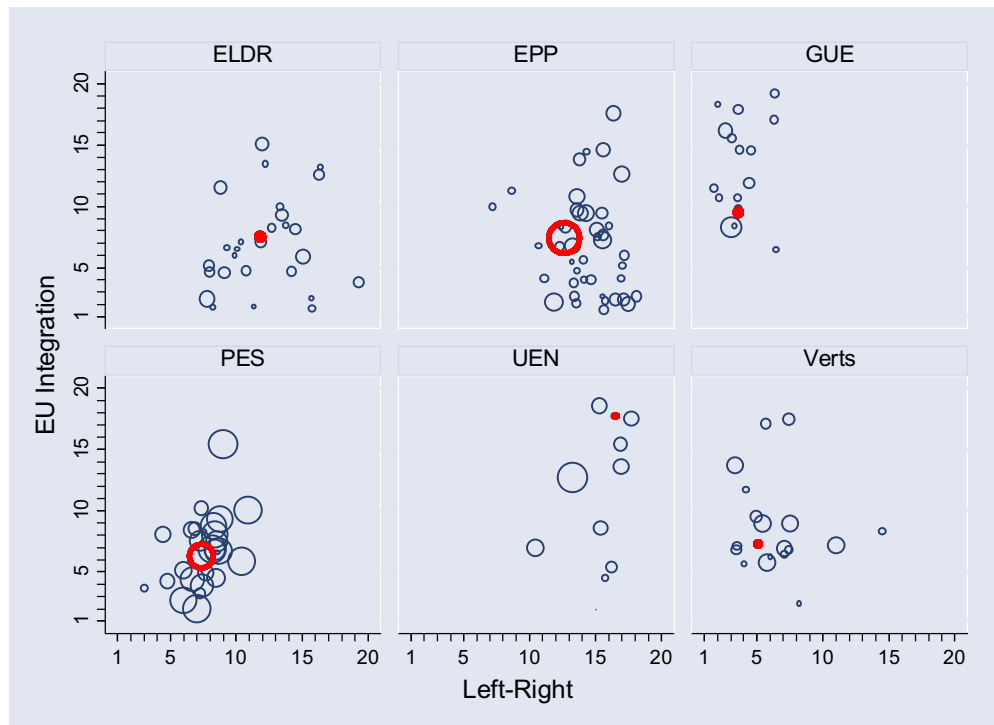


Figure 2. The Distributions of EP Party Group Positions and National Member Party Positions in Two Dimensions

Source: Benoit and Laver (2005) for national party left-right scores.
 EU integration is EU Authority, see Appendix A.

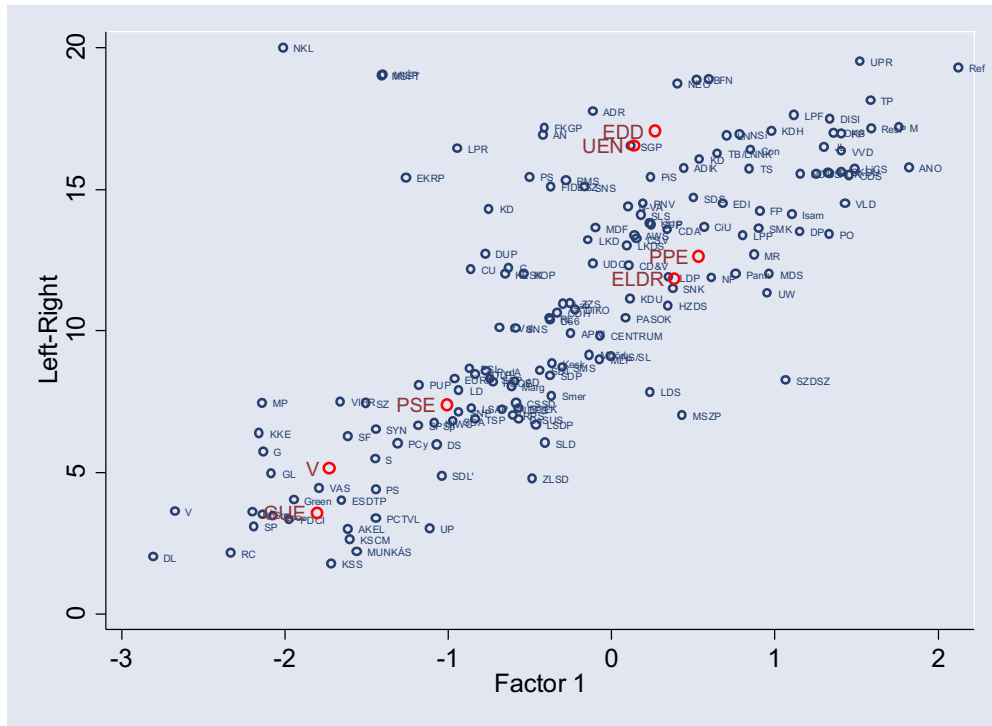


Figure 3. Relationship of First Factor to Independent Measures of Left-Right Positions. Red cases are the EP party groups. Factor scores are from Table 4, Column 4.

