The Role of European Integration in National Election Campaigns

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ABSTRACT

This study asks how and to what extent political parties in six West European countries – Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK – have addressed the process of European integration in national election campaigns since the 1970s. Based on a content analysis of newspaper data, the results show that Eurosceptic mobilization in national election campaigns has become most pronounced in countries where the public have always been rather apprehensive about European integration. In line with the 'new cleavage' hypothesis, in Switzerland and the UK mobilization around European integration is primarily driven by conservatives and/or the new populist right. In countries where the process of European integration is politically less salient, conservatives and/or the new populist right have been less Eurosceptic and their mobilization efforts have been more limited. While providing mixed support for the 'new cleavage' hypothesis, the study provides scant support for the received wisdom that Euroscepticism among political parties is essentially dictated by 'opposition politics'.

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Introduction

According to the conventional wisdom, the impact of the European integration process on West European party systems has been very limited. Thus, critics of the European 'democratic deficit' maintain that European integration has been effectively organized out of the electoral process at both the European and the national levels. These critics argue that European Union (EU) elections are widely perceived as 'secondary elections' that do not really reflect voters' preferences about representation at the European level (Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996), and national electoral contests also fail to register voters' preferences on the content and direction of EU policy (Mair, 2001). As Follesdal and Hix (2005) point out, there is no electoral contest for leadership at the European level or the basic direction of the EU policy agenda.

As far as the impact of European integration on national party systems is concerned, Mair (2001) arrives at the conclusion that European integration has had very little impact on either the format or the mechanics of national party systems thus far. Based on the finding that party competition still lacks a European dimension, he maintains that Eurosceptic parties – such as the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), the French National Front (Front National, FN), the Italian National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale, AN) or the Swedish Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) – cannot be reduced to their anti-European appeal, and that their anti-European positions are merely part and parcel of their general oppositional stance. As Taggart (1998) and Sitter (2001) have already shown, Euroscepticism is characteristic of parties outside the mainstream, both on the extreme left and on the extreme right. Drawing on these studies, Mair doubts whether European integration has had any direct effect on how national party systems operate.

On the other hand, some authors have questioned this position. Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004) demonstrate that EU elections are, at least in part, about Europe. More generally, Bartolini (2005) points out that, in European postwar electoral history, few issues have had comparably large and standardizing effects across European party systems. Although accepting that the impact of European integration on national party systems should not be exaggerated, Bartolini argues that 'the EU could indeed be a strong unifying catalyst' in the context of the prevailing 'strange amalgam of discontent across the traditional political spectrum'. In a replication of their previous study, Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) support this hunch. Based on the 1989 European election survey, these authors conclude that, with respect to European integration, the positions of parties and their voters were closely aligned. By the

end of the 1990s, however, they found a high, unrepresented, conflict potential among voters on the issue of European integration – a 'sleeping giant' waiting to be exploited by a political entrepreneur.

In my opinion, the mobilization potential of the European integration issue should be considered in the context of a larger set of processes that are weakening the boundaries of nation-states and that are also likely to have a profound impact on West European party systems. These processes are generally referred to under the heading of 'globalization' or, perhaps more appropriately, 'denationalization' (Zürn, 1998). According to this perspective, the process of European integration is part and parcel of broader processes of political competition (the construction of new supranational centres of authority), economic competition (liberalization and market integration, immigration, delocalization) and cultural competition (immigration and its multicultural consequences), all of which put the national political community under strain. As we have argued elsewhere (Kriesi et al., 2006), these processes are likely to give rise to a new structural conflict between the winners and losers from these transformations. The likely winners of these competitive processes include owners and highly qualified employees in sectors open to international competition, as well as all cosmopolitan citizens. The probable losers comprise citizens with a strong attachment to their respective national communities and traditionally protected economic sectors that find themselves increasingly exposed to foreign competition, as well as those who lack the professional and/or cultural skills to function successfully in a globalizing world. The winners are expected to support the opening of borders, including European integration, while the losers are more likely to mobilize not only against European integration but also against immigration and its consequences, against the cultural liberalism of the new social movements, and for the defence of national traditions, national privileges and national sovereignty. Under these conditions, this new structural conflict between 'integration' (into the European or global community) and 'demarcation' (of the national community) will become a more salient issue for West European parties and have a profound impact on national party systems. More specifically, I expect that this new mobilization will be driven by the parties that most successfully appeal to the interests and fears of the losers in the new structural conflict – including the Eurosceptics. In other words, in contrast to the hypothesis that Eurosceptic mobilization is simply part of the *politics of opposition*, I am positing a *new cleavage hypothesis*, according to which mobilization for and against European integration is part and parcel of a new structural conflict that is fundamentally transforming West European party systems altogether.

