Accepted Manuscript

Title: Mean voter representation and partisan constituency representation: Do parties respond to the mean voter position or to their supporters?

Authors: Lawrence Ezrow, Catherine De Vries, Marco Steenbergen & Erica Edwards

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810372100

Journal: Party Politics

Citation: Ezrow, L., De Vries, C., Steenbergen, M., & Edwards, E. (2011). Mean voter representation and partisan constituency representation: Do parties respond to the mean voter position or to their supporters?. Party Politics, 17(3), 275-301.

Mean voter representation and partisan constituency representation: Do parties respond to the mean voter position or to their supporters?

Lawrence Ezrow, University of Essex

Catherine De Vries, University of Amsterdam

Marco Steenbergen, University of Bern

Erica Edwards, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Accepted version, forthcoming in *Party Politics*

Abstract

Do political parties respond to shifts in the preferences of their supporters, which we label the partisan constituency model, or to shifts in the mean voter position (the general electorate model)? Cross-national analyses – based on observations from Eurobarometer surveys and parties' policy programmes in 15 countries from 1973 to 2002 – suggest that the general electorate model characterizes the policy shifts of mainstream parties. Alternatively, when we analyse the policy shifts of Communist, Green and extreme Nationalist parties (i.e. 'niche' parties), we find that these parties respond to shifts in the mean position of their supporters. The findings have implications for spatial theories and political representation.

Introduction

Do political parties respond to the ideological shifts of their supporters or to those of the mean voter in the electorate (or to neither)? Previous theoretical and empirical research stresses the primacy of the mean or median voter's policy preference as the starting point for democratic representation (Adams et al., 2004, 2006; Downs, 1957; Erikson et al., 2002; Huber and Powell, 1994; McDonald and Budge, 2005; Powell, 2000; Stimson et al., 1995). An alternative and equally compelling vision of policy representation emphasizes the policy preference of the mean party supporter in explaining party– citizen linkages (Dalton, 1985; Weissberg, 1978; Wessels, 1999), and recent research by Hobolt and Klemmenson (2009) suggests that parties cater to different constituencies at different points in the election cycle. We refer to the first model of political represen- tation as the general electorate model, and to the second as the partisan constituency model. In addition, recent work on niche parties provides convincing evidence that the type of party (i.e. 'mainstream' versus 'niche' parties) mediates linkages between parties' and citizens' policy preferences (Adams et al., 2006; Meguid, 2005, 2008).

With respect to the general electorate model and the partisan constituency model, we address the following questions: first, are shifts in the preference of the mean voter position in the general electorate accompanied by roughly corresponding policy shifts of the parties in a given party system? Alternatively, are shifts in the preferences of the party's supporters accompanied by roughly similar shifts in the party's position? Finally, are these citizen–party linkages mediated by the type of party?

The empirical analyses that we report examine political parties in 15 Western European democracies from 1973 to 2003.[1] The results reported below support the following conclusions. First, mainstream parties (i.e. parties belonging to the Social Democratic, Conservative, Christian Democratic or Liberal party families) tend to adjust their Left–Right positions in response to shifts in the mean voter position, but appear unresponsive to the policy shifts of their supporters. Second, the

[1] We include the following 15 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

opposite pattern is true for niche parties (i.e. parties belonging to the Communist, Nationalist and Green party families). Specifically, niche parties are highly sensitive to shifts in the position of their mean supporter, while they do not respond systematically to the median voter in the general electorate. Thus, each model of representation is accurate at capturing parties' policy shifts, depending on the type of party being examined.

Our results have important implications for political representation, party strategies and for spatial models of elections. With respect to political representation, Huber and Powell (1994) argue that the ideological 'congruence between citizens and policy makers' is one of the central features of democracy. Following from this perspective, G. Bingham Powell presents two visions of democracy that are based on constitutional design: the nature of party–citizen linkages varies depending on whether the political system is characterized as 'majoritarian' or 'proportional' (Powell, 2000; see also Lijphart, 1999). Complementing Powell, the typology emphasized here requires lowering the level of analysis from the country level to the party level. Specifically, when we classify parties along the lines of two recent studies by James Adams and his colleagues (2006) and Bonnie Meguid (2005) into niche and mainstream parties, an equally powerful narrative emerges that explains how parties represent the viewpoints of citizens. That is, we conclude that the general electorate model is accurate in explain- ing the policy shifts of mainstream parties and that the partisan constituency model is accurate in explaining the policy shifts of niche parties.

Furthermore, the partisan constituency result suggests an answer to the puzzle raised in Adams et al. (2006) where the authors find that niche parties do not respond to shifts in the mean voter position (i.e. public opinion). The lingering question then is to whom do niche parties respond? This second finding suggests that when public opinion is conceived in terms of party supporter preferences rather than as the mean voter position, we may also conclude that niche parties are 'responsive'.

Our findings also relate to the dynamic representation model of elections developed by Stimson et al. (1995) (see also Erikson et al., 2002), which identifies party responsiveness to shifts in public opinion as a key component to political representation.[2] Similarly, we assess the empirical validity of a partisan constituency model that is based on several influ- ential studies addressing party–constituency agreement (see Dalton, 1985; Weissberg, 1978; Wessels, 1999). Furthermore, our results corroborate and expand upon the conclusions of recent studies by Adams et al. (2006) and Meguid (2005, 2008), who present theoretical and empirical arguments suggesting that spatial theories of electoral competition (Downs, 1957; Enelow and Hinich, 1984) should account for the party families competing in elections.

Finally, our overall finding that different parties respond to different constituencies highlights the importance of developing more contextualized spatial models, particularly among the growing group of scholars who explore parties' policy strategies in real-world elections (Adams and Merrill, 1999, 2000; Adams et al., 2005; Alvarez et al., 2000; Andrews and Money, 2009; Dow, 2001; Erikson and Romero, 1990; Glasgow and Alvarez, 2005; Kedar, 2005; Lin et al., 1999; Merrill and Grofman, 1999; Schofield and Sened, 2005, 2006; Schofield et al., 1998). And, we believe our findings are more generally relevant to scholars who analyse the influence of non-policy factors on party policy positioning, including the role of national and global economic conditions (e.g. Haupt, 2010; Somer-Topcu, 2007); the influence of party-centred media coverage (Clark, 2009); voters' perceptions of party elites' competence and abilities to successfully address specific social and economic problems (Green and Hobolt, 2008); and the influence of past election results (e.g. Budge, 1994; Somer-Topcu, 2009). Our findings, in combination with these scholars' earlier results, suggest that party policy shifts are best explained by an integrated perspective that assigns a role both to public opinion and to additional factors that are not directly related to current policy debates.

[2] We note that there is a clear distinction between mean voter representation and dynamic representation. The former concerns the party–citizen linkage and 'giving voice' to electors, while the latter refers to responsiveness of governing institutions in terms of policy outputs.

Hypotheses

We develop two hypotheses; one is based on the general electorate model, and the other on the partisan constituency model. The first hypothesis concerns the linkage that is relevant to mean voter representation, namely the connection between the shifts in the mean policy preference of the electorate as a whole, and shifts in parties' policy programmes:

H1: Mean voter hypothesis. Changes in the mean voter position in the general electorate cause corresponding shifts in mainstream parties' policy positions.

Based on whether one assumes that parties are motivated by vote-seeking, office- seeking or policy-seeking objectives (see Muller and Strøm, 1999), there are persuasive arguments suggesting that shifts in the mean voter position will influence mainstream par- ties' policy shifts, perhaps at the expense of being responsive to shifts in their supporters' positions. Many scholars analysing party strategies in Western Europe have reported that these parties do indeed tend to be vote-maximizing and centre-oriented. These studies characterize mainstream parties as steadily pitching larger ideological tents in an attempt to 'catch' more voters, and this requires that these parties shed their 'ideological baggage' (Kirchheimer, 1966; see also Kitschelt, 1997; Van Kersbergen, 1999). The result is that major parties have become ideologically unhinged from particular voting sub- constituencies and instead receive policy shift signals from the centre of political systems.

Maximizing votes, as suggested by the mean voter hypothesis, may not be an end goal in itself: vote-maximization is an efficient strategy for office- and policy-seeking parties. In the former case, to the extent that a party in a multiparty system gains votes, ceteris paribus, this will enhance its position for post-election coalition negotiations. In the latter case, it is plausible to assume that as a policy-seeking party's electoral strength increases, the party will gain more leverage to pull the governing coalition's policy in its preferred direction. Adams and Merrill's (2009) theoretical study on policy-seeking parties' strategies in multiparty systems concludes that parties are motivated to adjust their policy strategies in response to their beliefs about the median voter's position, rather than in response to the diversity of voter ideologies in the electorate.