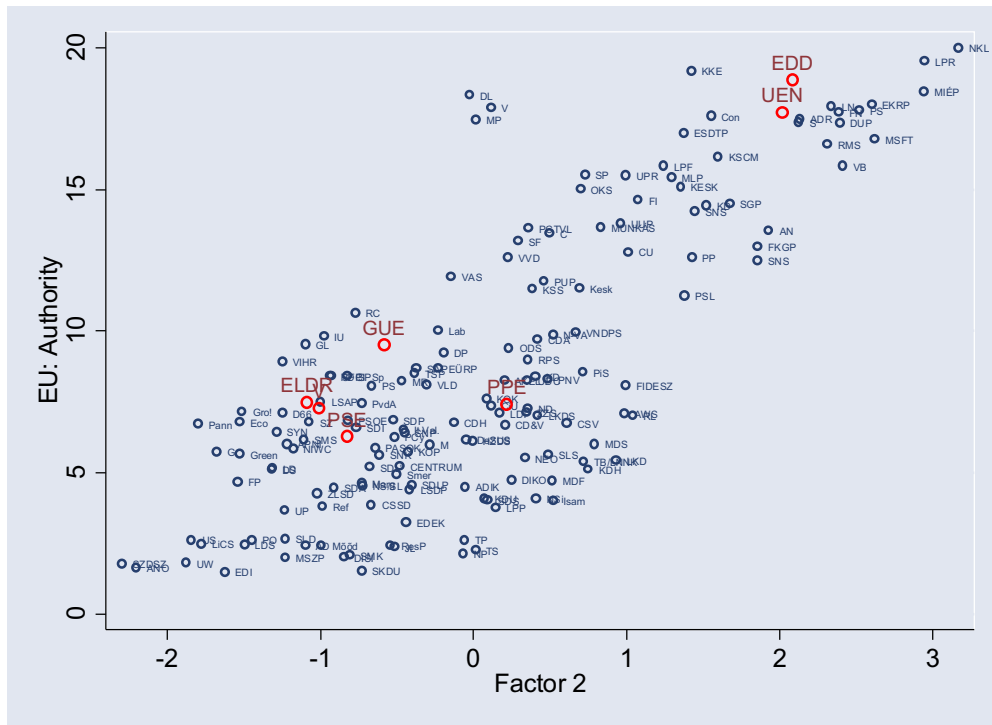


Figure 4. Relationship of Second Factor to Independent Measures of Position on EU Authority. Red cases are the EP party groups. Factor scores are from Table 4, Column 4.

EP Party Group	Label	Seat %	Seats	Member Parties
European People's Party	EPP	37.5	294	51
Party of the European Socialists	PES	29.5	232	32
European Liberal and Democrat Reform Party	ELDR	8.4	66	28
European United Left/Nordic Green Left	GUE	7	55	19
Greens	Verts	6	47	20
Union for a Europe of the Nations	UEN	3.8	30	11
Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities	EDD	2.2	17	5
Other	Other	5.6	44	16
Total		100	785	182

Table 1. Political Party Groups in European Parliament pre-2004 Election

Source: European Parliament official website

(http://wwpdb.europarl.eu.int/ep5/owa/p_meps2.repartition).⁸

⁸ These figures represent the standing just prior to the European Parliament Elections of 2004, the 785 member total is composed of the 626 members from the 15 pre-enlargement states and the temporary members representing the accession states since May 1st prior to the June elections.

