

Individual and contextual variation in EU issue voting: The role of political information

Catherine E. de Vries a,* , Wouter van der Brug a,1, Marcel H. van Egmond a,2, Cees van der Eijk b,3

a Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237, 1021 DL Amsterdam, The Netherlands

b Social Sciences Methods and Data Institute, University of Nottingham, LSS Building B103, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK

Accepted version, forthcoming in *Electoral Studies*

Abstract

Increasing politicization in EU member states about European issues can be expected to strengthen the impact of attitudes towards Europe on vote choice in European Parliament (EP) elections. At the same time this impact is likely to vary between voters and contexts as a function of political information. This study explores the role of political information in explaining individual and contextual heterogeneity in the degree of EU issue voting. Using a two-step hierarchical estimation procedure to explore both individual and contextual variation, we show that while EU issue voting in the 2009 EP elections is only slightly more pronounced among the politically sophisticated, it is clearly more extensive in contexts that provide higher levels of political information on European matters.

Introduction

The process of European integration has undergone major changes over the past decades. From the 1950s until the early 1990s, European integration was seen by both (neo-) functionalists and (liberal) intergovernmentalists alike as an elite- driven process in which public opinion was largely irrelevant. As Haas (1958: 17) stated it over 50 years ago: “It is as impracticable as it is unnecessary to have recourse to general public opinion surveys, or even surveys of specifically interested groups [.]. It suffices to single out and define the political elites in the participating countries, to study the reactions to integration and assess changes in attitude on their part.” At present, it is generally accepted that the time of permissive consensus is over and that political elites are confronted with increased popular contestation over European integration. Not only has public support for European integration become increasingly fickle, we also witness increased public contention over European matters in referenda, party competition and media reporting (de Vreese, 2003; de Vries, 2007; de Vries and Edwards, 2009; Hobolt, 2009; Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004; Schuck et al., 2011). Today, the process of European integration is constrained by popular dissent, where citizens and political parties actively monitor the course of integration and voice their fears and objections when deemed necessary (Hooghe and Marks, 2009).

Recent research points at increasingly structured, yet dissensual public opinion, where support for the European Union (EU) is shown to be influenced by perceptions of economic benefit and social identity (Gabel, 1998; McLaren, 2002; Carey, 2002; Tucker et al., 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Elgün and Tillman, 2007). Additionally, political parties both in old and new member states increasingly position themselves on European integration in publicly highly visible and distinguishable ways (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks et al., 2006; Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2007). Moreover, political parties, especially those on the extremes of the political spectrum, are quite responsive to public opinion (Carrubba, 2001; Ray, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2007; de Vries and Edwards, 2009). All of this evidence suggests the potential for the development of party-voter linkages

on questions of European unification. As a consequence, it is quite likely for attitudes towards Europe to influence electoral decisions both in national and European Parliament (EP) elections, a process referred to as EU issue voting (see de Vries, 2007). Indeed, recent research suggests that EU attitudes increasingly affect party choice in both electoral arenas (Evans, 1998, 2002; de Vries, 2007, 2009, 2010; Hobolt et al., 2009; Tillman, 2004; Van der Brug et al., 2007). At the same time, these studies demonstrate that these EU effects are still relatively weak in comparison with other choice determinants such as left/right orientations and domestic political issues.

In this study we revisit the ongoing work on EU issue voting by analyzing individual and contextual factors affecting the strength of the effects of EU attitudes on party choice in the 2009 EP elections. We start from the assumption that EU issue voting requires some degree of political sophistication. Casting a vote based on attitudes towards European integration calls for the presence of such attitudes, which is not self-evident in view of the distant, often technical and complex aspects of all matters relating to European integration. Moreover, voters need information about where political parties stand on these issues, the presence of which is, again, not obvious in view of the paucity of media attention to European affairs (see for example Peter et al., 2003, although we see more media attention for Europe in the 2009 EP campaign, see Schuck et al., 2011). Finally, a voter must be able to relate her own stance to those of the parties in order to assess which party would best represent her own views. In this light, more sophisticated voters – those with more relevant knowledge – are more likely than others to take their EU preferences into account when casting their ballots. In addition, contexts that provide more information on European integration can be expected to enhance the effect of EU attitudes on vote choice; we think in this respect particularly of the amount of media attention and the extent to which parties' positions are polarized. By exploring individual and contextual heterogeneity in EU issue voting, the analysis demonstrates that the impact of EU attitudes on vote choice in the 2009 EP elections is slightly more pronounced among politically sophisticated citizens but distinctly stronger in contexts that provide high levels of EU related information.

This study proceeds as follows. First, we present our expectations about how political sophistication and contextual political information mediate EU issue voting. In the next step we discuss the data, the operationalizations and the method guiding the empirical analysis. Subsequently we present and discuss the empirical results, and in the final section we highlight the implications of these findings and suggest promising lines for future research.

Explaining EP vote choice: the second-order model & the EU issue voting model

Reif and Schmitt's (1980) "second-order model" is probably the most influential model to interpret voting behaviour in EP elections. Most empirical work in this area has found support for the central tenets of the second-order thesis. Since there is less at stake in second-order electoral contexts such as EP elections, turnout tends to be lower and smaller parties tend to fare better as voters may be less guided by strategic considerations. In addition, the electoral performance of government parties is highly contingent upon the national political cycle with governments losing most at the mid-term of the national cycle (see Ferrera and Weishaupt, 2004; Hix and Marsh, 2007, 2011; Marsh, 1998; Schmitt, 2005; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996). Although some argue that the second-order model as developed by Reif and Schmitt fails to provide clear micro-foundations for individual-level voting behaviour (see Hobolt et al., 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011; Marsh and Mikhaylov, forthcoming; Schmitt et al., 2008), a central element of the model is that voters tend to cast their ballots in a second-order context mainly on the basis of considerations derived from the national political arena, such as government performance, the domestic economic situation, and the issues that dominate the competition between the political parties in national politics. So, in keeping with the second-order model, one would expect voters to base their vote choice in EP elections predominantly on first-order considerations, i.e. to be guided more by domestic political factors than by concerns about European

integration.¹

Over time we have witnessed a steady increase in the powers of the EP. In addition, the widening and deepening of European integration and EU competencies has instigated conflicts within domestic politics about the scope and depth of the European project. These developments may have important consequences for both national and EP elections. For example there is a growing body of evidence from both West and East-Central Europe to suggest that preferences on European integration influence domestic electoral politics. In his examination of Austria, Finland and Sweden Tillman (2004) finds evidence of EU issue voting at the time of accession, a period in which EU membership can be assumed to have been salient and at least somewhat divisive. Similarly, de Vries (2007) finds evidence of EU issue voting in Denmark and the United Kingdom, two countries characterized by high levels of party conflict and issue salience over Europe, yet fails to find such evidence in the Netherlands for example, where party conflict and issue salience regarding European integration are much more limited. Looking at the 2005 German elections, Schoen (2008) argues that attitudes towards Turkey's potential accession to the EU played an important role, with voters being more likely to support parties that held positions closer to their own on the Turkish question. Finally, exploring differences between East and West in 2004, de Vries and Tillman (2010) find that EU issue voting is more prominent in East-Central Europe compared to more consolidated democracies in Western Europe.

A growing body of work demonstrates that European attitudes increasingly matter for our understanding of voters' choices in EP elections (Rohrschneider and Clark, 2008; Van der Brug et al., 2007). While exploring vote switching between government and opposition parties in the 1999 and 2004 EP elections, Hobolt et al. (2009) demonstrate that Eurosceptic voters are more likely to defect from government parties than voters who are more pro-EU. In addition, this work convincingly shows that the campaign context matters in this respect. Voter defection from governing parties is more extensive in election campaigns with a clear Eurosceptic slant.

These findings from the national and EP level suggest that European issues can influence electoral behaviour but (so far) mainly when stimulated by events such as accession or in contexts of significant elite and public disagreements over European integration voiced by Eurosceptic political entrepreneurs and in the mass media (see also Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004). These findings give us a more refined picture of the dynamics of EU issue voting, but these studies have not contributed to our understanding of heterogeneity in EU issue voting at the individual- and contextual-level (for two recent exceptions see Hobolt, 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011). This study starts from the premise that it is unlikely that Europe matters equally for all voters and within all contexts. We set out to provide an explanation for both individual as well as contextual variation in EU issue voting by highlighting the role of political information. This study explores the role of political sophistication and of contextual political information and thus adds an important element to our understanding of the degree to which European attitudes matter in EP elections.