Finally, informational considerations suggest that mainstream parties may have difficulties identifying shifts in the policy preferences of their supporters. Since these parties occupy the crowded 'centre', while niche parties operate in a more distinct ideological space, it is likely that mainstream parties are unable to differentiate their supporters from other mainstream party supporters. In this environment, they might receive clear policy signals from the electorate as a whole (e.g. through polling) rather than from their supporters.[3] In sum, there are persuasive theoretical arguments to suggest that parties – whether they are vote-seeking, office-seeking or policy-seeking – will be responsive to changes in the median voter position in the general electorate.

H2: Partisan constituency hypothesis. Changes in the mean party supporter positions cause corresponding shifts in niche parties' policy positions.

While the general electorate model discussed above seems to logically explain the party policy shifts of mainstream parties, should we believe that it holds true for all types of par- ties? The growing number of studies on niche parties indicates that this is unlikely to be the case, as there are strong arguments to suggest that the type of party would mediate party– citizen linkages. A central implication of studies on elites and activists in the Green and Communist parties (see D'Alimonte, 1999; Kitschelt, 1994; Tarrow, 1989) is that the partisan constituency model would be more useful for examining the policy shifts of niche parties. Specifically, we expect niche parties to be more sensitive to shifts in their supporters' policy preferences, and less concerned with voter shifts at the centre of the political system.

The studies of Kitschelt (1994) and D'Alimonte (1999) suggest that niche party elites will be more responsive to their supporters than to the mean voter. Niche party elites who are willing to shift their

[3] We thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

policy orientations towards the mean voter position run the risk of being perceived as pandering or 'selling out'. This notion that niche parties are 'fundamentally different' is consistent with the conclusions of Adams et al. (2006), who report a statistical tendency for niche parties to lose votes when they moderate their policy positions.

A second, related, argument introduces electoral time horizons and assumes that niche parties are concerned primarily with preserving their electoral support in the long term, while mainstream party elites are more short-term-oriented (Przeworski and - Sprague, 1986). To the extent that niche parties' elites and activists have longer electoral time horizons than do mainstream party elites, we should expect niche parties to be less responsive to short-term trends in public opinion and more responsive to maintaining the loyalty of their supporters by appealing to them on policy grounds (Adams et al., 2005). A third reason why niche parties respond to their supporters is that the structure of niche party organizations enhances communication between the elites of these parties and their members. These organizations are smaller and more 'horizontal' in contrast to larger and more hierarchical mainstream party organizations. To these qualities, Kitschelt (1988) highlights several additional party features that would lead to partisan constituency representation, such as a more active and participatory membership; weak political executives (with higher turnover); and informal/personal linkages between these two groups. These considerations suggest that there should be high levels of interaction between rank-and-file supporters and party executives. Policy responsiveness to core constituencies, in turn, is far more likely within this organizational setting.

In addition to the organizational qualities highlighted by Kitschelt, we note that the informational arguments raised with respect to mainstream parties also apply here. The arguments raised above suggested that mainstream parties are incapable of differentiating the shifts in the policy preferences of their supporters from other mainstream party supporters, and thus rely on shifts in the mean voter position as a proxy. Niche parties, on the other hand, are not confronted with this issue. Their policies and their supporters are distinctly non-centrist. Thus, they are able to separate their supporters from other parties' supporters and subsequently respond to them.

Data and measurement

Measuring parties' policy positions and public policy preferences

Each hypothesis posits that the changes in the voters' ideological preferences are somehow linked to parties' policy positions. Thus, to test these propositions we must develop longitudinal, cross-national measures of parties' policy programmes as well as measures of voters' policy preferences.

To measure party policy positions over time, we employ estimates from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). These data comprise party manifestos from the main political parties in 25 democracies in the post-war period and provide the only longitudinal and cross-national estimates of party policies. The analytical pay-off of the CMP data is that it allows us to map party positions over the entire time period and in all of the countries under investigation.[4] Moreover, as the content of party programmes is often the result of intense intra-party debate, the CMP estimates should be reliable and accurate statements about parties' positions at the time of elections. Indeed, these measures are generally consistent with those from other party positioning studies, such as those based on expert placements, citizen perceptions of parties' positions and parliamentary voting analyses. This provides additional confidence in the longitudinal and cross-national reliability of these estimates (see Hearl, 2001; Laver et al., 2003; McDonald and Mendes, 2001).[5]

---

[4] In *Mapping Policy Preferences II*, the CMP updates their estimates of parties' policy positions through 2003 and expands the number of countries for which they place parties (Klingemann et al., 2006).

[5] We note the considerable debates that exist over which approach (e.g. expert opinions, citizen perceptions or codings of manifestos) is the most accurate for measuring parties' policy positions. A special issue of *Electoral Studies* analyses the trade-offs that accompany each of these approaches (Marks, 2007). We rely on the CMP data because the dataset covers a longer time period than the alternatives.

While the methods used by the CMP to map party policy positions based on election programmes are described at length elsewhere, we briefly review these methods here.[6] Under the CMP framework, policy preferences are characterized by systematic examination of party stances on policies based on content analysis of election programmes (Budge et al., 2001). Individual coders isolate 'quasi-sentences' in a party's policy programme and pair them with policy categories (e.g. education, defence, law and order, morality, etc.) using a pre-established, common classification scheme. The classification scheme is made up of 56 categories and the percentages of each category provide the basis for estimating the policy priorities of a party. The Left–Right ideological scores for parties' policy programmes range from –100 (extreme left) to +100 (extreme right). In order to fit these scores to our data on public opinion (see the description on the next page), we have recalibrated them to fit a 1–10 scale.[7] We analyse shifts on the Left–Right dimension because it is plausibly the only dimension that transfers similarly across all of the countries in our analysis. In a survey of over 1500 country experts, Benoit and Laver observe: 'for the western European countries surveyed, economic policy was judged most important' (Benoit and Laver, 2006: 158).[8] Our measure of public opinion is based on Eurobarometer surveys dating from 1973 (the first year that the Left–Right self-placement item appears on the Eurobarometer survey)[9] until 2002 (the last year for which the 'vote intention' item discussed below appears on the survey). In these surveys, approximately 2000 respondents in each country in each year are asked to place themselves on a 1–10 Left–Right ideological scale.[10] Finally, to estimate the policy position of the mean party supporter, we rely on the 'vote intention' question in the Eurobarometer surveys in combination with the Left–Right self-placement data described above. Specifically, the question asks respondents the following: 'If there were a ''general election'' tomorrow, which party would you support?' The mean party supporter is calculated as the mean Left–Right self-placement for all respondents that indicated that they would support the party in the upcoming parliamen- tary elections. The mean party supporter estimates are based on at least 50 responses to the Left–Right self-placement item in each country in each year.[11] Appendix A presents the countries, parties, inter-election periods, party family designations and the mean Left–Right party supporter positions, and Appendix B lists the mean general voter positions (stratified by year and by country) that are used in the empirical analyses.[12] We follow Steenbergen et al. (2007) and treat the data about parties and party supporters as panel data. Our rationale to do so is two fold. First, concerning the party data, we have repeated observations for the different parties in our sample. Second, though the reasoning is less straightforward, we maintain that the data about party supporters should also be treated as a panel. Although the Eurobarometer survey does not entail a panel component as

---

[6] For a more thorough description of the coding process, see Appendix 2 in Budge et al. (2001).

[7] The CMP scale was recalibrated to a 1–10 scale using the following equation: (CMP estimate * 9/200) + 5.5.

[8] Benoit and Laver (2006: 158) further specify, 'the taxes/spending and the deregulation dimensions received on average the highest most important scores' (italics added). Adams et al. (2006) and Ezrow (2008) represent additional examples of studies that focus on the Left–Right dimension for niche and mainstream party competition. The above studies suggest that niche parties' emphasis on additional dimensions (e.g. immigration and the environment) does not preclude these parties from also competing on the traditional Left–Right dimension. Communist parties clearly compete on the far 'left'. Indeed, parties that belong to the Nationalist party family are called 'right wing' or 'extreme right' parties. The labels themselves connote competition on the far 'right' of the Left–Right.