Party	Country	From	To	Year
Partido Popular	Spain	ED	PPE	1989
Conservative Party	UK	ED	PPE-ED	1992
Konservative Folkepartei	Denmark	ED	PPE-ED	1992
Scottish National Party	UK	RDE	ARC	1989
UDF	France	LDR	PPE	1994
PSD	Portugal	LDR	PPE	1994
Izquierda Unida	Spain	COM	GUE	1989
MSI	Italy	DR	NI	1989
Parti communiste francais	France	COM	CG	1989
Socialistisk folkeparti	Denmark	COM	GUE	1989
Agalev	Belgium	ARC	V	1989
CDS	Spain	NI	LDR	1989
Ulster Unionist Party	UK	DR	PPE	1989
Vlaams Bloc	Belgium	DR	NI	1994
Front National	France	DR	NI	1994
PSDI	Italy	S	RDE	1994
CDU-PCP	Portugal	CG	GUE	1994
PDS	Italy	GUE	S	1993
D'66	Netherlands	NI	LDR	1989
Partido Partido Nacionalista Vasco	Spain	Greens	ALDE	2004
Socialistisk Folkeparti	Denmark	GUE/NGL	Greens	2004
Liberalų demokratų partija	Lithuania	ELDR	UEN	2004
Valstiečių ir Naujosios demokratijos partijų sąjunga	Lithuania	EPP	UEN	2004
UDF	France	EPP	ALDE	2004
CDS/PP	Portugal	UEN	EPP	2004
PEV	Portugal	V	GUE/NGL	2004
Lega Nord	Italy	NI	ID	2004
Bloco de Esquerda	Spain	NI	GUE	2004
League of Polish Peasants	Poland	NI	ID	2004

EPP (PPE): European People's Party; PES (S): Party of European Socialists; ELDR (LDR/ALDE): European Liberal and Democratic Reform Group; UEN: Union for a Europe of Nations; COM: Communists; ED: European Democratic Group; ARC/ARE: Arc en Ciel (Rainbow Group); DR: Droites Européenes (Front National, Die Republikaner); GUE: Confederal Group of the European United Left; CG: Coalitions des Gauches; RDE : Group of the European Democratic Alliance; FE: Forza Europa (Forza Italia); TDI: Technical Group; NI: Unattached members

Table 2. Party Group Volatility in the European Parliament: National Party Switching Examples

Policy dimension	EP Party Group Position						
	GUE	Verts	PES	ELDR	EPP	UEN	EDD
Left-Right							
EP Group Mean	3.6	5.1	7.4	11.8	12.6	16.5	17.1
	(.51)	(.36)	(.30)	(.43)	(.39)	(.58)	(.49)
National Party Mean	3.5	6.5	7.5	12.2	14.4	14.9	14.4
	(.45)	(1.04)	(.42)	(.90)	(.43)	(1.19)	(7.40)
	13	15	26	21	41	8	2
Taxes v. Spending							
EP Group Mean	4.9	5.7	6.4	13.1	13.4	13.9	14.1
	(1.01)	(.72)	(.35)	(.73)	(.60)	(1.06)	(1.28)
National Party Mean	3.9	6.6	7.8	12.1	13.1	12.4	11.4
	(.33)	(.83)	(.41)	(1.08)	(.51)	(1.05)	(5.77)
	14	16	27	20	42	9	2
EU: Authority							
EP Group Mean	9.5	7.3	6.3	7.5	7.4	17.7	18.9
	(.82)	(1.00)	(.54)	(.64)	(.63)	(.50)	(.32)
National Party Mean	12.5	9.4	7.0	6.7	7.2	9.6	13.6
	(1.43)	(1.33)	(.80)	(1.13)	(.79)	(2.88)	(2.93)
	14	16	27	20	42	9	2
Deregulation							
EP Group Mean	4	6.7	7.4	14.2	13.5	13	14.6
	(.62)	(.82)	(.43)	(.89)	(.50)	(1.04)	(1.02)
National Party Mean	3.2	6.9	8.5	13.5	14.0	10.1	11.3
	(.40)	(1.11)	(.63)	(1.15)	(.63)	(2.73)	(5.79)
	10	12	21	18	36	5	2
Immigration							
EP Group Mean	6.1	6.5	7.3	7.4	12	17.5	17.5
	(.75)	(1.22)	(.63)	(.73)	(.70)	(.50)	(.40)
National Party Mean	5.3	4.6	7.9	9.8	12.6	16.3	12.8
	(.89)	(1.17)	(.62)	(1.45)	(.64)	(2.15)	(3.97)
	12	14	19	13	21	4	3
Environment							
EP Group Mean	6.9	2.9	8.6	10.9	12.1	12.8	12.9
	(.89)	(.83)	(.50)	(.96)	(.55)	(.82)	(.91)
National Party Mean	7.9	4.7	10.4	11.8	12.8	13.1	10.0
	(1.04)	(1.16)	(.39)	(.95)	(.36)	(1.54)	(7.20)
	14	16	27	20	42	8	2
Social							
EP Group Mean	4.3	4	5.6	4.4	13.9	15.1	15.1
	(.45)	(1.05)	(.41)	(.40)	(.58)	(.76)	(.90)
National Party Mean	6.0	5.7	7.2	7.5	14.3	15.8	18.5
	(1.06)	(1.35)	(.62)	(1.12)	(.51)	(1.00)	(3.74)
	14	16	27	20	43	9	2

Table 3. Policy Positions of EP Party Groups and Overall Issue Importance.