Individual and contextual heterogeneity in EU issue voting

Political sophistication and EU issue voting

We cannot expect all voters to be driven equally by EU considerations when casting their ballot. One factor that inhibits EU issue voting is the issue's relative complexity. European unification has created a complex division of power between various European institutions and between EU institutions and national governments. As a consequence, many citizens might be unable to determine when and how

¹ To the extent that European integration has become politicized along party political lines in the (first-order) national political arena, we can expect voters' orientations towards 'Europe' to be influential in their choice calculus. For a further elaboration of this logic (see Van der Brug and van der Eijk, 2007.)

to voice satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the EU. In particular in those circumstances where the issue has yet hardly become politicized along partisan lines, it is more difficult for voters to know where parties stand on the issue of European integration and thus to take this information into account when casting a vote. Adding to this complexity is the fact that, for much of its history, European integration was presented to citizens as a matter of foreign policy, about which citizens throughout the democratic world tend to have little knowledge (Holsti, 1992). Not surprisingly, evidence suggests low levels of understanding of the EU (Anderson, 1998). In short, the EU remains distant from most voters' everyday lives, and the consequences of European unification are often intangible and uncertain to citizens.

Furthermore, national governments have long been the target of reward and blame for salient policy questions (such as the state of the economy, e.g., Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007). Therefore, citizens may have difficulty understanding when the EU is responsible for policy outcomes. As a result, we may expect that only the most sophisticated voters will engage in EU issue voting. This expectation links up with evidence presented by Karp et al. (2003), who show that, although averagely engaged citizens base their assessments of EU politics mainly on satisfaction or dissatisfaction with national politics, more engaged voters command more EU information and use this information to evaluate the EU. Studies on cueing effects in the context of European integration also provide evidence of the importance of political sophistication (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Moreover, a large and well-established line of research from the US context demonstrates the conditional impact of political knowledge and political information on voters' political behaviour and the degree of issue voting (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Nie et al., 1976; Palfrey and Poole, 1987; Krosnick, 1988; Lavine et al., 1996; Alvarez, 1997; Basinger and Lavine, 2005). This literature demonstrates that political information affects the way in which attitudes guide political behaviour. Attitudes need to be readily retrievable in order to influence political behaviour. The role of political information is crucial in this respect as it reduces voters' uncertainty about their attitudes. This in turn leads to stronger and more accessible opinions which are more likely to be acted upon. In the light of these findings, we expect that citizens with higher levels of political sophistication are more inclined to give weight to their EU attitudes when casting their ballot.

We understand political sophistication as the store of political information available to an individual to be called upon when making judgments or decisions. There is considerable variation in this respect among the public (Converse, 1962, 1964; Luskin, 1987), and these differences affect the ways in which people take up and make use of information (see also Zaller, 1992). When studying the moderating influence of political sophistication, scholars often distinguish between political interest and political knowledge. Luskin (1987) showed that these two variables normally moderate effects in the same way, but that the moderating effect of knowledge is substantially stronger. It seems that the two variables tap into the same latent trait, but measures of factual knowledge are less affected by social desirability bias as they are not based on self-reported interest or activity in politics. Moreover, issue voting also requires actual knowledge about party positions (see also, Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011). On the basis of this work, we will investigate the moderating effects for political knowledge on the degree of EU issue voting in EP elections.

At the individual-level, we test two hypotheses. First, we expect to find some degree of EU issue voting in the 2009 EP elections. Voters are expected to vote for the party that most accurately resembles their EU positions, i.e. the smallest distance hypothesis (cf. Downs, 1957; Enelow and Hinich, 1984: 38). This expectation is formalized in hypothesis H1:

EU Issue Voting Hypothesis (H1): As the distance between a voter and a party on the issue of European integration increases, the likelihood to vote for this party decreases.

Notwithstanding, we also suggested that since the EU and the process of European integration is quite technical in nature and Brussels is often quite far removed from the ordinary lives of citizens, EU issue voting may require high levels of political interest and engagement. Accordingly, we would expect higher levels of EU issue voting among the political sophisticated, see hypothesis H2:

Political Sophistication Hypothesis (H2): The negative effect of distance between a voter and a party on the issue of European integration on the likelihood to vote for this party increases in strength with higher levels of political sophistication.

Contextual political information and EU issue voting

In addition to the moderating impact of political sophistication on EU issue voting at the level of voters, we also expect such issue voting to depend on the availability of contextual political information. Previous work on the role of EU issue voting in EP and national elections as well as in EU referendum campaigns has demonstrated the important role of issue salience and party conflict as factors facilitating issue voting (de Vries, 2007, 2009; Hobolt, 2009; Hobolt et al., 2009). We therefore expect the degree of mass media attention and the level of conflict among political parties about Europe to affect the extent of EU issue voting.

At the time of an election, it is difficult for voters to weigh parties' stances on every policy issue when deciding to cast their ballot, particularly because most voters are relatively ill-informed about specific policy positions of parties. As a result, voters as bounded rational citizens (Simon, 1985) rely on agenda setting by the mass media when acquiring political information for deciding which party to vote for (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Popkin, 1991; Bartels, 1993; Druckman and Parkin, 2005; Della Vigna and Kaplan, 2007). Media attention to a policy issue thus facilitates issue voting as it provides voters with important cognitive cues when casting their ballot. Previous studies demonstrated that the increased media attention to EU politics at the time of an EU summit meeting of European government leaders indeed changed attitudes towards the EU (Semetko et al., 2003) and primed citizens to evaluate leaders more strongly on the basis of these EU attitudes (Van der Brug et al., 2007a). Consequently, we expect more EU issue voting when media attention regarding the issue is higher.

Party conflict involves parties taking clearly differentiated stances on an issue, thereby providing citizens with clear choices on the matter. When parties take diverging stances, the clarity of the parties' issue positions can be expected to increase among the electorate, and this in turn enables voters to better relate their own issue positions to those of political parties (Carmines and Stimson, 1986: 902-3). Party conflict matters for issue voting as contrasts in their issue positions offer voters 'real' choices on the policy issue at hand, as well as a useful yardstick to relate their own position on an issue to that of the parties. If parties do not provide issue options, voters are forced to put their policy attitudes on ice at the time of an election. In the case of EU issue voting, the effect of EU issue voting should thus increase when parties provide diverging issue positions regarding the EU (de Vries, 2007; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004: 39).

So, at the contextual-level we expect the degree of EU issue voting to increase in contexts that provide higher levels of media reporting on the EU, and higher levels of party conflict over European integration. This expectation is formalized in hypothesis H3:

Contextual Political Information Hypothesis (H3): The degree of EU issue voting (see H1) is largest in contexts with high levels of media attention to and party conflict about European integration.

The notion that EU issue voting is most prominent among politically sophisticated citizens, and in contexts where media attention and party conflict regarding the issue are high, links up well with the literature on issue evolution (Carmines and Stimson, 1986, 1989, 1993). The term issue evolution refers to the emergence and development of policy issues that invoke public interest. According to Carmines and Stimson, citizens with high levels of political knowledge, often referred to as opinion leaders, are very important in early stages of the process by which new issues politicize. Opinion leaders are seen as the "agents of change" in politics. They are the first to engage with a new issue and by discussing it among friends, family and co-workers they influence 'ordinary' voters (Carmines and Stimson, 1989: 93).

Following this logic, we thus expect EU issue voting to be the realm of the politically sophisticated due to the complex and distant nature of European integration. This being said, we also expect that the degree to which political sophistication facilitates EU issue voting will depend on the amount of information that the political context provides citizens about EU matters. When media attention and party conflict regarding European integration is low, there will be no or hardly any EU issue voting even among the most sophisticated citizens (see Fig. 1). When media attention and party conflict increases, we expect that politically sophisticated voters are the first to engage with the issue. Since less sophisticated voters are less likely to do so, the difference in EU issue voting between the least sophisticated and most sophisticated voters is expected to increase with increasing contextual information. Only at an intermediate level of media attention and party conflict do we expect the least sophisticated voters to start connecting with the issue. At this point, indicated with a dotted line in Fig. 1, we suspect to find EU issue voting to be rather strong among the politically sophisticated, but still quite weak among the least sophisticated voters. At this intermediate level of media attention and party conflict the difference between the most and least sophisticated voters is expected to be the largest. At very high levels of political contestation, we would expect even the least sophisticated voters to vote on the basis of the issue, so that the difference between these groups of voters would be smaller.