[9] For the public opinion data, we relied on the Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970– 2002 (Schmitt and Scholz, 2005), which has compiled the Eurobarometers for the time period under investigation.

[10] Specifically, the Eurobarometer surveys ask: 'In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would you place your views on this scale?'

[11] We note that country-year observations were based on a relatively large number (approximately 2000) of respondents, so that only a few parties did not reach this criterion for inclusion. In addition, only parties that were observed in at least three successive elections are included in the empirical analyses.

[12] Addressing our research question requires aggregating individual-level observations up to party and country levels of analysis. Thus, while the statistical analyses that we report are based on over 309 party-level observations, it should be clarified that these aggregated observations are based on slightly over 800,000 individual responses for the time period and countries under consideration

individuals are only included once in the survey, our analysis does not deal with individuals but rather focuses on aggregates, that is, ideological strata of party supporters. Since ideological stratum tends to be associated with a given type of party (i.e. mainstream versus niche) at different points in time, treating the data about party supporters as a panel seems not only reasonable but necessary to account for autocorrelation. The failure to do so would imply that information about party supporters at times t and t + 1 are independent, which is a problematic assumption. To the extent that the data do not behave as panel data, this actually strengthens our conclusions regarding mainstream parties. It would bias our results towards a finding that mainstream parties' policy shifts are linked to shifts in their supporters' positions rather than shifts in the mean voter position. For example, if a party shifts away from a segment of its constituency it should lose support from some of these voters. This policy shift should also produce a subsequent increase in support for the party by virtue of its moving towards a new set of voters. If this party-switching process were taking place, we would observe a pattern in which the mean Left–Right supporter position would shift in unison with the party's policy shifts even if none of the voters are actually shifting their ideological positions. Since this should bias the empirical findings towards a finding that all parties are responsive to their supporters, it cannot account for the observation that we find only niche parties responding to their supporters. Given this unavoidable feature of the empirical analyses, it actually further strengthens the finding that mainstream parties respond to the mean voter position. Thus, to the extent that this type of endogeneity is a 'problem', it actually strengthens our substantive conclusion that mainstream parties are not disproportionately responsive to their supporters, since our statistical analyses may be biased in the opposite direction.

Testing the mean voter representation and the partisan constituency hypotheses

Model specification for the hypotheses

In order to test the mean voter hypothesis (H1) and the partisan constituency hypothesis (H2), we specify the following multivariate regression model (referred to as the core model specification):

$$\begin{aligned}&\text{Change in party position } (t)\\&= B1 + B2\ [\text{Mean shift} - \text{all voters } (t)]\\&+ B3\ [\text{Mean shift } - \text{party supporters } (t)]\\&+ \mathrm{B}_4\ [\text{Niche } \times \text{Mean shift } - \text{all voters } (t)]\\&+ B5[\text{Niche} \times \text{Mean shift} - \text{party supporters } (t)]\\&+ \mathrm{B}_6[\text{Niche}] + B7[\text{Change in party position } (t-1)]\end{aligned} \qquad (1)$$

where:
Change in party position (t) ¼ the change in a party's Left–Right policy position in the current election compared to its position in the previous election (election t – 1), based on the CMP data.

Change in party position (t – 1) ¼ the difference in the CMP Left–Right estimates of a party's policy position between election t – 1 and election t – 2.

Mean shift – all voters (t) ¼ the change in the mean Left–Right self-placement score of all respondents in a country between the year of the current election and the year of the previous election (election t – 1), based on the Eurobarometer data.

Mean shift – party supporters (t) ¼ the change in the mean Left–Right self placements for all of the respondents who indicated that they would vote for the party in the upcoming national election

between the year of the current election and the year of the previous election. Niche ¼ 1 if the party is classified by the CMP as a niche party, and 0 otherwise.

The dependent variable [change in party position (t)] represents the inter-election shift in parties' Left–Right policies. The variable is constructed so that positive scores indicate that the parties' policies are moving 'rightward' between elections and negative scores denote 'leftward' party shifts. The key independent variables [mean shift – all voters] and [mean shift – party supporters] are similarly constructed. Recall that the partisan constituency hypothesis (H2) states that party–citizen linkages are mediated by the type of party. To test this proposition, we include two interaction variables in the core model specification, [niche mean shift – all voters] and [niche mean shift – party supporters], which interact public opinion shifts and mean party supporter shifts with the dummy variable [niche]. The [niche] variable equals 1 if Klingemann et al. (2006) classify the party as a niche party (i.e. Communist, Green or Nationalist) and zero otherwise.[13] The interaction terms estimate differences in the degree to which public opinion or party supporters influence niche parties' policy positions as compared to mainstream parties. Each interaction term is comprised of the dichotomous variable [niche]. If mainstream parties are generally responsive to shifts in public opinion and to their supporters, coefficients B2 and B3 will be positive and statistically significant. Specifically, the mean voter hypothesis (H1) is supported if the coefficient on the [mean shift – all voters] variable (B2) is positive and statistically significant. Second, we consider the effect of public opinion shifts and party supporter shifts on the policy shifts of niche parties. The effects of changes in public opinion on niche parties' policy programmes will be captured by the sum of the coefficients B2 and B4 on the variables [mean shift – all voters] and [niche mean shift – all voters] in Equation 1. Similarly, the sum of the coefficients B3 and B5 on variables [mean shift – party supporters] and [niche mean shift – party supporters] will estimate the influence of changes in the mean Left–Right position of niche party supporters on the policy shifts of niche parties. Our second hypothesis, the partisan constituency hypothesis (H2), is supported if B3 þ B5 > 0 and is statistically significant.

We include two additional variables in the core model specification. First, we include a lagged version of our dependent variable [change in party position (t – 1)], which measures the party's policy shift between election t 2 and election t – 1. The lagged dependent variable addresses autocorrelation (discussed further below). Additionally, the [change in party position (t – 1)] variable addresses policy alternation, a possibility raised by Budge (1994; see also Budge et al., forthcoming) and Adams (2001), that party elites may have electoral incentives to move their party's position in the opposite direction from their shift in the previous election. Policy alternation, according to Budge, is a rational response by party leaders to placate different wings within the party. Adams emphasizes the existence of non-policy-related factors such as the party identification of voters that would explain similar zigzag patterns of party movement.[14] Under either scenario, the direction of parties' policy shifts in the previous election might influence party leaders' Left–Right strategies in the current election.

Evaluating the mean voter and partisan constituency hypotheses

We evaluate the mean voter and partisan constituency hypotheses using time-series cross-sectional data from 15 Western European democracies over the period 1973– 2002. One possible concern is the existence of unobserved differences between countries or parties. Estimating a simple regression on the pooled data containing these unobserved differences could lead to erroneous inferences (Green et al., 2001; Hsiao, 2003). In Table 1 (columns 1 and 2) we report estimates for our core model specification that control for country- and party-specific effects.[15] The results that we report indicate

---

[13] The Appendix presents the party family designations, countries and elections included in the empirical analyses.

[14] There are two additional considerations which would also explain party policy alternation. Burt (1997) proposes a random ideologies model that explains policy alternations by assuming a random selection of three successive party ideologies from a random probability distribution. Measurement error in the CMP estimates of parties' Left–Right positions is a fourth factor that would explain policy alternation. To the extent that parties' 'true' positions do not vary over time, and to the extent that the CMP estimates contain measurement error, the estimates will shift in the pattern predicted by Burt's random ideologies model.