Note: Figures for EP Group Mean represent mean (std. error) of expert responses from the EP expert survey. National Party mean represents (**unweighted**) mean of party mean positional scores from Benoit and Laver (2006) (std error) and number of parties

Factor	(1) European Parliament		(2) National Parties Only		(3) EP + National Parties		(4) EP + National Parties	
	Eigenvalue	Cumulative Proportion	Eigenvalue	Cumulative Proportion	Eigenvalue	Cumulative Proportion	Eigenvalue	Cumulative Proportion
1	5.38	0.60	4.02	0.57	4.06	0.59	3.23	0.54
2	1.60	0.78	1.49	0.79	1.47	0.79	1.46	0.78
3	0.47	0.83	0.68	0.88	0.66	0.89	0.65	0.89
4	0.38	0.87	0.39	0.94	0.39	0.94	0.34	0.95
5	0.32	0.91	0.24	0.97	0.24	0.97	0.23	0.99
6	0.26	0.94	0.10	1.00	0.10	0.99	0.07	1.00
7	0.23	0.96	0.07	1.00	0.07	1.00		
8	0.21	0.98						
9	0.14	1.00						
	Factor		Factor		Factor		Factor	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Left-Right	0.85	0.28	0.87	0.33	0.87	0.33		
Taxes v. Spending	0.88	0.15	0.94	0.17	0.94	0.12	0.92	0.15
Deregulation	0.88	0.03	0.96	-0.03	0.95	-0.03	0.96	0.01
Environment	0.82	0.24	0.75	0.27	0.76	0.27	0.78	0.31
Social	0.73	0.42	0.35	0.76	0.37	0.75	0.33	0.76
Immigration*	0.70	0.55	0.47	0.76	0.48	0.75	0.46	0.77
EU Authority	0.28	0.86	-0.26	0.78	-0.13	0.80	-0.28	0.78
EU Federalism	0.26	0.85						
EU Security	0.04	0.88						
N		108		154		160		160

Table 4. Principal components analysis of expert judgments of party positions

Note: Units for (1) are unweighted expert placements of parties. Units for (2)-(3) are national party factor analyses are mean positions of national parties weighted by vote share and EP groups weighted by seat share.

*Nationalism used instead of Immigration for the 8 post-communist cases.

Choice variables: Abs. Distance Between Party Position and EP Group Position on Dimension			
	<i>All National Parties</i>	<i>Non Post- Communist</i>	<i>Post-Communist</i>
Tax-Spending	-0.053 (.116) .95	-0.03 (.156) .97	-0.062 (.186) .94
Social	-0.26 (.048)** .77	-0.238 (.062)** .79	-0.296 (.076)** .74
Environment	-0.245 (.066)** .78	-0.224 (.078)** .80	-0.31 (.151)* .73
Left-Right	-0.217 (.076)** .80	-0.232 (.098)* .79	-0.245 (.131) .78
EU Authority	-0.219 (.037)** .80	-0.162 (.047)** .85	-0.296 (.067)** .74
Deregulation	-0.243 (.094)** .78	-0.276 (.121)* .76	-0.190 (.161) .83
-2LL	-138.37147	-98.899047	-37.631137
Pseudo R ²	.51	.49	.58
Observations	1022	700	322
Total national parties	146	100	46
% correctly predicted	.69	.70	.67

Table 5. Conditional Logit Model of Party Choice

Std. errors in parentheses. Statistically significant at **.01 and **.05 levels. Italic figures represent odds ratios.