Prior research tells us that media attention to EU issues and party conflict about European integration is still fairly limited, so that most contexts are likely to fall into the lower ends of contextual political information spectrum (Peter et al., 2003; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004; de Vreese et al., 2006; Green-Pedersen, 2007). As can be seen in Fig.1, at the lower end of the contextual information scale, the difference between the least and most sophisticated voters increases when contextual information increases from low to intermediate levels. On this basis we formulate our final hypothesis.

Context Dependent Political Sophistication Hypothesis (H4): There is a positive relationship between the level of contextual political information regarding European integration and the extent to which political sophistication mediates EU issue voting.

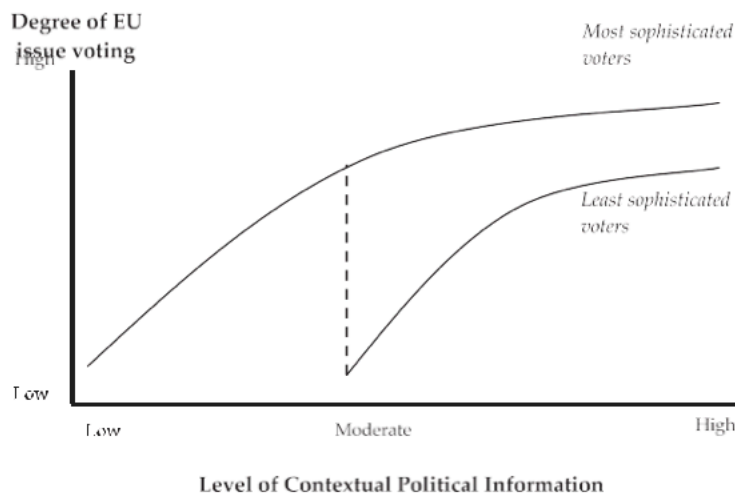


Fig. 1. A Model of individual and contextual heterogeneity in EU Issue Voting.

Data, methods and operationalizations

In order to test our hypotheses we need a measure of the extent of EU issue voting. Three variables are in this respect of central importance: voters' party choice in the 2009 EP elections and the distances between their self-placement on a European integration scale and their perceptions of parties' positions on that same scale. The goal of the empirical analysis is to explore the degree of EU issue voting in the

2009 EP elections and the extent to which that is conditional upon voters' political sophistication and upon contextual information provided by media and political parties.

In order to estimate the effect of EU attitudes on vote choice and the moderation effects of individual- and contextual-level political information, we employ a two-stage multi-level conditional logit model. The choice for conditional logit allows, as we explain below, the use of not only case-specific independent variables, but also of alternative-specific ones. Estimating conditional logit coefficients across different countries is complicated, however, by the country-specific number of available choice options, as well as their qualitatively different character across countries. These conceptual and methodological problems involved in modeling all parameters in a single step have not yet been adequately solved. Moreover, when fitting such a complex model in a hierarchical setting one frequently runs into computational difficulties (for a discussion of one- and two-stage MLM, see Gelman, 2005). As an alternative to a one-stage multi-level model we used a two-step hierarchical estimation procedure (Achen, 2005; Duch and Stevenson, 2005, 2008; Franzese, 2005; Lewis and Linzer, 2005). This is a special case of multi-level modeling (MLM) in which we obtain first-level results fitted to each country separately and then explore their variation across countries in a separate second-level model whilst accounting for the uncertainty of the computed first-level estimates (see Lewis and Linzer, 2005). The two-stage procedure constitutes a reasonable alternative to a one-stage MLM model, particularly because several studies cross-validating both approaches have shown that two-stage MLM models yield essentially the same results as long as the number of respondents per country in the dataset is sufficiently large, a condition that is clearly satisfied in our case, as each country sample contains approximately 1000 respondents (see Jusko and Shiveley, 2005; Duch and Stevenson, 2005).

The first stage of this procedure estimates for each context an individual-level conditional logistic (CL) regression analysis, which models the impact of the distance between a voter's self- and party placement regarding European integration on vote choice as well as the interactions of this distance with political knowledge. In the second stage, an estimated dependent variable model is used to examine whether media attention to and party conflict about European integration can account for the variation in EU issue voting between countries, and for the differences in the moderation effect of political sophistication.

The individual-level data are derived from the European Parliament Election Survey (EES) 2009, Advance Release (EES, 2009a; Van Egmond et al., 2010). The survey was conducted among representative samples of the electorates of all 27 EU member states, and focussed on electoral behaviour and political attitudes. The contextual data on media attention regarding EU issues in the 2009 EP campaign are derived from the EES 2009 Media Study, Advance Release, (EES, 2009b; Schuck et al., 2010). The level of party conflict is measured by the standard deviation of the positions of parties on a European integration scale, where those positions are obtained from the interpolated median of voters' perceptions of these parties in EES 2009. Note that we distinguish 28 contexts in total since we treat Flanders and Wallonia as two separate party systems.²

Let us begin by explaining in some detail the multiple stages of the model. The first stage of the empirical analysis employs an individual-level CL regression model to establish the extent of EU issue voting in the 2009 EP elections for each of the 28 political systems under investigation. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis is inappropriate because the dependent variable is a categorical variable with multiple values, i.e. vote choice for different parties (see Alvarez and Nagler, 1998; Agresti, 2002). Since we are interested to model the variation in the extent of EU issue voting in each system in the second stage, we employ a conditional logit (CL) regression model to estimate the degree to which the distances between voters' self- and party placements on an EU scale influence their party choices. The dependent variable is vote choice in the 2009 EP election. The CL regression model allows us to introduce two types of independent variables: alternative-specific and case-specific (McFadden, 1974). Alternative-specific variables vary across both cases (i.e. individuals) and alternatives (i.e. parties), and case-specific

² As it is not possible for voters in the Flemish region to cast a ballot for Wallonian parties and vice versa, Belgium is effectively a two system country. For this reason Flanders and Wallonia are treated separately.

variables vary only across cases. We include two alternative-specific variables, namely left/right distance and EU distance.

EU distance is operationalized as the distance between a voter's self-placement and her perception of a party's position on a European unification scale ranging from 0 ('integration has already gone too far') and 10 ('integration should be pushed forward'). To assess the importance of the European integration issue in relation to other central concerns influencing voters' electoral choices, we include several non-EU related policy variables and socio-economic controls. First, the distance between a voter's self-placement and perception of a party's position on a left/right scale ranging from 0 ('left') to 10 ('right') was added. Next, we include government approval as a case-specific control variable (approval was coded as 1 and disapproval as 0). The inclusion of this variable is important as previous research suggests that voting behaviour for the EP is often a reflection of national considerations such as approval of the current national government (see for example Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Marsh, 1998; Schmitt, 2005). Additional case-specific control variables tap into voters' perceptions of the economy. We included respondents' retrospective and prospective economic considerations (ranging from 1 a lot worse to 5 a lot better). Finally, several case-specific socio-economic control variables were included in the model: religiosity (ranging from 1 never attend religious services to 6 attend them several times a week), perceived social class (1 working through 5 upper class), and education (ranging from no qualifications to university education).³

In order to determine whether political sophistication moderates the degree of EU issue voting, we also include an interaction between EU distance and political knowledge. Political knowledge is measured by the the factual correctness of respondents' answers to several statements relating to the EU and the national system. In order to assess whether they relate to a single latent dimension, the responses to these items were analysed on a pooled sample of all countries by means of an ordinal IRT model (Mokken, 1971). By constructing a scale on the basis of all countries combined, we are able to adequately compare our results across contexts. The EES 2009 includes seven knowledge questions relating to EU and national political knowledge. We were able to construct a satisfactory political knowledge scale ($H > .3$) on the basis of four different items: whether Switzerland is a member of the EU; the number of EU member states; whether all countries elect the same number of members to the EP; and finally the number of parliamentary seats in the national parliament.