[15] The [niche] variable does not vary within parties (i.e. party family designations do not change over time), which makes running a fixed-effects model for the original specification problematic, as this term naturally drops out of the model specification. Thus, we report in column 2 the results from a random-effects model specification where we control for unobserved differences between parties. We note that when party-specific intercepts are estimated (and the [niche] variable drops out of the model) the results from these analyses also support the substantive conclusions reported below.

that unobserved differences between countries or parties are not driving our major findings. In addition, we address the possibility of serially correlated errors within countries. Given the structure of the data, the causal processes which generate the change in the policy position of a party at time t could also be operating during the prior interelection period t – 1. This concern is addressed by including the lagged version of the dependent variable [change in party position (t – 1)] in the core specification given in Equation 1 (see Beck and Katz, 1995, 1996).[16] The parameter estimates for the core model specification are presented in column 1 of Table 1. The coefficient estimate on the [change in party position (t – 1)] variable is negative and statistically significant, which is consistent with the theoretical arguments of Budge (1994) and Adams (2001) that parties tend to shift their positions in the opposite direction from their shifts in the previous inter-election period. With respect to our key hypotheses, we find statistically significant evidence that mainstream parties respond to shifts in the mean voter position. Specifically, the parameter estimate on the [mean shift – all voters (t)] variable is positive and statistically significant (+0.38). Furthermore, the magnitude of this estimate suggests that the effect is substantively significant: the coefficient indicates that when the mean Left–Right self-placement of respondents in a country shifts by a unit along the 1–10 Eurobarometer Left–Right scale during an interelection period, then mainstream parties' Left–Right positions tend to shift 0.38 units in the same direction along the recalibrated 10-point CMP Left–Right scale.[17] Accordingly, the evidence supports the mean voter hypothesis (H1) indicating that shifts in mainstream parties' Left–Right policy positions systematically respond to shifts in the mean voter position. We label this finding the general electorate result. Table 1 also reports the coefficient estimates for the [niche mean shift – party supporters] variable, which are positive and reach statistical significance, lending support to a finding that niche parties are systematically more responsive to their supporters than are mainstream parties. Furthermore, we computed the conditional coefficient and conditional standard error to determine if niche parties are responsive to their supporters in absolute terms (and not simply relative to mainstream parties). The conditional coefficient on niche party responsiveness to their supporters is positive and statistically significant (B3 + B5 ¼ 0.31; s.e. ¼ 0.17; p ¼ 0.046).[18] The magnitude of the conditional coefficient on niche party responsiveness to their supporters is also substantively significant: these estimates suggest that on a recalibrated 10-point CMP scale (to fit on the 1–10 Eurobarometer scale), a 1-unit party supporter shift produces, on average, a 0.31-unit niche party shift.[19] Consequently, the conditional parameter estimates support the partisan constituency hypothesis (H2). We label this second finding the partisan constituency result. In addition to these central results of the article (i.e. the general electorate result and the partisan constituency result), it is important to consider the consequential 'null' results. Relying on the equations presented in endnote 18, the conditional parameter estimates for niche party responsiveness to the [mean shift – all voters] variable (B2 + B4 ¼ 0.11; s.e. ¼ 0.32; p ¼ 0.72) indicate a lack of support for a finding that shifts in the

---

[16] The coefficient on the variable [change in party position (t – 1)] is negative and statistically significant, which suggests that parties tend to shift policy in the opposite direction from their previous policy shift. This result is consistent with conclusions reported by Budge (1994) and Adams (2001).

[17] Recall that we recalibrated the original 200-point CMP scale to a 1–10 scale to fit our public opinion data using the following equation: (CMP estimate 9/200) þ 5.5. Although the theoretical range of the CMP scale is 200 points, it has been noted in several studies that the practical range of the CMP scale is from –50 to 50 (Mikhaylov et al., 2008; see also Budge and McDonald, 2006). If the CMP scale is treated as a 100-point scale rather than a 200-point scale, as these authors suggest (and adjusted to the 1–10 Left–Right Eurobarometer scale), a mean voter shift of one unit is expected to induce mainstream parties to shift their positions approximately three quarters of a unit (0.76) on this scale in the same direction. Under either scenario, mainstream political parties appear highly responsive to the shift in the mean voter position.

[18] The conditional coefficients are calculated based on the following (see Equation 1 for notation):

by s.e.

Brambor et al., 2006), where DP(t) and DS(t) stand for the variables [change in party position (t)] and [mean shift – party supporters (t)]. The coefficient and standard error for mainstream parties (when [niche] ¼ 0) are simply B3 and s.e. (B3) (the coefficient and standard error estimating the effects of the [mean shift – party supporters] variable). For niche parties (when the [niche] variable ¼ 1), the coefficient is (B3 þ B5), and the conditional standard error is calculated using the equation above.

[19] If the range of the CMP data is treated as being on a 100-point scale (as discussed in note 17), then a 1-unit party supporter shift is expected to induce niche parties to shift their policy positions in the inter-election period by almost two-thirds of a unit (0.62).

mean voter position systematically influence the policy shifts of niche parties. Additionally, the estimates for the effects of the [mean shift – party supporters] variable (B3) do not support a finding that mainstream parties systematically respond to shifts in their supporters' positions (indeed, the coefficient is negative).

Table 1. Explaining parties' policy shifts

$\frac{\partial \Delta P(t)}{\partial \Delta S(t)} = B_3 + B_5 \times [niche]$, while the conditional standard errors are given $\left(\frac{\partial \Delta P(t)}{\partial \Delta S(t)}\right) = \sqrt{\text{var}(B_3) + [niche]^2 \times \text{var}(B_5) + 2[niche] \times \text{cov}(B_3,B_5)}$ (see

	Country-specific effects (1)	Party-specific effects (2)	Past election results (3)	Party moderation (4)	Fully-specified model (5)	Public opinion model (6)	Party mod
Mean shift – all voters (t)	**0.38****	**0.33***	**0.38****	**0.38****	**0.38****	**0.34***	
	(0.05)	**(0.17)**	**(0.18)**	**(0.18)**	**(0.18)**	**(0.18)**	
Mean shift – party supporters (t)	–0.07	–0.06	–0.06	–0.07	–0.06		–0.04
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)		(0.08
Niche × mean shift – all voters (t)	–0.27	–0.34	–0.28	–0.27	–0.37	–0.23	
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.17)	(0.35)	
Niche × mean shift – party supporters (t)	**0.38****	**0.29***	**0.37****	**0.38****	**0.37****		**0.33**
	(0.17)	**(0.17)**	**(0.17)**	**(0.17)**	**(0.17)**		**(0.1**
Niche	–0.05	–0.03	–0.05	–0.04	–0.05	–0.04	–0.05
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.08
Change in party position ($t-1$)	–0.43***	–0.42***	–0.44***	–0.44***	–0.44***	–0.44***	–0.44
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(1.00)	(0.05)	(0.05
Change in party position ($t-1$) × vote change ($t-1$)			0.001**		0.001**		
			(0.000)		(0.000)		
Vote change ($t-1$)			–0.010*		–0.010*		
			(0.006)		(0.006)		
Party ideology				0.008	0.004		
				(0.036)	(0.035)		
Intercept	7.98**	7.87**	7.99**	7.98**	7.99**	8.02***	7.99*
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.30
N	309	309	309	309	309	309	309
R^2	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.19	0.20	0.18	0.18

*$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$, two-tailed tests. Standard errors are given in parentheses. The dependent variable is the change in a party's Left–Right policy position based on the codings of parties' policy programmes that are reported in the CD-ROM in Budge et al. (2001) and Klingemann et al. (2006). The definitions of the independent variables are given in the text. Column 2 estimates the parameters of a random-effects model specification (see note 15). The country-specific intercepts for columns 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are available upon request.

Sensitivity analyses

Columns 3–5 in Table 1 report parameter estimates for pooled data analyses that control for additional factors that plausibly influence parties' policy positions, including the effects of past election results, party system convergence and a full specification that accounts for all of the factors raised in the analysis.

Past election results. Column 3 reports estimates for a past election results model, which is identical to the basic model except that we control for the possibility that parties adjust their Left–Right positions in response to the outcome of the previous election. Specifically, building on Budge's (1994) empirical finding that parties tend to shift their policies in the same direction as the last time if they gained votes at the previous election, and in the opposite direction if they lost votes (see also Adams et al., 2004; Budge et al., forthcoming; Somer-Topcu, 2009), we incorporate a variable [vote change (t – 1),] that denotes the party's vote gain or loss at the previous election, and the variable [vote change (t – 1) change in party position (t – 1)] that interacts the vote change variable with the party's Left–Right shift at the previous election. A positive coefficient estimate on this interactive variable will indicate that parties tend to shift their positions in the same direction as their previous policy shift if they gained votes at the previous election, and in the opposite direction if they lost votes. The parameter estimate on this variable that we report in column 3 is indeed positive and statistically significant, which supports Budge's arguments. More important for our purposes, the parameter estimates on the policy shifts of opinion leaders and other voters continue to support the general electorate hypothesis (H1) and the partisan constituency hypothesis (H2).