Country	Party	Full Party Name	EP Party Group		Predicted Probability		Ratio Predicted/Actual
			Actual	Predicted	Actual	Predicted	
BE	PS	Socialist Party	PES	GUE	0.21	0.64	3.02
CY	ADIK	Agonistiko Dimokratiko Kinima	UEN	EPP	0.11	0.63	6.03
CY	DIKO	Dimokratikon Komma	ELDR	EPP	0.07	0.58	7.86
CZ	US	Freedom Union-Democratic Union	EPP	ELDR	0.13	0.8	5.95
DK	RV	Radikale Venstre	ELDR	PES	0.29	0.4	1.35
DK	V	Venstre, Danmarks liberale parti	ELDR	EPP	0.29	0.57	1.94
EE	Kesk	Eesti Keskerakond	ELDR	EPP	0.1	0.57	5.85
EE	RL	Eestimaa Rahvaliid	UEN	EPP	0.03	0.54	17.56
EE	Ref	Eesti Reformierakond	ELDR	EPP	0.21	0.54	2.6
ES	PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	V	EPP	0	0.83	2176.14
ES	PP	Partido Popular	EPP	EDD	0.11	0.51	4.77
FI	KD	Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit	EPP	UEN	0.21	0.53	2.57
FI	KESK	Suomen Keskusta	ELDR	UEN	0.03	0.44	14.85
FR	PCF	Parti Communiste Francais	GUE	PES	0.37	0.47	1.28
FR	V	Les Verts	V	GUE	0.43	0.54	1.23
GR	PASOK	Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima	PES	ELDR	0.23	0.49	2.15
GR	SYN	Synaspismos	GUE	V	0.13	0.46	3.64
HU	MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party	PES	ELDR	0.34	0.4	1.17
IE	FF	Fianna Fail	UEN	EPP	0.34	0.43	1.28
IE	PD	Progressive Democrats	ELDR	EDD	0.29	0.3	1.05
IT	FI	Forza Italia	EPP	EDD	0.14	0.44	3.22
IT	It.Val.	Lista di Pietro Italia dei Valori	ELDR	PES	0.1	0.68	6.65
IT	Marg	La Margherita	ELDR	PES	0.05	0.72	15.8
LT	LDP	Liberal Democratic Party	ELDR	EPP	0.19	0.76	3.97
LT	NS/SL	New Union- Social Liberals	ELDR	EPP	0.32	0.35	1.08
LT	VNDPS	Union of Peasant and New Democracy Parties	EPP	PES	0.26	0.49	1.92
LV	PCTVL	For Human Rights in a United Latvia	V	GUE	0.07	0.64	9.75
LV	TB/LNNK	Alliance Fatherland and Freedom-LNNK	UEN	EPP	0.12	0.73	6.15
LV	ZZS	Green and Farmers Union	V	EPP	0.02	0.7	31.88
MT	AD	Democratic Alternative	V	PES	0.16	0.52	3.23
MT	MLP	Malta Labour Party	PES	UEN	0.01	0.44	36.6
NI	APNI	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	ELDR	PES	0.38	0.51	1.36
NL	CU	ChristenUnie	EDD	EPP	0.13	0.46	3.65
NL	SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	EDD	UEN	0.28	0.62	2.2
PL	PO	Citizens' Platform	EPP	ELDR	0.45	0.49	1.08
PL	PiS	Law and Justice	UEN	EPP	0.17	0.67	3.99
PL	UP	Labour Union	PES	GUE	0.3	0.5	1.67
PT	CDS/PP	People's Party	UEN	EDD	0.42	0.55	1.31
SE	C	Centerpartiet	ELDR	EPP	0.15	0.47	3.26
SI	LDS	Liberalna Demokracija Slovenije	ELDR	PES	0.4	0.47	1.17
UK	Con	Conservative Party	EPP	EDD	0.02	0.52	32.64
UK	LD	Liberal Democrats	ELDR	PES	0.08	0.61	7.77
UK	Lab	Labour Party	PES	ELDR	0.15	0.54	3.55
UK	PCy	Plaid Cymru	V	PES	0.2	0.62	3.06
UK	SNP	Scottish National Party	V	PES	0.08	0.84	11.19

Table 6. Parties that Don't Fit in their Party Groups.

Predictions are based on the conditional logit regression model in Table 5, conditional on one case in each prediction group having a positive outcome.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Right	Conservative	Liberal	Christian Democrat	Left	Green	Regional
Environment	-1.579 (2.227)	-0.194 (0.269)	-0.229 (0.201)	-0.171 (0.362)	-0.426 (0.314)	-2.087 (0.682)**	-0.366 (0.300)
Taxes-Spending	0.575 (2.167)	-0.104 (0.391)	-0.216 (0.323)	0.104 (0.420)	-0.935 (0.759)	-0.657 (0.601)	-0.393 (0.468)
Social	0.751 (0.547)	0.638 (0.203)**	0.061 (0.148)	1.270 (0.295)**	0.498 (0.355)	0.397 (0.295)	0.179 (0.217)
Left-Right	3.723 (3.518)	0.549 (0.328)	0.468 (0.283)	0.167 (0.386)	-0.615 (0.855)	1.161 (0.856)	0.653 (0.455)
Deregulation	-1.277 (2.475)	0.449 (0.368)	0.494 (0.322)	0.401 (0.422)	-0.272 (0.981)	0.147 (0.637)	0.233 (0.454)
EU: Authority	-0.627 (0.855)	0.013 (0.135)	0.000 (0.133)	-0.122 (0.164)	0.260 (0.265)	-0.013 (0.268)	-0.225 (0.240)
Constant	-35.013 (22.527)	-14.394 (3.493)**	-5.742 (2.076)**	-20.353 (4.774)**	7.358 (4.806)	5.784 (4.324)	-2.649 (3.532)
<i>N</i>	139	139	139	139	139	139	139
Standard errors in parentheses Base Category: Socialist							
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%							