After the CL regressions are estimated, the second stage of the analysis proceeds by modeling the (contextual) variation in EU issue voting. To ensure substantively meaningful comparability across countries, the first stage CL coefficients are transformed into predicted vote probabilities (see also Duch and Stevenson, 2005, 2008). We estimate the change in the predicted probability of voting for the party that was actually chosen when EU distance decreases from one standard deviation above the mean to one standard deviation below the mean, while holding all other control variables at their respective means. These changes in predicted vote probabilities thus make up the estimated dependent variable in the second stage.

In order to explore contextual variation in the moderation effect of political sophistication on EU issue voting, we compared the change in predicted vote probability when EU distance decreases (i.e. first differences) between respondents with high and those with low levels of political knowledge. For example, in the case of the interaction effect between political knowledge and EU distance in Austria, we find that moving EU distance from one standard deviation above the mean to one standard deviation below the mean increases the predicted vote probability by 12.5% for respondents who exhibit high

³ To ensure ensure proper estimation, the CL regression models also include party dummies. These dummies pick up most the effects of party size that elsewhere have been shown to be important in modeling electoral choice (e.g., Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996). However, in some systems, we could not perform the analysis including party dummies and government approval simultaneously due to high levels of multi-collinearity. In Bulgaria, Finland, France, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom, we included government approval rather than party dummies in the final analyses as government approval is at the heart of the second-order elections model. We did inspect models including either governmental approval or party dummies and these yield almost identical results.

levels of political knowledge, and by only 6.4% for those who have low levels of political knowledge. Hence, the moderation effect of political interest, i.e. the difference between respondents with a high versus low level of political knowledge, on EU issue voting is 6.1% in Austria. We calculated these differences for the moderation effect of political knowledge on the extent of EU issue voting in the same way for each of the 28 contexts.⁴

To investigate the effects of contextual factors, the predicted changes in vote probabilities are regressed on the two measures of contextual political information, namely media attention towards EU issues in the 2009 EP campaign and the degree of party conflict regarding European integration. Media attention is operationalized by the attention given in the print and TV media to EU related topics in the EP election campaign. In terms of print media all news stories containing information about the EU were coded in the Political/News, Editorial and Business sections. In order to arrive at the degree of attention to EU versus other news, all other news stories on the front page and a randomly selected second page were coded. A measure of newspaper attention to EU related issues is obtained by dividing the number of EU news stories by all news stories in the 2009 EP campaign in each of the 28 different systems. The attention to EU issues in TV news was constructed by the coding of the content of news items in news shows on both the public and private TV channels that are watched most frequently. Details of the measures of media attention to EU issues are provided by Schuck et al. (2011). We constructed a combined EU media attention variable by adding the newspaper and TV attention variables, which seemed justified in view of the strong correlation between them ($r = .7$; $p < .001$ two-tailed).⁵ The degree of party conflict within each of the 28 contexts is measured by the standard deviation of the interpolated mean of voters' placements of the different party positions on the European unification scale within each system using the EES 2009 data.⁶

Empirical results

We first test the EU Issue Voting Hypothesis (H1) and the Contextual Political Information Hypothesis (H3). Recall that we expect voters to vote for the party that most accurately resembles their EU positions (i.e. the smallest distance hypothesis). The existence of EU issue voting is thus reflected in negative and statistically significant CL coefficients for EU distance. In other words, a larger distance between a respondent's EU position and a party's EU position should lead to a smaller likelihood of voting for that party. Table 1 presents the results of the CL analyses of 2009 EP vote choice in each of the 28 different systems. Due to space limitations Table 1 only provides the CL estimates for left/right and EU distance, but these results are based on a fully specified model including government approval, economic voting indicators and socio-economic controls.⁷

⁴ In order to calculate the difference in these changes of predicted vote probabilities between respondents with high and low political sophistication, we dichotomized the political knowledge scale by separating out score above and below the mean score.

⁵ A Mokken scaling analysis produced an H coefficient of .68 indicating a strong scale.

⁶ Note that we also estimated the models presented in Tables 2 and 3 using the standard deviation between parties' EU positions weighted by vote share and obtained identical results.

⁷ The full results of the CL models are available upon request from the authors.

Table 1: Extent of EU Issue Voting in 2009 EP Election

Countries	Left/Right distance		EU distance		Model summary	
	Estimates	SE	Estimates	SE	Summary statistics	
Austria	-.28**	.04	-.13**	.04	Pseudo R ² : .38	LR C ² : 453.69**
BelgiumFlanders	-.23**	.07	-.13*	.07	Pseudo R ² : .37	LR C ² : 177.79**
Belgium-Wallonia	-.33**	.08	-.01	.08	Pseudo R ² : .14	LR C ² : 39.59**
Bulgaria	-.49**	.05	-.09	.06	Pseudo R ² : .50	LR C ² : 419.42**
Cyprus	-.43**	.03	-.12**	.05	Pseudo R ² : .49	LR C ² : 910.53**
CzechRepublic	-.44**	.04	-.06	.05	Pseudo R ² : .46	LR C ² : 432.49**
Denmark	-.33**	.03	-.12**	.03	Pseudo R ² : .32	LR C ² : 1112.13**
Estonia	-.33**	.06	-.11*	.06	Pseudo R ² : .40	LR C ² : 288.52**
Finland	-.63**	.05	-.22**	.05	Pseudo R ² : .38	LR C ² : 590.90**
France	-.18**	.05	-.03	.02	Pseudo R ² : .54	LR C ² : 305.21**
Germany	-.41**	.05	-.16**	.05	Pseudo R ² : .35	LR C ² : 412.49**
Greece	-.41**	.04	-.15**	.03	Pseudo R ² : .45	LR C ² : 789.71**
Hungary	-.64**	.07	.04	.05	Pseudo R ² : .64	LR C ² : 733.52**
Ireland	-.20**	.03	-.09**	.03	Pseudo R ² : .34	LR C ² : 552.85**
Italy	-.60**	.07	-.05	.06	Pseudo R ² : .54	LR C ² : 500.20**
Latvia	-.30**	.04	.07	.05	Pseudo R ² : .25	LR C ² : 372.05**
Lithuania	-.36**	.05	-.17**	.06	Pseudo R ² : .49	LR C ² : 290.64**
Luxembourg	-.23**	.04	.04	.05	Pseudo R ² : .31	LR C ² : 353.04**
Malta	-.40**	.10	-.18	.12	Pseudo R ² : .78	LR C ² : 353.81**
Netherlands	-.57**	.06	-.26**	.07	Pseudo R ² : .47	LR C ² : 539.80**
Poland	-.33**	.04	-.18**	.05	Pseudo R ² : .43	LR C ² : 326.41**
Portugal	-.52**	.06	-.12**	.06	Pseudo R ² : .39	LR C ² : 320.25**
Romania	-.28**	.04	-.18**	.05	Pseudo R ² : .34	LR C ² : 233.67**
Slovakia	-.46**	.06	-.17**	.08	Pseudo R ² : .46	LR C ² : 344.35**
Slovenia	-.18**	.03	-.13*	.04	Pseudo R ² : .38	LR C ² : 509.85**
Spain	-.52**	.08	-.01	.09	Pseudo R ² : .68	LR C ² : 392.97**
Sweden	-.42**				Pseudo R ² : .30	LR C ² : 895.25**
United Kingdom	-.27**	.04	-.05	.03	Pseudo R ² : .33	LR C ² : 467.15**

The results lend support for the EU Issue Voting Hypothesis as we find that the coefficient of EU distance is both negative and statistically significant in 17 of the 28 systems, even when we control for national considerations such as economic evaluations or government approval. We do not find evidence of EU issue voting in Belgium-Wallonia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain and the United Kingdom. So, in the majority of systems voters drew upon their EU attitudes when casting their ballot in the 2009 EP election.

To facilitate visual inspection of the variation in the extent of EU issue voting across the 28 systems, we transformed the CL estimates for EU issue distance presented in Table 1 into more intuitive quantities, namely changes in predicted probability of voting for the party actually chosen when we move EU distance from one standard deviation above the mean to one standard deviation below the mean while holding all other variables at their respective means. Fig. 2 provides these results.