Party system convergence. Previous studies by Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009), Ezrow (2007) and Keman and Pennings (2006) report results suggesting that parties tend to moderate their Left–Right positions over time, that is, left-wing parties tend to shift to the right, while right-wing parties shift leftward. To evaluate this hypothesis, we estimated a model that was identical to the basic model except that we incorporated a [party ideology] variable that was scored at +1 for left-wing parties, –1 for right-wing parties and zero for centrist parties.[20] Column 4 of Table 1 gives the parameter estimates for this party moderation model. The estimated coefficient on the [party ideology] variable is positive and is not statistically significant. The inclusion of this variable does not alter our substantive conclusions: the parameter estimates for this model continue to support hypotheses H1 and H2.

A fully-specified model. Column 5 in Table 1 reports the parameter estimates for a fully-specified model, which controls for both past election results and party system convergence. The coefficient estimates for this model continue to support H1 and H2.

Additional analyses. In addition to the results reported in Table 1 that control for country-specific and party-specific effects, the parameters were estimated for several additional pooled data specifications (the results of which are available upon request). First, we re-estimated the core model specification on a country-by-country basis, omitting one country at a time. We also estimated the parameters of this model specification relaxing our definition of niche and mainstream parties.[21] Third, we addressed the likelihood of correlated errors among the parties competing in a particular election, a possibility arising from unobserved election-specific factors that could be influencing all of the parties' policy shifts, by estimating robust standard errors clustered by election (Rogers, 1993; Williams, 2000).[22] Finally, empirical analyses by Huber (1989) suggest that, with the exception of Belgium, Germany and Ireland, the Eurobarometer respondents' Left–Right self-placements are comparable cross-nationally (i.e. respondents' self-placements are meaningfully related to the preferences along specific dimensions of policy debate). To account for this possibility, we have re-estimated the parameters of the model specification in Equation 1

---

[20] We defined parties as left-wing if the CMP classified the party as being a member of the Social Democratic party family, while right-wing parties were those that the CMP classified as belonging to the Conservative or Christian Democratic party families. Parties were defined as centrist if they were classified as members of the Liberal party family. The parties' family designations are reported in Appendix A.

[21] There are 22 observations from 'regional' and 'agrarian' party families that were omitted from the analyses because these parties are substantively different from niche and mainstream parties. Specifically, these parties do not compete on the Left–Right dimension. Nevertheless, it is reassuring that when we do include these parties in the analyses, classified as either niche or mainstream parties, the central findings remain unchanged.

[22] When we estimate the parameters of this specification, this supports the finding of relative niche party responsiveness to their supporters (when compared to mainstream parties). However, the certainty decreases for a finding that would support absolute niche party responsiveness to their supporters.

excluding these countries, as well as those countries that were not members of the European Community at the time Huber completed his study. These additional analyses thus included observations from only Britain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, France, Greece, Spain, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. The parameter estimates for each of these model specifications described above support the substantive conclusions that we report. We also considered the possibility of collinearity between public opinion and supporter positions. If it were the case that these variables are highly collinear, then parsing out their effects would be difficult. This might be a problem, especially for mainstream parties, where one could argue that supporters may be a more representative cross-section of the public than is the case for niche parties. We do find modest evidence of this: the correlation between public opinion changes and changes in the positions of party supporters is 0.25 for mainstream parties ($p < 0.01$) and 0.01 for niche parties (not significant). However, for mainstream parties the correlation is not so high as to create severe collinearity. In quite a few cases (37.8 percent), changes in public opinion are in the opposite direction to those among mainstream party supporters. Moreover, columns 6 and 7 report parameter estimates for a public opinion model and a party supporter model, where we estimate the effects of only changes in public opinion; and only changes in supporter positions. In each case, our substantive conclusions remain unchanged.

Dimensionality and endogeneity analyses. Our analysis of a single Left–Right dimension could potentially bias our results due to the omission of additional policy dimensions. With respect to this point, Kriesi et al. (2006) and Marks et al. (2006) identify an additional non-economic cultural dimension in Western Europe for our time period. We evaluated this possibility by re-estimating the parameters of the model specifications described above for Britain, The Netherlands and Italy, because Benoit and Laver (2006: Ch. 5) identify these party systems as revolving primarily around Left–Right economic issues.[23] We compared estimates from these countries to the estimates for the remaining multidimensional party systems and each set of estimates supports our conclusions. Finally, we address endogeneity; namely, the possible cueing of public opinion or supporters by parties. Although this study concentrates on the ideological linkages between parties and citizens rather than the direction in which ideological preferences are transmitted between these groups, cueing is nevertheless relevant. Indeed, it may be that citizens respond to parties, rather than the reverse, in which case the coefficients reported may be biased and inconsistent. Past studies that have explicitly addressed this issue of causality have found that any cue-giving effects by parties tend to be weaker than the corresponding cues that voters transmit to parties (see Carrubba, 2001; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Nonetheless, we performed a Durbin–Wu–Hausman test in which we modelled public opinion and supporter positions as functions of their lagged values, computed the residuals and entered these residuals into a model of parties' policy positions. If public opinion and supporter positions were endogenous with respect to party positions, then these positions would be reflected in the residuals; namely, the residuals would exert a significant effect on parties' Left–Right positions. We found no evidence of this for mainstream parties. For niche parties there was evidence that the public opinion residual is significant.[24] Thus, the estimates reported in the tables are not marred by endogeneity, and, with the possible exception of the effect of public opinion on niche parties, they are consistent.

In addition to the studies cited above by Carrubba (2001) and Steenbergen et al. (2007), the finding that mainstream parties in Western Europe respond to voters but that voters do not respond to parties is consistent with the results reported in recent studies by Hobolt and Klemmensen (2008), Adams et al. (forthcoming) and Hellwig et al. (forthcoming). Hobolt and Klemmensen (2008), after employing a Granger causality test on voters' issue concerns and the issue diversity of party leaders' speeches, conclude that the range of voters' issue concerns moves, but is not significantly moved by, the issue diversity of party leaders' speeches. In addition, Adams et al. (forthcoming) report cross-national results that do not suggest the presence of 'partisan adjustments', that is, voters do not systematically adjust their own Left–Right policy preferences when parties change their policy statements. Finally, Hellwig et al. (forthcoming) examine citizen perceptions of the diversity of policy offerings provided by the parties in their system and conclude that these perceptions are unconnected to objective measures of policy choices given by parties as measured in parties' policy statements. The central implication for all of these studies is that while it seems plausible for a small group of party elites in mainstream parties to respond to citizens' policy signals when producing their party platforms, voters appear less likely to respond systematically in kind to these policy platform changes.

---

[23] Based on experts' ratings of parties' positions, Benoit and Laver (2006: Ch. 5) report factor analyses that for the countries listed above there is a 'first dimension' that explains at least three times as much variance as the second, and that the first dimension can be straightforwardly interpreted in terms of the Left–Right dimension of economic policy.

[24] For mainstream parties, the effect of the public opinion residuals yields p ¼ 0.941, while the corresponding p-value for the supporter residuals is 0.261. For niche parties, the p-values are 0.376 for the supporter residual and 0.029 for the public opinion residual.

Conclusion

Representation is a complex phenomenon. It has been addressed from a variety of angles and dimensions and through different normative lenses. The smallest common denominator in normative terms, though, is that in a democracy there should be some match between the interests of the people and what representatives promote. (Wessels, 1999: 137)

How parties represent the policy preferences of citizens is crucial for political representation. In spite of the importance of understanding these linkages, there has been very little systematic cross-national empirical examination of the dynamic relationships that exist between parties, publics and sub-constituencies. This study hurdles some of the macro-level observational barriers that are required to analyse theories at the country and party levels. In so doing, we identify two robust patterns/findings. The first is the general electorate result, which states that changes in the mean voter position cause corresponding shifts in mainstream parties' policy positions. This finding is relevant, as it demonstrates the exportability of the Stimson et al. (1995; see also Erikson et al., 2002) concept of dynamic representation to the mainstream parties in Western European democracies. Our second major finding is the partisan constituency result, which states that while niche parties are unresponsive to shifts in the mean voter position, these ideologically oriented parties are responsive to the shifts in their supporters' positions. The central implication of this result is that the citizen–party linkage emphasized by Dalton (1985) and Wessels (1999) is particularly useful for understanding the policy shifts of niche parties in Western Europe. Taken together, these two results corroborate and extend the growing body of research that emphasizes the type of party (Adams et al., 2006; Ezrow, 2008; Meguid, 2005, 2008; see also Calvo and Hellwig, forthcoming) in spatial analyses of elections and political representation. Furthermore, these conclusions support the perspective of Laver (2005) and Fowler and Laver (2006) that it is worthwhile to model competition between sets of parties that employ different decision rules. The study raises several interesting questions for future research. While the evidence suggests that there are indeed direct linkages between voter preferences and the policy positions that are on offer by parties in a political system, our explanations are only tentative. A comprehensive explanation requires contextual analyses of Western European parties: namely, of parties' organizational structures, of party elites, as well as of rank-and-file party supporters. A detailed analysis of why different types of parties receive different signals from different segments of the electorate, though outside the scope of this study, is necessary to reach a better understanding of how changes occur to the policy choices that political parties present to the electorate. Nonetheless, the results of this analysis are relevant to our understanding of the democratic process and, specifically, to the dynamics between voter and party ideologies. Moreover, this study has positive implications for normative visions of democracy in so far as it reveals unambiguous linkages between the policy preferences of citizens and parties.