Table 7. Multinomial Logit model of Party Family.

Unit of analysis is national party position means from Benoit and Laver dataset.

Appendix A: Dimension Text Wording

Economic (Spending v. Taxes)

European Parliament:

(At the national level) Prefers raising taxes to increase public services (1)

(At the national level) Prefers cutting public services to cut taxes (20)

National level:

Promotes raising taxes to increase public services. (1)

Promotes cutting public services to cut taxes. (20)

Deregulation

European Parliament:

Favours high levels of regulation and control of the markets, such as telecommunications (1)

Favours deregulation at every opportunity (20)

Non-post-communist countries:

Favours high levels of state regulation and control of the market. (1)

Favours deregulation of markets at every opportunity. (20)

Post-communist countries:

Promotes maximum state ownership of business and industry. (1)

Opposes all state ownership of business and industry. (20)

Social

Favours liberal policies on matters such as homosexual law, abortion, and euthanasia (1)

Opposes liberal policies on matters such as homosexual law, abortion, and euthanasia (20)

Environment

Supports protection of the environment, even at the cost of economic growth (1)

Supports economic growth, even at the cost of damage to the environment (20)

EU Authority

European Parliament and non-post-communist countries:

Favours increasing the range of areas in which the EU can set policy (1)

Favours reducing the range of areas in which the EU can set policy (20)

Post-communist countries:

Favors joining the European Union. (1)

Opposes joining the European Union. (20)

Immigration

European Parliament:

Favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into European society. (1)

Favours policies designed to restrict access of asylum seekers and immigrants to Europe (20)

Non-post-communist cases only:

Favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into [e.g. British] society. (1)

Favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants return to their country of origin. (20)

EU Federalism

European Parliament:

Promotes a federal vision for the EU (1)

Promotes a Europe of nation-states (*Europe des Patries*) (20)

Non-post-communist cases only:

Promotes the direct accountability of the EU to citizens via institutions such as the European Parliament. (1)
Promotes the indirect accountability of the EU to citizens via their own national governments. (20)

EU Collective Security

European Parliament:

Favours a common defence and security policy for member states (1)

Opposes development of common defence and security policy (20)

Non-post-communist cases only:

Favours [*e.g. British*] involvement in European security and peacekeeping missions. (1)

Opposes any [*e.g. British*] involvement in European military affairs

Nationalism

Post-communist cases only:

Strongly promotes a cosmopolitan rather than a [*e.g. Hungarian*] national consciousness, history, and culture. (1)

Strongly promotes a [*e.g. Hungarian*] national rather than a cosmopolitan consciousness, history, and culture. (20)

Left-Right

Please locate each political group on a general left-right dimension, taking all aspects of group policy into account. Left (1). Right (20).

Appendix B. Party Group Membership of National Parties (June 2004)