Parties mobilizing the political conflict potential linked to European integration

But which parties are mainly organizing the losers, and thus becoming the driving force behind the transformation of these party systems? In order to address this question, it is important to distinguish two aspects of the integration/demarcation conflict – its economic and its cultural dimensions. This distinction has been of critical importance in the debate about what drives public opinion on the European integration process. This debate has reached a consensus that both dimensions are important for determining public opinion, but that cultural factors related to national identities and fear of/hostility towards other cultures are particularly important at the individual level.[1] Moreover, this distinction is important for understanding the distinct challenges facing different types of established parties, because, as Marks and Wilson (2000: 437) argue, 'the social cleavages that have historically shaped political parties and competition among them influence the policy positions of parties on each of these dimensions of European integration'.[2]

On the *left*, mainstream parties tend wholeheartedly to embrace the cultural dimension of the (European) integration process, but they face a dilemma when confronted with its economic side. Whereas the cultural aspects of denationalization coincide with the left's internationalist tradition, economic integration in Europe and beyond poses a threat to the left's social achievements at the national level. Although the social democratic leadership of all European parties has come to accept European integration, social democrats remain internally divided on the economic dimension, as is the left in general.

We can distinguish between a *classic left* position, which remains Eurosceptic and opposed to globalization, and the position of a *modernized left*, which roughly corresponds to the 'Third Way' that was formulated by the British Labour Party and later informed political discourse in other countries – especially in Germany. The traditional social democratic and radical left opposition to the opening of borders corresponds to the position of the classic left and primarily represents a response to the threat that economic liberalization poses to the left's achievements at the national level in the domains of social policy and industrial relations. The Third Way, by contrast, constitutes a novel attempt to come to terms with the problems posed by the integration/demarcation conflict more generally: Third Way politics takes globalization seriously, adopts a positive attitude towards it, and seeks to combine a neo-liberal endorsement of free trade with a core concern for social justice (Giddens, 1998: 64ff.).

Compared with the left, the opening of borders seems to constitute less of a challenge for Christian democratic and liberal parties. As noted by

Marks and Wilson (2000: 451), *Christian democratic* parties have been more closely associated with the founding of the EU than any other party family. More generally, they tend to take an intermediate position with regard to both the cultural and the economic dimensions of globalization. As far as the *liberals* are concerned, we can distinguish at least two currents (Smith, 1988): *liberal radicalism* and *liberal conservatism*. Faced with denationalization, liberals generally tend to support market liberalization, but differ with regard to cultural integration. Whereas liberal radicals tend to support this dimension of the process, liberal conservatives are usually reluctant to accept supra-national political integration (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 448–50).

Conservatives face a similar dilemma to the liberal conservatives – one that is precisely the opposite of that confronted by mainstream parties of the left (Marks and Wilson, 2000): economically they tend to endorse liberalization but politically and culturally they are likely to be nationalists and opposed to the opening of borders. Cultural and political integration threatens national traditions and national sovereignty – values that conservatives traditionally defend. Accordingly, their positions are likely to vary, especially along the cultural dimension. Depending on the perceived threat of integration to national identity, conservatives will be more or less opposed to integration.