Table A1 (*continued*)

Countries	Left/Right distance		EU distance		EU distance × 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 R^2 values are of the McFadden variety.

Acknowledgements

Earlier versions have been presented at the University of Aberdeen (22 April 2009), Trinity College Dublin (30 January 2009), and the ‘‘Analyzing European Politics in the 21st Century’’ Conference hosted by the European Union Center of Excellence at Texas A&M University (28–29 July 2008). Catherine de Vries would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Veni grant scheme of the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO Veni 451-08-001), and Lawrence Ezrow would like to acknowledge the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Grant, RES 000-22-2895, for funding support. The authors thank Jim Adams, Royce Carroll, Marty Gilens, Gary Marks, Michael McDonald, Tony McGann, Hugh Ward, Guy Whitten and the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of the paper.

Appendix A. List of countries, inter-election periods, parties, party families and mean Left–Right party supporter positions included in the empirical analyses

Country inter-election period	Party	Party family	Mean Left–Right party supporter position
Austria	Austrian Peoples' Party (ÖVP)	Conservative	5.84
1995–99; 1999–2003	League of the Independents, later named Freedom Movement (VdU/ FPÖ)	Liberal	6.63
	Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)	Social Democratic	4.33
	Green Alternative (GA)	Green	4.79
Belgium	Christian Social Party (PSC)	Christian Democratic	6.43
1974–77; 1977–78; 1979–81;	Christian People's Party (CVP)	Christian Democratic	6.89
1985–87; 1987–91; 1991–95;	Liberal Reformation Party (PRL)	Liberal	6.47
1995–99	Liberal Reformation Party – Francophone Democratic Front (PRL-FDF)	Liberal	6.22
	Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD)	Liberal	6.37
	Francophone Socialist Party (PS)	Social Democratic	3.94
	Flemish Socialist Party (SP)	Social Democratic	4.34
	AGALEV	Green	4.45
	ECOLA	Green	4.58
	Flemish Bloc (VB)	Nationalist	6.36
Denmark	Conservative People's Party (KF)	Conservative	7.33
1977–79; 1979–81; 1981–84;	Radical Party (RV)	Liberal	5.42
1984–87; 1987–88; 1988–90;	Liberals (V)	Liberal	6.86
1990–94; 1994–98; 1998–2001	Social Democratic Party (SD)	Social Democratic	4.95
	Centre Democrats (CD)	Social Democratic	6.42
	Socialist People's Party (SF)	Communist	3.48
	Progress Party (FP)	Nationalist	7.11

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Country inter-election period	Party	Party family	Mean Left–Right party supporter position
Finland	National Rally (KOK)	Conservative	7.91
1995–99; 1999–2003	Finnish Centre (KESK)	Liberal	6.46
	Finnish Social Democrats (SSDP)	Social Democratic	4.48
	Left-Wing Alliance (VL)	Communist	3.01
	Green Union (VL)	Green	5.23
France	Gaullists	Conservative	7.14
1978–81; 1981–86; 1986–88;	Rally for the Republic (RPR)	Conservative	7.18
1988–93; 1993–97; 1997–2002	Union for French Democracy (UDF)	Conservative	6.43
	Socialist Party (PS)	Social Democratic	3.66
	French Communist Party (PCF)	Communist	2.59
Germany	Christian Democratic Party/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)	Christian Democratic	6.43
1976–80; 1980–83; 1983–87;			
1987–90; 1990–94; 1994–98;	Free Democratic Party (FDP)	Liberal	5.86
1998–2002	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Social Democratic	4.40
	Party of German Socialism (PDS)	Communist	4.23
Greece	New Democracy (ND)	Christian Democratic	8.14
1981–85; 1985–89 (June);	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	Social Democratic	4.59
1989–89 (Nov); 1989–90;			
1990–93; 1993–1996;	Communist Party of Greece (KKE)	Communist	2.12
1996–2000	Progressive Left Coalition (SAP)	Communist	2.69
Ireland	Fianna Fail	Conservative	6.56
1977–81; 1981–82 (Feb);	Fine Gail	Christian Democratic	6.37
1982–82 (Nov); 1982–87;	Progressive Democrats (PD)	Liberal	6.15
1987–89; 1989–92; 1992–97;	Labour Party (LP)	Social Democratic	4.88
1997–2002			

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Country inter-election period	Party	Party family	Mean Left–Right party supporter position
Italy	Italian Social Movement (AN)	Nationalist	8.26
1976–79; 1979–83; 1987–92;	Northern League (LN)	Nationalist	6.10
1992–94; 1994–96; 1996–2001	Go Italy (FI)	Conservative	7.01
	Italian People's Party (PPI)	Christian Democratic	5.70
	Republican Party (PRI)	Liberal	4.95
	Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI)	Social Democratic	4.50
	Socialist Party (PSI)	Social Democratic	3.62
	Newly Founded Communists (RC)	Communist	2.06
	Democrats of the Left (DS)	Communist	2.48
Luxembourg	Christian Social People's Party (PCS/CSV)	Christian Democratic	6.82
1979–84; 1984–89; 1989–94; 1994–99	Patriotic and Democratic Group (PD/DP)	Liberal	5.76
	Socialist Workers' Party (POSL/LSAP)	Social Democratic	4.20
	Communist Party (PCL/KPL)	Communist	3.14
Netherlands	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)	Christian Democratic	6.67
1977–81; 1981–82; 1982–86; 1986–89; 1989–94; 1994–98; 1998–2002	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	Liberal	6.84
	Labour Party (PvdA)	Social Democratic	3.76
	Democrats 66 (D'66)	Social Democratic	4.75
	Green Left (GL)	Green	3.34
Portugal	Centre Social Democrats (CDS/PP)	Conservative	7.37
1987–91; 1991–95; 1995–99	Popular Democratic Party (PPD/PSD)	Social Democratic	6.95
	Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP)	Social Democratic	4.63
	Unified Democratic Coalition (CDU)	Communist	2.64

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Country inter-election period	Party	Party family	Mean Left–Right party supporter position
Spain	Popular Alliance (AP/PP)	Conservative	7.29
1986–89; 1989–93; 1993–96;	Convergence and Union (CiU)	Conservative	5.33
1996–2000	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	Social Democratic	3.54
	Communist Party (IU)	Communist	2.74
Sweden	Moderate Coalition Party (MSP)	Conservative	7.80
1994–98; 1998–2002	Christian Democratic Community Party (KdS)	Christian Democratic	6.48
	People's Party (FP)	Liberal	6.23
	Centre Party (CP)	Liberal	5.90
	Social Democratic Labour Party (SdsP)	Social Democratic	4.18
	Communist Party (VP)	Communist	2.90
	Green Party	Green	4.63
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	Conservative	6.97
1979–83; 1983–87; 1987–92;	Liberal Democrats (LD)	Liberal	5.39
1992–97; 1997–2001	Labour Party	Social Democratic	4.26

Parties are observed in at least three successive elections. The mean Left–Right party supporter position is calculated as the average of the mean party supporter positions for all of the elections in which the party is included in the empirical analysis. Party family designations are based on Appendix I of Budge et al. (2001).