Fig. 2 shows first of all that some degree of EU issue voting exists in most countries: in 25 systems the direction of the estimated effects are in the hypothesized direction, and in 17 of these the effects are significant. In 11 systems, however, the effect is either in the ‘wrong’ direction, or it is not significant, but in no case it is significant and in the ‘wrong’ direction. Our first hypothesis thus received considerable, but not fully unequivocal empirical support. The degree of EU issue voting varies quite substantially between the 28 different systems. It is the highest in Malta with 16% (in terms of the quantities displayed in Fig. 2) and not less than 5% in any of the countries where the effect is significant.

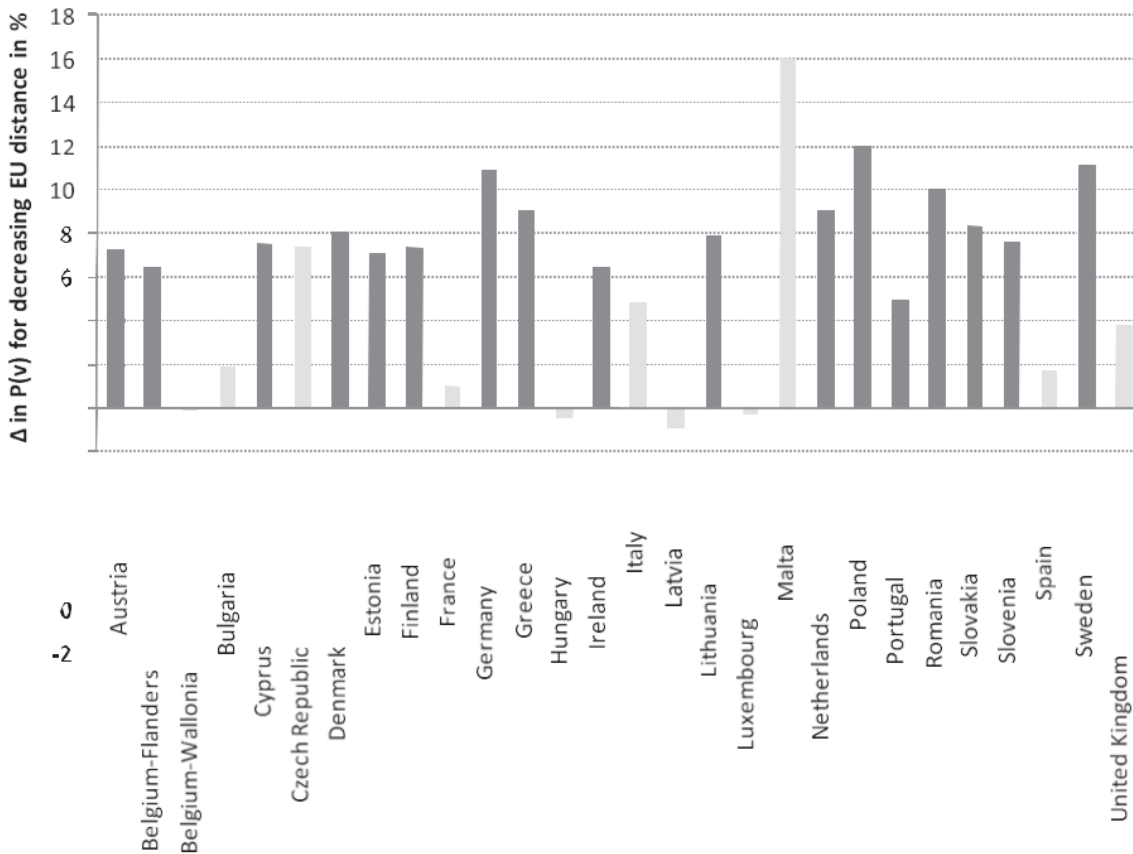


Fig. 2. Variation in EU Issue Voting across the 28 Systems. Notes: The values on the y-axis denote the change in the predicted vote probability $P(v)$ as a function of a decreasing EU distance, i.e. when the distance between a voter's self- and a party placement on the European unification scale moves from one standard deviation above to one standard deviation below the mean. Positive values indicate an increase in the expected vote probability as a result of decreasing EU distance (i.e. higher proximity), while negative values indicate a decrease in the expected vote probability. Dark grey bars indicate effects that are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, whereas light grey bars signify effects that are not statistically significant.

Now we turn to the question of which factors explain the variation in EU issue voting across contexts. In the second stage of the analysis, we utilize the changes in predicted vote probabilities depicted in Fig. 2 as dependent variable to determine whether their differences can be explained by contextual factors. Table 2 provides the results of an OLS regression analysis in which we regress the degree of EU issue voting on the extent of media attention to and party conflict about European integration. Since the dependent variable in this second stage of the analysis is based on estimates, the analysis should take the uncertainty of these estimates into account. Lewis and Linzer (2005) proposed a weighting

procedure that produces appropriate standard errors for the second stage, and they also demonstrate that White's heteroskedastic consistent standard error is almost always equally good. The latter is used here.

Table 2: Explaining Contextual Variation in EU Issue Voting

Predictors	Estimates	Robust SE
Media Attention	1.59**	.54
Party Conflict	1.10*	.66
Constant	6.26**	.71
R ²	.27	
F-Test	14.75**	
DF	25	
N	28	

Notes: **statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, * at $p < .05$ level (one-tailed). Cell entries represent OLS regression estimates with robust standard errors. The dependent variable used in this analysis is the change in the predicted vote probability $P(v)$ as a function of a decreasing EU distance, i.e. when the EU distance moves from one standard deviation above to one standard deviation below the mean.

Table 3: Explaining Contextual Variation in the Conditional Effect of Political Knowledge on EU Issue Voting

Predictors	Estimates	Robust SE
Media Attention	1.81**	.50
Party Conflict	.11	.56
Constant	4.26**	.69
R ²	.21	
F-Test	6.69**	
DF	25	
N	28	

Notes: **statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, * at $p < .05$ level (one-tailed). Cell entries represent OLS regression estimates with robust standard errors. The dependent variable used in this analysis is the difference in the change in the predicted vote probability $P(v)$ as a function of a decreasing EU distance, i.e. when the EU distance moves from one standard deviation above to one standard deviation below the mean, between respondents with high levels of political knowledge versus respondents with low levels.

The results in Table 2 provide clear empirical support for our Contextual Political Information Hypothesis (H3) that states that EU issue voting is most pronounced in contexts with high levels of media attention to and party conflict about European integration. We find positive and statistically significant coefficients for both independent variables.⁸ Overall, the two contextual information factors explain close to 30% of the variance in EU issue voting between countries. These findings demonstrate that voters are most inclined to act upon their EU preferences when casting their ballot when media pay much attention to the EU and when parties offer clear choices when it comes to European integration.

⁸ These results are robust when we drop one country at a time.

These findings are in line with research about EU issue voting in national elections (see Tillman, 2004 and de Vries, 2007 for example). In the next step, we examine the extent to which the degree of EU issue voting is moderated by voters' political sophistication. As elaborated earlier, we expect EU issue voting to be facilitated by political sophistication (Political Sophistication Hypothesis, H2). Fig. 3 provides the results for the interaction effect of the EU distance between voter and party positions on the one hand and political knowledge on the other. The dots in the figure represent the point estimates of the CL coefficients for the interaction effects. The horizontal lines depict the 95% confidence intervals. The range of the parameter estimates is displayed on the x-axis, while the 28 systems are denoted on the y-axis. Table A1 in the appendix provides more detailed results as well as model fit statistics.