Moreover, as with the left, we can distinguish between *classic conservatives* and an updated variant. Unlike the left, however, in this case the new version is the more radical, with the *new populist right* having staked out a clear position against European integration (and globalization more generally), in both political and cultural terms. The new populist right's ideology is not primarily Eurosceptic, but opposition to European integration fits into its general defence of national privileges. Its main characteristics are its opposition to immigration in Western Europe and its populist appeal to widespread resentment against mainstream parties and political elites. Right-wing populists build on the fears of those who are likely to lose from a further weakening of national borders and on their strong belief in simple and ready-made solutions. Economic issues tend to be secondary for such parties (Betz, 2003; Kitschelt, 2001: 435; Kriesi et al., 2006).

This discussion can be summarized in a set of hypotheses about the role of European integration for different types of party in national election campaigns. These hypotheses build on previous work (Hooghe et al., 2002) and provide an opportunity to elaborate the new cleavage hypothesis introduced above.[3] First, mainstream social democratic, radical liberal and Christian democratic parties can be expected to support European integration in spite of the serious dilemmas that it tends to generate, which gives rise to severe intra-party tensions. These mainstream parties have generally been the main pillars of the 'permissive consensus' that has facilitated European

integration to date. Second, given this mainstream consensus in favour of European integration, Eurosceptic mobilization in national election campaigns can mainly be expected from the classic left and the new populist right. Third, given that the Euroscepticism of the new populist right is embedded in a broader, electorally successful challenge on behalf of the losers from denationalization, it is expected to have a strong impact on the positioning of the mainstream parties that most closely approximate its positions, i.e. the liberal conservative and national conservative parties. These parties are most likely to take an accommodating stance toward the Eurosceptic message of the new populist right in particular, and toward the losers' programme formulated by these challengers more generally in order to close off their niche in the electoral market (Meguid, 2005). Consequently, the issue of European integration is expected to be most salient for liberal conservative and national conservative parties and for parties of the new populist right, which make the most explicit appeals to the fears of the losers from denationalization.

Country-specific conditions for mobilization against European integration

The meaning of European integration and the institutional setting of the party systems vary from one country to the next. Accordingly, the hypotheses that follow take these variations into account.

First, public opinion on European integration has been closely tracked by regular Eurobarometer surveys. In part, variation among countries can be explained in terms of the relative economic costs and benefits that accrue to different countries from EU membership. More importantly, however, these differences have deep cultural roots. As Diez Medrano (2003: 249) has observed, European citizens' image of the EU and of the European integration process is filtered by national and subnational cultures. In other words, public attitudes and opinions about the EU are shaped by cultural repertoires that, in turn, are rooted in national histories and collective experiences. Thus, for Spaniards, membership in the EU represents a path towards modernization, greater international prestige and a way out of the isolation of the Franco years. For the British, on the other hand, EU membership is viewed as a necessary evil at best (Haller, 1999).

In this study, I compare the positioning of political parties with regard to Europe in six countries. It is important to note the fundamental differences in these countries' perceptions of Europe and of the process of European integration. For different reasons, in four of these countries – Austria, Germany,

France and the Netherlands – the population has traditionally viewed European integration quite favourably. Germany, France and the Netherlands are among the six original members. Austria is a latecomer to the EU – its neutrality was the main reason for its delayed application – but, when its population was given the opportunity to express itself on the EU in the 1994 referendum, it embraced membership with a two-thirds majority. Since then, the Austrians have become decidedly more Eurosceptic (Dolezal, 2006). However, even their Euroscepticism is far less critical than that of the citizens of the two remaining countries in my study – Switzerland and the UK. The Swiss have not yet joined the Union, and the British are very reluctant members. The former are afraid of losing their national identity, just as the latter fear the threat to their national sovereignty that an 'ever closer union' implies. In these two countries, cultural heritage provides a fertile opportunity for Eurosceptics to mobilize on the basis of the cultural dimension, i.e. for the Eurosceptics from the right. Conservatives in these countries should therefore be particularly tempted to adopt a Eurosceptic position. More generally, I expect the salience of the European issue to be higher and that Eurosceptics on the right will be more successful in the UK and in Switzerland than in the other four countries.