Appendix B. Citizen mean Left–Right self-placements (stratified by country and year)

	Election year																													
Country	**73**	**74**	**75**	**76**	**77**	**78**	**79**	**80**	**81**	**82**	**83**	**84**	**85**	**86**	**87**	**88**	**89**	**90**	**91**	**92**	**93**	**94**	**95**	**96**	**97**	**98**	**99**	**00**	**01**	**02**
Belgium	5.67	**5.76**	–	6.00	**6.02**	**6.03**	5.82	6.39	**5.75**	5.83	5.79	5.74	**5.71**	5.71	**5.50**	5.62	5.53	5.50	**5.55**	5.42	5.38	5.15	**5.36**	5.36	5.29	5.33	**5.10**	5.20	5.17	5.20
Denmark	**5.41**	–	**5.43**	5.45	**5.36**	5.53	**5.60**	5.48	**5.66**	5.63	5.87	**5.64**	5.62	5.66	**5.69**	**6.04**	5.78	**5.60**	5.70	5.69	5.58	**5.54**	5.57	5.54	5.67	**5.63**	5.65	5.68	**5.61**	5.56
France	**5.05**	–	–	4.88	4.90	**4.87**	4.83	5.36	**4.79**	4.98	5.11	5.23	5.32	**5.18**	4.94	**4.95**	4.85	4.95	4.83	4.95	**4.97**	4.86	4.93	4.65	**4.76**	4.81	**4.71**	4.67	4.69	**4.98**
Germany	5.63	–	–	**5.92**	6.05	5.96	5.82	**5.75**	5.80	5.56	**5.53**	5.45	5.39	5.48	**5.38**	5.45	5.32	**5.33**	5.39	5.45	5.37	**5.17**	5.21	5.21	5.19	**5.14**	5.26	5.23	5.11	**5.27**
Ireland	**6.30**	–	–	5.99	**6.42**	6.22	6.11	5.84	**6.25**	**6.19**	5.99	6.25	6.18	6.08	**6.22**	6.22	**6.05**	5.69	5.66	**5.64**	5.57	5.72	4.78	5.61	**5.53**	5.60	5.60	5.60	5.53	**5.57**
Italy	4.69	–	–	**4.39**	4.40	4.42	**4.31**	4.52	4.51	4.62	**4.63**	4.62	4.68	4.69	**4.70**	4.82	4.65	4.63	4.76	**4.77**	4.73	**5.11**	5.04	**5.02**	5.20	5.17	5.33	5.30	**5.25**	5.35
Luxembourg	5.43	**5.52**	–	5.70	6.01	5.77	**5.83**	5.55	5.59	5.56	5.79	**5.66**	5.78	5.86	5.71	5.75	**5.48**	5.47	5.30	5.21	5.10	**5.34**	5.18	5.22	5.26	5.02	**4.99**	4.91	4.95	4.94
Netherlands	5.80	–	–	5.92	**5.72**	5.43	5.53	5.22	**5.46**	**5.50**	5.30	5.37	5.26	**5.29**	5.33	5.31	**5.22**	5.39	5.40	5.40	5.33	**5.17**	5.17	5.10	5.02	**5.06**	5.28	5.27	5.08	**5.25**
Great Britain	5.37	**5.57**	–	5.97	5.89	5.72	**5.79**	5.72	5.59	5.74	**5.72**	5.74	5.79	5.62	**5.83**	5.77	5.57	5.40	5.59	**5.54**	5.39	5.23	5.23	5.20	**5.05**	5.15	5.03	5.16	**5.08**	4.96
Greece	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.15	**5.68**	4.95	5.16	5.21	**5.11**	5.44	5.48	5.43	**5.57**	**5.68**	5.77	5.80	**5.57**	5.68	5.51	**5.52**	5.34	5.55	5.69	**5.77**	5.61	5.62
Portugal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	**5.54**	5.44	**5.79**	5.44	5.41	5.50	**5.49**	5.54	5.45	5.20	**5.27**	5.29	5.26	5.11	**5.20**	5.30	5.25	5.31
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.00	**4.78**	4.55	4.50	**4.38**	4.43	4.27	4.52	**4.62**	4.82	4.75	**4.70**	4.66	4.77	4.69	**4.86**	4.66	4.62
Finland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	**5.79**	5.78	5.74	5.78	**5.78**	5.67	5.49	5.57
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.29	5.24	5.32	**5.38**	5.43	5.19	5.32	**5.24**
Austria	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	**5.27**	5.14	4.78	4.75	**5.12**	4.88	5.16	**4.93**

The table entries represent the mean citizen Left–Right (1–10) self-placements, based on the Eurobarometer surveys from 1973 to 2002. Bold type denotes an election year. The four observations in 1974 and 1975 have been interpolated based on the 1973 and 1976 data (because the self-placement item is omitted from these survey years). Our conclusions do not depend on whether we include or remove these observations. The administration of the Eurobarometer surveys begins in Greece, Portugal, Spain, Finland, Sweden and Austria at roughly the same time that these countries joined the European Union.

References

Adams, James (2001) Party Competition and Responsible Party Government: A Theory of Spatial Competition Based Upon Insights from Behavioral Voting Research. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow and Garrett Glasgow (2004) 'Understanding Change and Stability in Party Ideologies: Do Parties Respond to Public Opinion or to Past Election Results?' British Journal of Political Science 34: 589–610.

Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow and Garrett Glasgow (2006) 'Are Niche Parties Fundamentally Different from Mainstream Parties?: The Causes and Electoral Consequences of Western European Parties' Policy Shifts, 1976–1998', American Journal of Political Science 50: 513–29.

Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow and Zeynep Somer-Topcu (forthcoming) 'Is Anybody Listening? Evidence that Voters do not Respond to European Parties' Policy Programmes', American Journal of Political Science.

Adams, James and Samuel Merrill, III (1999) 'Party Policy Equilibrium for Alternative Spatial Voting Models: An Application to the Norwegian Storting', European Journal of Political Research 36: 235–55.

Adams, James and Samuel Merrill, III (2000) 'Spatial Models of Candidate Competition and the 1988 French Presidential Election: Are Presidential Candidates Vote-Maximizers?' Journal of Politics 62: 729–56.

Adams, James and Samuel Merrill, III (2009) 'Policy-Seeking Parties in a Parliamentary Democracy with Proportional Representation: A Valence-Uncertainty Model', British Journal of Political Science 39: 539–58.

Adams, James, Samuel Merrill III and Bernard Grofman (2005) A Unified Theory of Party Competition: A Cross-National Analysis Integrating Spatial and Behavioral Factors. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adams, James and Zeynep Somer-Topcu (2009) 'Policy Adjustment by Parties in Response to Rival Parties' Policy Shifts: Spatial Theory and the Dynamics of Party Competition in Twenty-Five Post-War Democracies', British Journal of Political Science 39: 825–46.

Alvarez, R. Michael, Jonathan Nagler and Shaun Bowler (2000) 'Issues, Economics, and Dynamics of Multiparty Elections: The 1987 British General Election', American Political Science Review 94: 131–49.

Andrews, Josephine and Jeannette Money (2009) 'The Spatial Structure of Party Competition: Party Dispersion within a Finite Policy Space', British Journal of Political Science 39: 805–24.

Beck, Nathaniel and Jonathan Katz (1995) 'What to Do (and Not to Do) with Time-Series CrossSection Data', American Political Science Review 89: 634–47.

Beck, Nathaniel and Jonathan Katz (1996) 'Nuisance vs. Substance: Specifying and Estimating Time-Series-Cross-Section Models', Political Analysis 6: 1–36.

Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Laver (2006) Party Policy in Modern Democracies. London: Routledge.

Brambor, Thomas, William R. Clark and Matthew Golder (2006) 'Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses', Political Analysis 14: 63–82.

Budge, Ian (1994) 'A New Theory of Party Competition: Uncertainty, Ideology, and Policy Equilibria Viewed Comparatively and Temporally', British Journal of Political Science 24: 443–67.

Budge, Ian and Michael McDonald (2006) 'Choices Parties Define: Policy Alternatives in Representative Elections – 17 Countries 1945–1998', Party Politics 12: 451–66.

Budge, Ian, Lawrence Ezrow and Michael M. McDonald (forthcoming) 'Ideology, Party Factionalism and Policy Change: An Integrated Dynamic Theory', British Journal of Political Science.