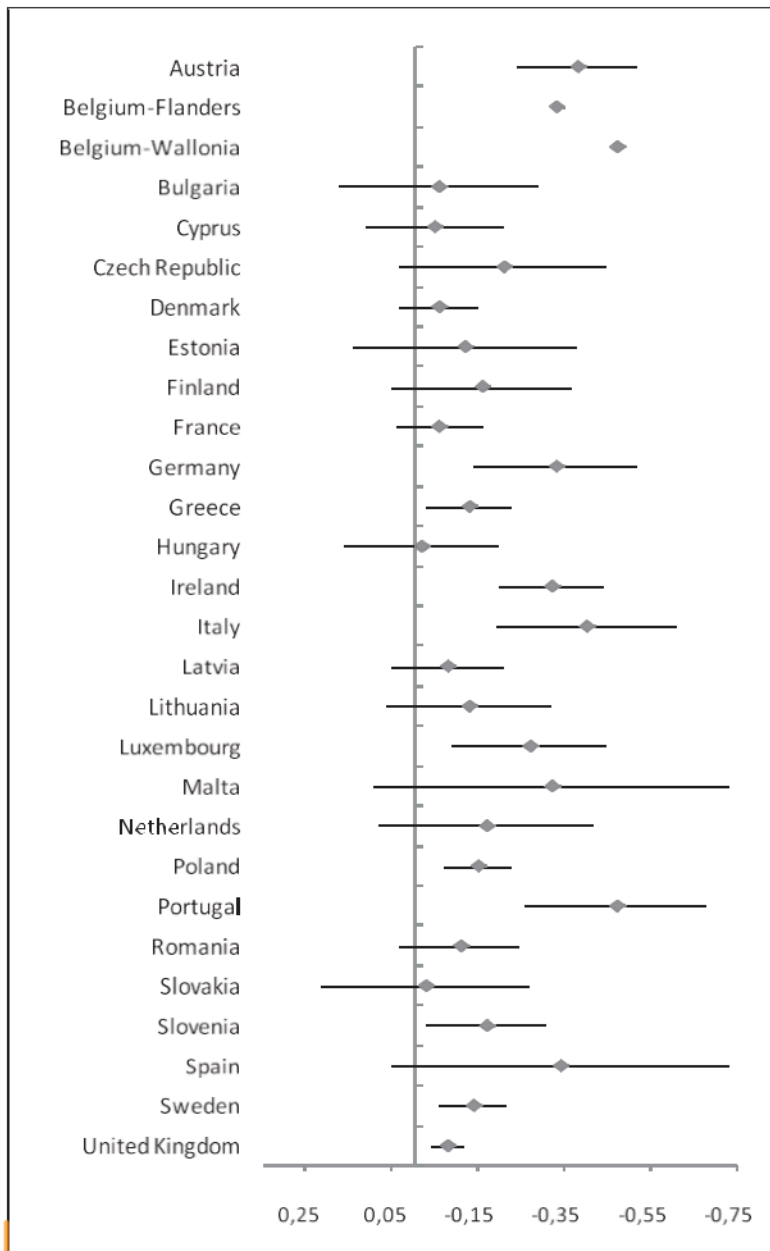


Fig. 3. Interaction Effect Political Knowledge. Notes: The dots represent the point estimates of the CL coefficients for the interaction effect between EU distance and political knowledge. The horizontal lines depict the 95% confidence intervals. The range of the parameter estimates is displayed on the x-axis, while the 28 systems are denoted on the y-axis.

As the interaction pertains to distances that themselves are negatively related with choice, an interaction that strengthens this effect will be negatively signed. Fig. 3 indicates that the coefficients

are uniformly negative indeed, but not always statistically significant.⁹ The interaction between political knowledge and EU distance is negative and statistically significant in only roughly a third of the cases. In eight systems, namely Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, we find that political knowledge significantly increases the effect of EU distance on EP vote choice.¹⁰

Having established that these interactions acquire significance in some instances, we can subsequently assess what these instances have in common. We therefore consider whether the moderation effect of political sophistication on EU issue voting is conditional on the degree of political information provided by the mass media or by the extent to which political parties differ in their stances towards European integration. Table 3 presents the relevant findings, using the same approach as was used in the analyses presented earlier in Table 2. The (estimated) dependent variable used in these models are derived from the individual-level CL analyses presented in Fig. 3: the difference between respondents with high and low political knowledge in the change of predicted probabilities for voting for the party that was actually chosen between when varying EU distance from one standard deviation above, to one standard deviation below the mean, while holding all other control variables at their respective means. Significant coefficients in Table 3 thus indicate that the strength of the interaction effect co-varies with the contextual factors that are used as independent variables.

Table 3 provides OLS coefficients with White's heteroskedastic consistent standard errors.¹¹ The results above present the effects of the independent (contextual) variables on the interaction effect of political sophistication on EU issue voting. In line with the Context Dependent Political Information Hypothesis (H4) we find a positive and statistically significant coefficient for media attention on the moderation effect of political knowledge on EU issue voting. However, we find only partial support for our fourth hypothesis as the degree of party conflict over Europe does not affect the moderation effect of individual-level knowledge. So although not uniformly for both components of contextual information, we do find a stronger moderation effect of political knowledge in contexts where the mass media provide more information about European integration. This finding is in accordance with our theoretical expectation.

Conclusion

We conclude this study by discussing its contributions to our understanding of the role of European integration in EP elections and to the study of comparative voting behaviour generally. Subsequently, we suggest some directions for further research on this topic.

This study started with three central premises. First, we expect party choice in EP elections to be determined – at least to some extent – by attitudes towards Europe. Second, we expect systematic differences between more and less sophisticated voters in the extent to which attitudes towards Europe matter in this regard. Thirdly, we expect systematic differences in EU issue voting between contexts, where we hypothesize that the amount of relevant information provided by a context

⁹ We also performed these analyses using alternative aspects of political sophistication: political interest and campaign activity. These analyses show similar patterns as reported in Fig. 3 and Table A1, but somewhat less clearly so. This is not surprising in light of the evidence put forward by Luskin (1987) and others that factual knowledge is the most appropriate indicator of political sophistication as it not biased by social desirability, as it does not rely on self-reported interest or activity in politics.

¹⁰ We are aware of the risk of alpha inflation when performing 28 simultaneous tests. The reader should be aware of the problem that capitalisation on chance alone would generate approximately 1.5 effects appearing as significant, and that correcting for the large number of simultaneous tests will yield somewhat larger confidence intervals. As a consequence, the findings may be somewhat weaker than they appear to be at first instance. Yet, these inferential problems cannot account for all the significant effects that we find.

¹¹ These results are robust when we drop one country at a time.

matters; information that can be generated by media attention to Europe, or by polarization between parties' positions on matters relating to European integration. Using a two-step hierarchical estimation procedure to explore both individual and contextual variation, we demonstrated that some degree of EU issue voting by 2009 is indeed wide-spread, and that it is more pronounced among the politically sophisticated and within contexts that provide higher levels of information regarding European matters.

Our finding of individual-level heterogeneity in EU issue voting merits further study. The relevance of the finding that politically sophisticated citizens in particular engage in EU issue voting is that they are more likely to be opinion leaders who often act as the "agents of change" in politics (Berelson et al., 1954; Carmines and Stimson, 1989). This makes them disproportionately influential in their social contexts, where they inform and persuade friends, family and co-workers. Even though citizen activists and opinion leaders may be few in the general public, they often carry more weight than their mere numbers suggest (see also Carmines and Stimson, 1989: 89). Moreover, the highly competitive nature of many elections should remind us that even "small effects may have large consequences" (Van der Brug and van der Eijk, 2007: 270; see also: Van der Brug et al., 2007b). Thus, the finding that politically knowledgeable citizens are more likely to vote on the basis of EU attitudes may signal future increases in the prevalence of EU issue voting amongst others.

Similarly, our results regarding the conditioning role of context are of relevance as they imply that actions of media and political parties may either help or obstruct EU issue voting. EU issue voting increases when media attention to and party conflict about the issue are high. This is in line with existing work on cueing and priming effects of the media and political parties (see, e.g., de Vreese, 2003; Ray, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Hobolt, 2009). However, we believe that future work should also address how citizens' attitudes towards the EU affect their behaviour when media provide little information or when parties are little distinct in their stances. Do such contexts depress turnout or facilitate protest voting? Our results thus far lead us to expect that the extent and form of EU issue voting will be crucially shaped by the strategic decisions of national political elites, the coverage by media and the activities of politically sophisticated citizens.

Acknowledgements

A previous version of this paper was presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago, 22–25 April 2010. The authors would like to thank the discussant Robert Rohrschneider as well as other participants for their useful suggestions. In addition, the authors are indebted to Mark Franklin and Sara Hobolt for their extensive comments and suggestions on previous versions of this paper. We are also grateful to Schuck et al. (2011) for providing us with the media context data. Finally, Catherine de Vries acknowledges the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for providing financial support for this research (NWO VENI Grant 451-08-001).