Second, as far as institutional differences are concerned, the national electoral system is naturally of prime importance. Most importantly, *majoritarian* electoral systems reduce the significance of the challenge from the new populist right. For example, the British majoritarian system is a major reason the populist right in the UK has never achieved significant electoral success (Ignazi, 2003: 186). However, majoritarian systems still provide two strong incentives for the transformation of mainstream parties. On the one hand, mainstream parties are more heterogeneous in such systems than under proportional representation, which increases the likelihood of major shifts in their internal power relations and therefore in their political orientation. Second, the lot of the opposition is particularly hard in such a system, which increases mainstream parties' incentives to exploit opportunities to revise their profiles in order to regain power. These conditions suggest that conservative parties that are out of power in majoritarian systems are particularly likely to seek to expand the scope of conflict on issues associated with the new cleavage, i.e. to adopt a more radical stance with regard to such issues. The reorientation of the British Conservatives – in spite of their traditional emphasis on the unity of the British nation against peripheral nationalism, disestablished churches and class conflict (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 457) – illustrates this general idea. In France, our second majoritarian country, the situation has been more complicated for the mainstream conservative parties (Union pour la démocratie française, UDF, and Rassemblement pour la République, RPR),

because the new populist challenger – the Front National – benefited from the introduction by President Mitterrand of the proportional electoral systems for national elections during the FN's rise to national prominence, a change that was later undone by Jacques Chirac.

In *proportional systems*, the situation for the transformation of mainstream conservative parties is particularly favourable in *federalist states*. In these states, territorially fragmented party systems allow more room for parties to experiment with the potential of new issues to mobilize voters at the regional level. Successful experiments at the regional level of a conservative party may lead to a transformation of the party platform at the national level. This pattern was followed by the Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in Austria, which started its transformation in Carinthia – Haider's home base – in 1989. Its 1990 victory on a nationalist platform marked a turning point for the party's profile at the national level (Ignazi, 2003: 113). Similarly, the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP), a conservative mainstream party, began its rise in the canton of Zurich at the end of the 1970s. The Zurich leadership gradually imposed itself in spite of strong resistance from the traditional leadership of the party and set out to consolidate its position throughout Switzerland in subsequent elections.

Germany is the only country under examination here in which the new challengers have not managed to score a direct electoral victory or to pressure either of the mainstream parties to move closer to their positions on the challenges of denationalization.

Data

The data used here are from a larger project on the impact of globalization on the national political space (see Kriesi et al., 2006). This comparative study focuses on national elections, since these are still generally considered to be the key events around which national politics is structured. The study covers three elections since the 1990s and one electoral contest per country from the 1970s. This earlier election serves in each case as a point of reference from a period before national politics began to confront the challenges of globalization and before the permissive consensus on European integration began to break down. The data used here concern the supply side of electoral competition, i.e. parties' positioning within the national political space.

I assume that the most appropriate way to analyse how parties position themselves and how they deal with the new issues associated with globalization and European integration is to focus on the political debate during national electoral campaigns, as reflected in the mass media. Furthermore, I

consider both the salience with which parties address certain issues and the positions (for and against) that they take. Although extensive research based on party manifestos has shown that parties tend to avoid direct confrontation and that they primarily distinguish themselves through selective emphasis of priorities (see Budge, 2001, for a review), we also know that new issues usually do not have a strong valence character, and that direct confrontation – with parties advocating diverging positions on political issues – is much more pronounced in the media and during electoral campaigns than is usually the case in party programmes (Budge and Farlie, 1983: 281). Perhaps most importantly, voters generally view parties in confrontational terms.