EP Party Group	Country	Party Label	Party Name	Total MEPS
EDD	FR	CPNT	Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions	5 *
EDD	FR	RPF	Rassemblement pour la France	3
EDD	NL	CU	ChristenUnie	3
EDD	NL	SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	3
EDD	UK	UKIP	UK Independence Party	3 *
ELDR	BE	VLD	Flemish Liberals and Democrats	3
ELDR	BE		Other	1 *
ELDR	CY	DIKO	Dimokratikon Komma	1
ELDR	CZ		Independent	1 *
ELDR	DK	RV	Radikale Venstre	1
ELDR	DK	V	Venstre, Danmarks liberale parti	5
ELDR	EE	Kesk	Eesti Keskerakond	1
ELDR	EE	Ref	Eesti Reformierakond	1
ELDR	ES		Others	2 *
ELDR	FI	KESK	Suomen Keskusta	4
ELDR	FI	SFP	Svenska Folkepartiet i Finland	1
ELDR	FR	UDF	Union pour la démocratie française	1
ELDR	HU	SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats	2
ELDR	IE		Independent	1 *
ELDR	IT	It.Val.	Lista di Pietro Italia dei Valori	2
ELDR	IT		Others	2 *
ELDR	IT		I Democratici	4 *
ELDR	LT	LDP	Liberal Democratic Party	1
ELDR	LT	LiCS	Union of Liberals and Center	2
ELDR	LT	NS/SL	New Union- Social Liberals	2
ELDR	LU	DP	Democratic Party	1
ELDR	NL	D66	Democraten 66	2
ELDR	NL	VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	6
ELDR	SE	C	Centerpartiet	1
ELDR	SE	FP	Folkpartiet Liberalerna	3
ELDR	SI	LDS	Liberalna Demokracija Slovenije	3
ELDR	SK	ANO	New Civic Alliance	1
ELDR	UK	LD	Liberal Democrats	11
GUE	CY	AKEL	Anorthotikon Komma Ergazemenou Laou	2
GUE	CZ	KSCM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	3
GUE	DE	PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism	6
GUE	DE		Independent	1 *
GUE	DK	SF	Socialistisk Folkeparti	1
GUE	DK		Den frie Socialdemokrat	1 *
GUE	DK		Folkebevægelsen	1 *
GUE	ES	IU	Izquierda Unida	4
GUE	FI	VAS	Vasemmistolitto	1
GUE	FR	PCF	Parti Communiste Francais	3
GUE	FR		Others	12 *
GUE	GR	KKE	Kommunistiko Koma Ellados	3
GUE	GR		Others	4 *
GUE	IT	PDCI	Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	2
GUE	IT	RC	Rifondazione Comunista	4
GUE	NL	SP	Socialistische Partij	1
GUE	PT	PCP	Portuguese Communist Party	2

EP Party Group	Country	Party Label	Party Name	Total MEPS
GUE	SE	V	Vänsterpartiet	3
GUE	SK	KSS	Slovak Communist Party	1
EPP	AT	OVP	Austrian People's Party	7
EPP	BE	CD&V	Christian Democratic & Flemish	2
EPP	BE	CDH	Humanist Democratic Centre	1
EPP	BE		Others	2 *
EPP	CY	DISI	Dimokratikos Sinagermo4s	2
EPP	CZ	KDU	Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People	3
EPP	CZ	ODS	Civic Democratic Party	8
EPP	CZ	US	Freedom Union-Democratic Union	1
EPP	CZ		Independent	1 *
EPP	DE	CDU/C	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union	53
EPP	DK	KF	Konservative Folkeparti	1
EPP	EE	Isam	Erakond Isamaaliit	1
EPP	EE	ResP	Ühendus Vabariigi Eest - Res Publica	1
EPP	ES	PP	Partido Popular	27
EPP	ES		Other	1 *
EPP	FI	KD	Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit	1
EPP	FI	KOK	Kansallinen Kokoomus	4
EPP	FR	UDF	Union pour la Democratie Francaise	1
EPP	FR	UDF	Union pour la Democratie Francaise	6
EPP	FR	UMP	Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	14 *
EPP	GR	ND	Nea Dimokratia	9
EPP	HU	FIDESZ	Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Party	9
EPP	HU	MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum	3
EPP	IE	FG	Fine Gael	4
EPP	IE		Independent	1 *
EPP	IT	FI	Forza Italia	23
EPP	IT	UDC	Unione di Centro	4
EPP	IT		Others	7 *
EPP	LT	LKD	Lithuanian Christian Democrats	1
EPP	LT	TS	Homeland Union	1
EPP	LT	VNDPS	Union of Peasant and New Democracy Parties	1
EPP	LU	CSV	Christian Social People's Party	2
EPP	LV	JL	New Era	2
EPP	LV	LPP	Latvia's First Party	1
EPP	LV	TP	People's Party	2
EPP	MT	NP	Nationalist Party	2
EPP	NI	UUP	Ulster Unionist Party	1
EPP	NL	CDA	Christen Democratisch Appe'l	9
EPP	PL	PO	Citizens' Platform	5
EPP	PL	PSL	Polish Peasant Party	5
EPP	PL		Others	3 *
EPP	PT	PSD	Social Democratic Party	9
EPP	SE	KD	Kristdemokraterna	2
EPP	SE	M	Moderata Samlingspartiet	5
EPP	SI	NSi	Nova Slovenija-KrAĵanska Ljudska Stranka	1
EPP	SI	SDS	Socialdemokratska Stranka Slovenije	1
EPP	SI	SLS	Slovenska Ljudska Stranka	1
EPP	SK	KDH	Christian Democratic Movement	2
EPP	SK	SKDU	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union	3
EPP	SK	SMK	Party of the Hungarian Coalition	2
EPP	UK	Con	Conservative Party	36