Appendix

Table A1: Interaction between EU distance and Political knowledge

Countries	Left/Right distance		EU distance		EU distance × Political knowledge		Summary statistics
	Estimates	SE	Estimates	SE	Estimates	SE	
Austria	-.30**	.04	.12	.10	-.38*	.14	Pseudo R ² : .39 LR C ² : 462.46**
Belgium Flanders	-.25**	.07	.02	.18	-.33	.27	Pseudo R ² : .37 LR C ² : 162.06**
Belgium-Wallonia	-.32**	.09	.27	.23	-.47	.34	Pseudo R ² : .16 LR C ² : 42.65**
Bulgaria	-.53**	.06	-.08	.17	-.06	.23	Pseudo R ² : .48 LR C ² : 322.28**
Cyprus	-.41**	.03	-.11	.07	-.05	.16	Pseudo R ² : .49 LR C ² : 877.38**
Czech Republic	-.44**	.06	.08	.17	-.21	.24	Pseudo R ² : .45 LR C ² : 184.91**
Denmark	-.33**	.03	-.09*	.04	-.06	.09	Pseudo R ² : .32 LR C ² : 1106.06**
Estonia	-.32**	.05	-.11	.10	-.12	.26	Pseudo R ² : .40 LR C ² : 274.89**
Finland	-.63**	.05	-.15	.12	-.16	.21	Pseudo R ² : .37 LR C ² : 578.57**
France	-.19**	.05	-.01	.05	-.06	.10	Pseudo R ² : .57 LR C ² : 317.45**
Germany	-.43**	.05	.06	.14	-.33*	.19	Pseudo R ² : .36 LR C ² : 382.32**
Greece	-.12**	.10	-.11*	.05	-.13	.10	Pseudo R ² : .46 LR C ² : 1772.00**
Hungary	-.66**	.07	.05	.12	-.02	.18	Pseudo R ² : .64 LR C ² : 732.94**
Ireland	-.21**	.03	.08	.07	-.32**	.12	Pseudo R ² : .35 LR C ² : 566.56**
Italy	-.61**	.07	.15	.12	-.40*	.21	Pseudo R ² : .55 LR C ² : 498.73**
Latvia	-.31**	.04	.12	.08	-.08	.13	Pseudo R ² : .25 LR C ² : 380.36**
Lithuania	-.36**	.05	-.14	.09	-.13	.19	Pseudo R ² : .49 LR C ² : 290.01**
Luxembourg	-.23**	.05	.13	.08	-.27	.18	Pseudo R ² : .32 LR C ² : 366.72**
Malta	-.42**	.10	-.08	.20	-.32	.41	Pseudo R ² : .78 LR C ² : 356.72**
Netherlands	-.59**	.07	-.14	.18	-.17	.25	Pseudo R ² : .48 LR C ² : 539.57**
Poland	-.33**	.04	-.09	.11	-.15*	.08	Pseudo R ² : .43 LR C ² : 322.81**

Table A1 (continued)

Countries	Left/Right distance		EU distance		EU distance x Political knowledge		Summary statistics
	Estimates	SE	Estimates	SE	Estimates	SE	
Portugal	-.52**	.06	.21	.16	-.47*	.21	Pseudo R ² : .40 LR C ² : 322.62**
Romania	-.25**	.03	-.16**	.06	-.11	.14	Pseudo R ² : .38 LR C ² : 361.38**
Slovakia	-.46**	.06	-.16	.14	-.03	.24	Pseudo R ² : .46 LR C ² : 337.12**
Slovenia	-.19**	.04	-.01	.10	-.17	.14	Pseudo R ² : .39 LR C ² : 518.26**
Spain	-.50**	.09	.14	.17	-.34	.39	Pseudo R ² : .69 LR C ² : 391.64**
Sweden	-.42**	.03	-.06	.07	-.14*	.08	Pseudo R ² : .30 LR C ² : 908.53**
United Kingdom	-.28**	.05	-.03	.10	-.08*	.04	Pseudo R ² : .34 LR C ² : 275.75**

Notes: **statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, * at $p < .05$ level (one-tailed). Cell entries present CL regression estimates of the impact of left/right, EU distance and the interaction between EU issue distance and political knowledge on vote choice in the 2009 EP election. Each coefficient is one of a full model of vote choice estimated including the political knowledge and the control variables mentioned in the data, methods and operationalizations section. Pseudo R² values are of the McFadden variety.

References

- Achen, C.H., 2005. Two-Step hierarchical estimation: beyond regression analysis. *Political Analysis* 134, 447–456.
- Agresti, A., 2002. *Categorical Data Analysis*. John Wiley and Sons, New York.
- Alvarez, R.M., 1997. *Information and Elections*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Alvarez, R.M., Nagler, J., 1998. When politics and models collide: estimating models of multiparty elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 421, 55–96.
- Anderson, C.J., 1998. When in doubt use proxies: attitudes to domestic politics and support for the EU. *Comparative Political Studies* 314, 569–601.
- Bartels, L.M., 1993. Messages received: the political impact of media exposure. *American Political Science Review* 872, 267–285.
- Basinger, S.J., Lavine, H., 2005. Ambivalence, information and electoral choice. *American Political Science Review* 992, 169–184.
- Berelson, B.R., Lazarsfeld, P.F., McPhee, W.N., 1954. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P.E., Miller, W.E., Stokes, D.E., 1960. *The American Voter*. Wiley, New York.
- Carey, S., 2002. Undivided loyalties: is national identity an obstacle to European integration? *European Union Politics* 3, 387–413.
- Carmines, E.G., Stimson, J.A., 1986. On the structure and sequence of issue evolution. *American Political Science Review* 803, 901–920.
- Carmines, E.G., Stimson, J.A., 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American politics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Carmines, E.G., Stimson, J., 1993. The two faces of issue voting. In: Niemi, R., Weisberg, H. (Eds.), *Classics in Voting Behavior: Congressional Quarterly Press*, Washington, DC, pp. 114–119.
- Carrubba, C.J., 2001. The electoral connection in European Union politics. *Journal of Politics* 631, 141–158.

- Converse, P.E., 1962. Information flow and the stability of partisan attitudes. *Political Research Quarterly* 263, 578–599.
- Converse, P.E., 1964. The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In: Apter, D.A. (Ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*. Free Press of Glencoe, London, pp. 206–261.
- Della Vigna, S., Kaplan, E., 2007. The Fox news effect: media bias and voting. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 1123, 1187–1234.
- de Vreese, C., 2003. *Framing Europe: Television News and European Integration*. Aksant Academic Publishers, Amsterdam.
- de Vreese, C.H., Banducci, S., Semetko, H.A., Boomgaarden, H.G., 2006. The news coverage of the 2004 European parliamentary election campaign in 25 countries. *European Union Politics* 73, 477–504.
- de Vries, C.E., 2007. Sleeping Giant: fact or fairytale? How European integration affects vote choice in national elections. *European Union Politics* 83, 363–385.
- de Vries, C.E., 2009. The impact of EU referenda on national electoral politics: the Dutch case. *West European Politics* 321, 142–171.
- de Vries, C.E., 2010. EU issue voting: asset or liability? How European integration affects parties electoral Fortunes. *European Union Politics* 111, 89–117.
- de Vries, C.E., Edwards, E.E., 2009. Taking Europe to its extremes: extremist parties and public Euroscepticism. *Party Politics* 151, 5–28.
- de Vries, C.E., Tillman, E.R. 2010. European Union issue voting in East and West Europe: the role of political context. Forthcoming in *Comparative European Politics*.
- Downs, A., 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row, New York.
- Druckman, J.D., Parkin, M., 2005. The impact of media bias: how editorial slant affects voters. *Journal of Politics* 674, 1030–1049.
- Duch, R.M., Stevenson, R., 2005. Context and the economic vote: a multi- level analysis. *Political Analysis* 134, 387–409.
- Duch, R.M., Stevenson, R., 2008. *The Economic Vote: How Political and Economic Institutions Condition Election Results*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- EES, 2009a. European parliament election study 2009 voter study, Advance Release, 7/4/2010. www.piredeu.eu.
- EES, 2009b. European parliament election study 2009 media study data, Advance Release, 31/03/2010. www.piredeu.eu.
- Elgün, Ö, Tillman, E.R., 2007. Exposure to European Union policies and support for membership in the candidate countries. *Political Research Quarterly* 60, 391–400.
- Enelow, J.M., Hinich, M.J., 1984. *The Spatial Theory of Voting: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Evans, G., 1998. Euroscepticism and Conservative electoral support: how an Asset Became a Liability. *British Journal of Political Science* 284, 573–590.
- Evans, G., 2002. European integration, party politics and voting in the 2001 election. In: Bennie, L., Rallings, C., Tonge, J., Webb, P. (Eds.), *British Elections and Parties Review*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, pp. 95–110.
- Ferrera, F., Weishaupt, J.T., 2004. Get your act together: party performance in European parliament elections. *European Union Politics* 53, 283– 306.
- Franzese, R.J., 2005. Empirical strategies for various manifestations of multilevel data. *Political Analysis* 134, 430–446.
- Gabel, M.J., 1998. *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Gelman, A., 2005. Two-stage regression and multilevel modelling: a commentary. *Political Analysis* 13, 459–461.
- Green-Pedersen, C., 2007. The growing importance of issue competition: the changing nature of party competition in Western Europe. *Political Studies* 554, 608–628.
- Haas, E.B., 1958. *The Uniting of Europe*. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Hix, S., Marsh, M., 2007. Punishment or protest? Understanding European parliament elections. *Journal of Politics* 692, 495–510.