The obvious disadvantage of this methodological choice is that we had to produce our own data. In order to identify the salience of the campaign issues for the various parties and their issue-specific positions we relied on a content analysis of the editorial section of major daily newspapers. We chose a quality paper and a tabloid for each country.[4] All the articles related to the electoral contest or to politics in general were selected in both newspapers for the two months prior to the four elections examined in each country. The headlines, the 'lead' and the first paragraph of the selected articles were then coded *sentence by sentence* using a method developed by Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators (see Kleinnijenhuis et al., 1997; Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings, 2001). This method is designed to code every relationship between 'political objects' (i.e. either between two political actors or between a political actor and a political issue) that appears in the text. For this study, I am interested only in relationships between political actors, on the one hand, and political issues on the other. Each sentence is reduced to its most basic structure (the 'core sentence'), indicating only its subject (political actor), its object (issue) and the direction of the relationship between the two. The direction is quantified using a scale ranging from –1 to +1 (with three intermediate positions).

In party research, it is still quite unusual to rely on newspaper coding in order to determine parties' issue-specific positioning and their mobilization effort (salience) on particular issues. Critics are quick to mention the selection bias of the press (the selectivity of the newspapers' reporting) and to its description bias (the erroneous reporting of relevant information). In research on social movements, where content analysis of the press has a more venerable tradition, numerous studies have attempted to assess the relevance of these two forms of bias (Earl et al., 2004; Rucht et al., 1998). These studies conclude that press reports are generally accurate, although confirming arguments in favour of caution when using newspaper *event* data (the kind of data most relevant for social movement studies). Overall, however, Earl et al. (2004: 77) conclude that newspaper data, although not without flaws, do not deviate significantly from accepted standards of quality and therefore remain a useful

data source. Having observed the high selectivity of the German press with regard to protest events – small events and/or those that relate only to local issues are largely left out – Rucht and Neidhardt (1998: 76) suggest a compelling theory about why this is not as problematic as critics might think. According to their argument, although protests that go unnoticed by the media may be significant for the protesters themselves and their immediate audience, they simply do not matter for the rest of the public. Similarly, pronouncements by political parties in national election campaigns that go unreported by the media remain largely irrelevant for voters, who depend heavily on the media for political communication (Swanson and Mancini, 1996).

I have attempted to cross-validate the results obtained here with manifesto data. Only the general trend in salience could be replicated, in contrast to the cross-country and cross-party variation in salience and the corresponding variation in positioning, which confirms the relative weakness of manifesto data in capturing salience (Netjes and Binnema, forthcoming) and position (Marks et al., forthcoming) on European integration. Even the improved digitized coding of manifesto data by Pennings (2006: 262) does not provide similar cross-country variation. I interpret this as an indication that the relative 'depoliticization' of the process of European integration in national elections should be examined using data that explicitly consider the mobilization efforts of political parties.

Political actors are coded according to their party membership. For the present analysis, I have regrouped them into a limited number of categories or limited my analysis to the most important parties. These parties or groups of parties are:

- Austria: greens (Die Grünen–Die Grüne Alternative), social democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ), liberals (Liberales Forum), Christian democrats (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP), new populist right (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ).
- UK: social democrats (Labour), liberals (Liberal Democrats), Conservatives.
- France: radical left (Parti communiste français, PCF, and Trotskyite parties), greens (Les verts), social democrats (Parti socialiste, PSF), Christian democrats (Union pour la démocratie française, UDF), radical liberals (Mouvement des radicaux de gauche, MRG), conservative liberals (Rassemblement pour la République, RPR), new populist right (Front National, FN).
- Germany: radical left (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus, PDS), greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), social democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD), liberals (Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP),

Christian democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union, CDU/CSU).