EP Party Group	Country	Party Label	Party Name	Total MEPS
PES	AT	SPO	Austrian Social Democratic Party	6
PES	BE	PS	Socialist Party	5
PES	BE		Other	1 *
PES	CY	EDEK	Kinima Sosialdimokraton EDEK	1
PES	CZ	CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party	7
PES	DE	SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	35
PES	DK	SD	Socialdemokratiet i Danmark	2
PES	EE		Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	1 *
PES	ES	PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	23
PES	ES		Other	1 *
PES	FI	SDP	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	3
PES	FR	PS	Parti Socialiste	17
PES	FR		Other	1 *
PES	GR	PASOK	Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima	9
PES	HU	MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party	10
PES	IE	LB	Labour	1
PES	IT	DS	Democratici di Sinistra	15
PES	IT	SDI	Socialisti Democratici Italiani	1
PES	LT	LSDP	Lithuanian Social Democratic Party	5
PES	LU	LSAP	Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party	2
PES	LV	TSP	People's Harmony Party	1
PES	MT	MLP	Malta Labour Party	2
PES	NI	SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party	1
PES	NL	PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid	6
PES	PL	SLD	Alliance of Democratic Left	22
PES	PL	UP	Labour Union	2
PES	PL		Socjaldemocracja Polska	3 *
PES	PT	PS	Socialist Party	12
PES	SE	SAP	Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet	6
PES	SI	ZLSD	Zdrúžena Lista Socialnih Demokratov	1
PES	SK	Smer	Party Direction - Third Way	2
PES	UK	Lab	Labour Party	28
UEN	DK	DF	Dansk Folkeparti	1
UEN	EE	RL	Eestimaa Rahvaliid	1
UEN	FR	RPF	Rassemblement pour la France	2
UEN	FR	UMP	Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	2 *
UEN	IE	FF	Fianna Fail	6
UEN	IT	AN	Alleanza Nazionale	9
UEN	IT	Patti	Patti Segni	1 *
UEN	LV	TB/LNNK	Alliance Fatherland and Freedom-LNNK	1
UEN	PL	PiS	Law and Justice	4
UEN	PT	CDS/PP	People's Party	2
UEN	SK	LU	People's Union	1
Verts	AT	Gru	The Greens	2
Verts	BE	Eco	Ecolo	3
Verts	BE	Gro!	Groen!	1
Verts	BE		Others	2 *
Verts	DE	GRÜ	Green Party	4
Verts	ES	PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	1
Verts	ES		Others	4 *
Verts	FI	VIHR	Vihreä Liitto	1
Verts	FI		Independent	1 *

EP Party Group	Country	Party Label	Party Name	Total MEPS
Verts	FR	V	Les Verts	9
Verts	IE	GR	Greens	2
Verts	IT	Green	Federazione dei Verdi	2
Verts	LU	G	The Green	1
Verts	LV	PCTVL	For Human Rights in a United Latvia	1
Verts	LV	ZZS	Green and Farmers Union	1
Verts	NL	GL	Groen Links	4
Verts	SE	MP	Miljöpartiet de Gröna	2
Verts	UK	PCy	Plaid Cymru	2
Verts	UK	SNP	Scottish National Party	2
Verts	UK	UKGre	Green Party	2 *
Indep	AT	FPO	Freedom Party of Austria	3
Indep	AT		No Affiliation	3 *
Indep	BE	VB	Flemish Block	2
Indep	BE	VLD	Vlaamse liberalen en democraten	1
Indep	ES	EH	Euskal Herritarrok	1 *
Indep	FR	FN	Front National	5
Indep	FR	MPF	Mouvement pour la France	3
Indep	FR		No Affiliation	2 *
Indep	IT	LDE	Liberali Democratici Europei	1 *
Indep	IT	LN	Lega Nord	3
Indep	IT	Pann	Lista Pannella Bonino	7
Indep	NI	DUP	Democratic Unionist Party	1
Indep	PL	LPR	League of Polish Families	3
Indep	PL	S	Self Defence of the Polish Republic	4
Indep	PL		Others	3 *
Indep	SK	HZDS	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia	2
			Total	785

Note: Party group affiliations are taken from June 2004 (see Table 1 note). Parties marked with an asterisk were not included in the Benoit-Laver survey. All non-asterisked parties are included in Figure 2.