- Hix, S., Marsh, M., 2011. Second-order effects plus pan-european political swings: an analysis of european parliament elections across time. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1), 4–15.
- Hobolt, S.B., 2009. *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Hobolt, S.B., Wittrock, J., 2011. The second-order model revisited: an experimental test of vote choices in European parliament elections. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1), 29–40.
- Hobolt, S.B., Spoon, J.J., Tilley, J., 2009. A vote against Europe? Explaining defection at the 1999 and 2004 European parliament elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 391, 93–115.
- Holsti, O.R., 1992. Public opinion and foreign policy: challenges to the Almond-Lippmann consensus, *Mershon Series: Research Program and Debates. International Studies Quarterly* 36, 439–466.
- Hooghe, L., Marks, G., 2005. Calculation, community and cues: public opinion on European integration. *European Union Politics* 6, 419–443. Hooghe, L., Marks, G., 2009. A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science* 391, 1–23.
- Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Wilson, C.J., 2002. Does left/right structure party positions on European integration. *Comparative Political Studies* 358, 965–989.
- Jusko, K.L., Shiveley, W.P., 2005. Applying a two-step strategy to the analysis of cross-national public opinion data. *Political Analysis* 13, 327–344.
- Karp, J.A., Banducci, S.A., Bowler, S., 2003. To know it is to love it? satisfaction with democracy in the European Union. *Comparative Political Studies* 363, 271–292.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., Frey, T., 2006. Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research* 456, 921–956.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., Frey, T., 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Krosnick, J.A., 1988. The role of attitude importance in social evaluation: a study of policy preferences, presidential candidate evaluation, and voting behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 552, 196–210.
- Lavine, H., Sullivan, J.L., Borgida, E., Thomsen, C.J., 1996. The relationship of national and personal issue salience to attitude accessibility on foreign and domestic policy issues. *Political Psychology* 17, 293–316.
- Lewis-Beck, M.S., Stegmaier, M., 2007. Economic models of voting. In: Dalton, R.J., Klingemann, H.D. (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 518–537.
- Lewis, J.B., Linzer, D.A., 2005. Estimating regression models in which the dependent variable is based on estimates. *Political Analysis* 134, 345–364.
- Luskin, R.L., 1987. Measuring political sophistication. *American Journal of Political Science* 314, 856–899.
- Marks, G., Wilson, C.J., 2000. The past and the present: a cleavage theory of party response to European integration. *British Journal of Political Science* 303, 433–459.
- Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Nelson, M., Edwards, E., 2006. Party competition and European integration: different structure, same causality. *Comparative Political Studies* 392, 155–175.
- Marsh, M., 1998. Testing the second-order election model after four European elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 284, 591–607. Marsh, M., Mikhaylov, S., EP elections and EU governance, living reviews. In: *European Governance*, forthcoming.
- McCombs, M., Shaw, D., 1972. The agenda setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 362, 176–187.
- McFadden, D., 1974. Conditional logit analysis of qualitative choice behavior. In: Zarembka, P. (Ed.), *Frontiers in Econometrics*. New York University Press, New York, pp. 105–142.
- McLaren, L., 2002. Public support for the European Union: cost/benefit analysis or perceived cultural threat? *Journal of Politics* 64, 551–566. Mokken, R.J., 1971. *A Theory and Procedure of Scale Analysis with Applications in Political Research*. Mouton, The Hague.
- Nie, N.H., Verba, S., Petrocik, J.R., 1976. *The Changing American Voter*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Palfrey, T.R., Poole, K.T., 1987. The relationship between information, ideology and voting behavior.

American Journal of Political Science 313, 511–530.

Peter, J., Semetko, H.A., de Vreese, C.H., 2003. EU politics on TV news. *European Union Politics* 43, 305–327.

Popkin, S.L., 1991. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Ray, L., 2003. When parties matter: the conditional influence of party positions on voter opinion about European integration. *Journal of Politics* 654, 978–994.

Reif, K., Schmitt, H., 1980. Nine second-order national elections: a conceptual Framework for the analysis of European election results. *European Journal of Political Research* 81, 3–45.

Rohrschneider, R., Whitefield, S., 2007. Representation in new democracies: party stances on European integration in post-communist Eastern Europe. *Journal of Politics* 69, 1133–1146.

Rohrschneider, R., Clark, N., 2008. Second-order elections versus first-order thinking: how voters perceive the representation process in a multi-layered system of governance. *Journal of European Integration* 315, 613–632.

Schmitt, H., 2005. The European parliament elections of June 2004: still second-order? *West European Politics* 283, 650–679.

Schmitt, H., Sanz, A., Braun, D., 2008. The micro-foundations of second-order election theory: theoretical reconstructions and empirical tests based upon the European election study 2004. In: Paper Presented at the Citizen Politics Workshop. University of Manchester 9–11 2008.

Schoen, H., 2008. Turkey's bid for EU membership, contrasting views of public opinion, and vote choice: evidence from the 2005 German federal election. *Electoral Studies* 272, 344–355.

Schuck, A., Xezonakis, G., Banducci, S., de Vreese, C.H., 2010. EES 2009 media study data advance release documentation, 31/03/2010. www.piredeu.eu.

Schuck, A.R.T., Xezonakis, G., Elenbaas, M., Banducci, S., de Vreese, C.H., 2011. Party contestation and Europe on the news agenda: The 2009 European parliamentary elections. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1), 41–52.

Semetko, H.A., van der Brug, W., Valkenburg, P.M., 2003. The influence of political events on attitudes towards the European Union. *British Journal of Political Science* 334, 621–634.

Simon, H.A., 1985. Human nature in politics: the dialogue of psychology with political science. *American Political Science Review* 79, 293–305.

Steenbergen, M.R., Jones, B., 2002. Modeling multilevel data structures. *American Journal of Political Science* 461, 218–237.

Steenbergen, M.R., Edwards, E.E., de Vries, C.E., 2007. Who's cueing Whom? Mass-elite linkages and the future of European integration. *European Union Politics* 81, 13–35.

Tillman, E.R., 2004. The European Union at the ballot box? European integration and voting behavior in the new member states. *Comparative Political Studies* 375, 590–610.

Tucker, J.A., Pacek, A.C., Berinsky, A.J., 2002. Transitional winners and losers: attitudes toward EU membership in post-communist countries. *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (3), 557–571.

Van der Brug, W., Semetko, H.A., Valkenburg, P.A., 2007a. Priming in a multi-party context: the impact of European summit news on evaluations of political leaders. *Political Behavior* 291, 115–141.

Van der Brug, W., van der Eijk, C., 2007. European elections, domestic politics and European integration. In: Van der Brug, W., van der Eijk, C. (Eds.), *European Elections and Domestic Politics – Lessons from the Past and Scenarios for the Future*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 226–261.

Van der Brug, W., van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M., 2007b. *The Economy and the Vote: Economic Conditions and Elections in Fifteen Countries*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M.N. (Eds.), 1996. *Choosing Europe? the European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of the Union*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M.N., 2004. Potential for contestation on European matters at national elections in Europe. In: Marks, G., Steenbergen, M.R. (Eds.), *European Integration and Political Conflict*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 33–50.

Van Egmond, M.H., Sapir, E.V., van der Brug, W., Hobolt, S.B., Franklin, M. N., 2010. EES 2009 voter study advance release notes. University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Zaller, J., 1992. *The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