Budge, Ian, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara and Eric Tanenbaum (2001) Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945–1998. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Burt, Gordon (1997) 'Party Policy: Decision Rule or Chance? A Note on Budge's New Spatial Theory of Party Competition', British Journal of Political Science 27: 647–58.
Calvo, Ernesto and Timothy Hellwig (forthcoming) 'Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives under Different Electoral Systems', American Journal of Political Science.
Carrubba, Clifford (2001) 'The Electoral Connection in European Union Politics', Journal of Politics 63: 141–58. Clark, Michael (2009) 'Valence and Electoral Outcomes in Western Europe, 1976–1998', Electoral Studies 28: 111–22.
D'Alimonte, Roberto (1999) 'Party Behavior in a Polarized System: The Italian Communist Party and the Historic Compromise', in Wolfgang Muller and Kaare Strøm (eds) Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions, pp. 141–71. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Dalton, Russell (1985) 'Political Parties and Political Representation', Comparative Political Studies 17: 267–99.
Dow, Jay K. (2001) 'A Comparative Spatial Analysis of Majoritarian and Proportional Elections', Electoral Studies 20: 109–25.
Downs, Anthony (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy. New York: Harper.
Enelow, James and Melvin Hinich (1984) The Spatial Theory of Voting. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Erikson, Robert and David Romero (1990) 'Candidate Equilibrium and the Behavioral Model of the Vote', American Political Science Review 84: 1103–26.
Erikson, Robert, Michael MacKuen and James Stimson (2002) The Macro Polity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ezrow, Lawrence (2007) 'The Variance Matters: How Party Systems Represent the Preferences of Voters', Journal of Politics 69: 182–92.
Ezrow, Lawrence (2008) 'Research Note: On the Inverse Relationship between Votes and Proximity for Niche Parties', European Journal of Political Research 47: 206–20.
Fowler, James H. and Michael Laver (2006) 'A Tournament of Party Decision Rules'. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia.
Glasgow, Garrett and R. Michael Alvarez (2005) 'Voting Behavior and the Electoral Context of Government Formation', Electoral Studies 24: 245–64.
Green, Donald P., Soo Yeon Kim and David H. Yoon (2001) 'Dirty Pool', International Organization 55: 441–68.
Green, Jane and Sara B. Hobolt (2008) 'Owning the Issue Agenda: Party Strategies and Vote Choices in British Politics', Electoral Studies 27: 460–76.
Haupt, Andrea (2010) 'Parties and Globalization: What is Left for the Left, and Right for the Right?' Party Politics 16(1): 5–27.
Hearl, Derek (2001) 'Checking the Party Policy Estimates: Reliability', in Ian Budge, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara and Eric Tanenbaum (eds) Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945–1998, pp. 111–25. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hellwig, Timothy, Anna Mikulska and Burcu Gezgor (forthcoming) 'Perceptions of Policy Choice in Contemporary Democracies', European Journal of Political Research.
Hobolt, Sara B. and Robert Klemmensen (2008) 'One for All, All for One: Issue Competition in Party Leader Rhetoric'. Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.
Hobolt, Sara B. and Robert Klemmensen (2009) 'The Dynamics of Voter Preferences and Party Leader Positions'. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 3–6 April.

Hsiao, Cheng (2003) Analysis of Panel Data, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Huber, John (1989) 'Values and Partisanship in Left–Right Orientations: Measuring Ideology', European Journal of Political Research 17: 599–621.
Huber, John and G. Bingham Powell, Jr. (1994) 'Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy', World Politics 46: 291–326.
Kedar, Orit (2005) 'When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections', American Political Science Review 99: 185–99.
Keman, Hans and Paul Pennings (2006) 'Competition and Coalescence in European Party Systems: Social Democracy and Christian Democracy Moving into the 21st Century', Swiss Political Science Review 12: 95–126.
Kirchheimer, Otto (1966) 'The Transformation of Western European Party Systems', in Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (eds) Political Parties and Political Development, pp. 177–200. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Kitschelt, Herbert (1988) 'Organization and Strategy of Belgian and West German Ecology Parties: A New Dynamic of Party Politics in Western Europe?' Comparative Politics 20: 127–54.
Kitschelt, Herbert (1994) The Transformation of European Social Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Kitschelt, Herbert (1997) 'European Party Systems: Continuity and Change', in Martin Rhodes, Paul Heywood and Vincent Wright (eds) Developments in West European Politics, pp. 131– 50. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, Ian Budge and Michael D. McDonald (2006) Mapping Policy Preferences II: Estimates for Parties, Electors and Governments in Central and Eastern Europe, European Union and OECD 1990–2003. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier and Timotheos Frey (2006) 'Globalization and the Transformation of the National Political Space: Six European Countries Compared', European Journal of Political Research 45: 921–56.
Laver, Michael (2005) 'Policy and the Dynamics of Political Competition', American Political Science Review 99: 263–81.
Laver, Michael, Kenneth Benoit and John Garry (2003) 'Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data', American Political Science Review 97: 311–31.
Lijphart, Arend (1999) Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Lin, Tse-Min, James Enelow and Han Dorussen (1999) 'Equilibrium in Multicandidate Probabilistic Spatial Voting', Public Choice 98: 59–82.
Marks, Gary (ed.) (2007) 'Special Symposium. Comparing Measures of Party Positioning: Expert, Manifesto, and Survey Data', Electoral Studies 26: 1–141.
Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Moira Nelson and Erica E. Edwards (2006) 'Party Competition and European Integration in East and West Europe: Different Structure, Same Causality', Comparative Political Studies 39: 155–79.
McDonald, Michael and Ian Budge (2005) Elections, Parties, and Democracy: Conferring the Median Mandate. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
McDonald, Michael and Sylvia Mendes (2001) 'Checking the Party Policy Estimates: Convergent Validity', in Ian Budge, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara and Eric Tanenbaum (eds) Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945–1998, pp. 127–42. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Meguid, Bonnie (2005) 'Competition between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy and Niche Party Success', American Political Science Review 99: 347–60.
Meguid, Bonnie (2008) Party Competition between Unequals. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Merrill, Samuel, III and Bernard Grofman (1999) A Unified Theory of Voting: Directional and Proximity Models. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mikhaylov, Slava, Michael Laver and Kenneth Benoit (2008) 'Coder Reliability and Misclassification in Comparative Manifesto Project Codings'. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.
Muller, Wolfgang C. and Kaare Strøm (eds) (1999) Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Powell, G. Bingham (2000) Elections as Instruments of Democracy. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Przeworski, Adam and John Sprague (1986) Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Rogers, William H. (1993) 'Regression Standard Errors in Clustered Samples', Stata Technical Bulletin 13: 19–23.
Schmitt, Herman and Evi Scholz (2005). The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970–2002 [Computer file]. Prepared by Zentralarchiv fur Empirische Sozialforschung. ICPSR04357- v1. Mannheim, Germany: Mannheimer Zentrum fur Europaische Socialforschung and Zentrum fur Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen [producers]. Cologne, Germany: Zentralarchiv fur Empirische Sozialforschung/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 2005–12–06.
Schofield, Norman and Itai Sened (2005) 'Modeling the Interaction of Parties, Activists, and Voters: Why is the Political Center so Empty?' European Journal of Political Research 44: 355–90.
Schofield, Norman and Itai Sened (2006) Multiparty Democracy: Parties, Elections, and Legislative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Schofield, Norman, Andrew Martin, Kevin Quinn and David Nixon (1998) 'Multiparty Electoral Competition in the Netherlands and Germany: A Model Based on Multinomial Probit', Public Choice 97: 257–93.
Somer-Topcu, Zeynep (2007) 'Party Policy Strategies and Valence Issues: The Effect of Government Membership and Economic Performance on Parties' Policy Strategies in Post-Communist Europe'. Working paper.
Somer-Topcu, Zeynep (2009) 'Timely Decisions: The Effects of Past National Elections on Party Policy Change', Journal of Politics 71: 238–48.
Steenbergen, Marco, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. De Vries (2007) 'Who's Cueing Whom?: Mass–Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration', European Union Politics 8: 13–35.
Stimson, James, Michael MacKuen and Robert Erikson (1995) 'Dynamic Representation', American Political Science Review 89: 543–65.
Tarrow, Sidney (1989) Democracy and Disorder. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Van Kersbergen, Kees (1999) 'Contemporary Christian Democracy and the Demise of the Politics of Mediation', in Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Gary Marks and John D. Stephens (eds) Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism, pp. 346–70. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Weissberg, Robert (1978) 'Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress', American Political Science Review 72: 535–47.
Wessels, Bernhard (1999) 'System Characteristics Matter. Empirical Evidence from Ten Representation Studies', in Warren Miller, Soren Holmberg and Roy Pierce (eds) Policy Representation in Western Democracies, pp. 137–61. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Williams, Rick L. (2000) 'A Note on Robust Variance Estimation for Cluster-Correlated Data', Biometrics 56: 645–6.