- Netherlands: greens (De Groenen, GroenLinks), social democrats (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA), Christian democrats (Christen-Democratisch Appèl, CDA), radical (D66) and conservative liberals (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD), new populist right (Lijst Pim Fortuyn, LPF).
- Switzerland: greens (Grüne Partei der Schweiz), social democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz, SPS), Christian democrats (Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei, CVP, and other minor centrist parties), liberals (Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei, FDP, and Liberale Partei der Schweiz, LPS), conservatives (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP, and the new populist right).

Note that, for the reasons discussed above, the conservatives and the new populist right will be grouped together into a single party family. This 'conservative' family will include the British Conservative Party, the Swiss People's Party, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List and the French National Front. There is no German party in this group.

For the *political issues*, I used a detailed coding scheme consisting of 200 or more categories (depending on the country). For the analysis presented here, I have regrouped these into 12 categories, one of which is support for European integration (including enlargement) or for European membership in the case of Switzerland and Austria (*Europe*). The other categories relate to the expansion of the welfare state and resistance to welfare state retrenchment (*welfare*); budgetary rigour (*budget*); support for deregulation, competition and privatization or opposition to economic protectionism (*economic liberalism*); support for the goals of the new social movements, with the exception of the environmental movement (*cultural liberalism*); support for education, culture and scientific research (*culture*); support for tough immigration and integration policy (*immigration*), for the military, including NATO (*army*), and for law and order (*security*); and support for *environmental protection*, *institutional reform* and improved *infrastructure*. The first three categories refer to the traditional *economic opposition between state and market*, i.e. to the class-based opposition between left and right. On this dimension, the left tends to defend the welfare state whereas the right tends to support economic liberalism and budgetary rigour. The next four categories all refer to the *cultural dimension*; the remaining three are not clearly associated with either of the two basic dimensions.

All categories are formulated in such a way that they have a clear direction. Thus, a party that supports Swiss accession to the EU has a positive

relationship (+1) with the category 'Europe'. On the other hand, a party that advocates an increase in state expenditures has a negative relationship (–1) with the 'budget' category. These kinds of data offer valuable information on two central aspects of the supply side of electoral competition: the *positions* of political parties on various issues and the *salience* of these issues for each party. The position of an actor on an issue category is determined by computing the average of all core sentences that contain a relationship between this actor and any of the issues in the category. The salience of an issue category for a particular party is determined by the relative frequency with which it takes a position on issues in the category. It is important to understand that both position and salience are necessary for an adequate description of the political space. Parties vary not only in terms of the positions they advocate, but also with respect to the priorities they set. It is also important to note that salience can be computed in different ways. In this study, party–issue relationships are analysed in the context of specific campaigns.

Results

Salience

As expected, European integration increased in salience between the 1970s and the 1990s. On average, issues related to European integration made up only 2.5% of all issue-related statements in the 1970s campaigns, but close to 7.0% in the campaigns of the 1990s. However, although Europe has become more prominent over time in the parties' national electoral campaigns, it is still not a key theme. The three most salient issue categories remain the same as in the 1970s, although they now make up a considerably smaller share: welfare, 16.4% (down from 19.9% in the 1970s); cultural liberalism, 12.4% (versus 13.9%); and economic liberalism, 12.0% (versus 20.4%). The share of cultural issues has generally increased and, most importantly, Europe is one of the three issues with the most pronounced increase, together with two other issues traditionally associated with the new populist right – immigration (6.3%, up from 1.6%), and security (9.8%, up from 5.2%).

   Substantial country-specific differences remain with regard to the salience of European integration in national election campaigns (see Figure 1). Although European integration has become more salient in all six countries, as expected, the increase has been most substantial in the two most Eurosceptic countries – the UK and Switzerland – where Europe became one of the key issues in the electoral campaigns of the 1990s, with 11.2% and 12.2% of all issue-specific statements, respectively.
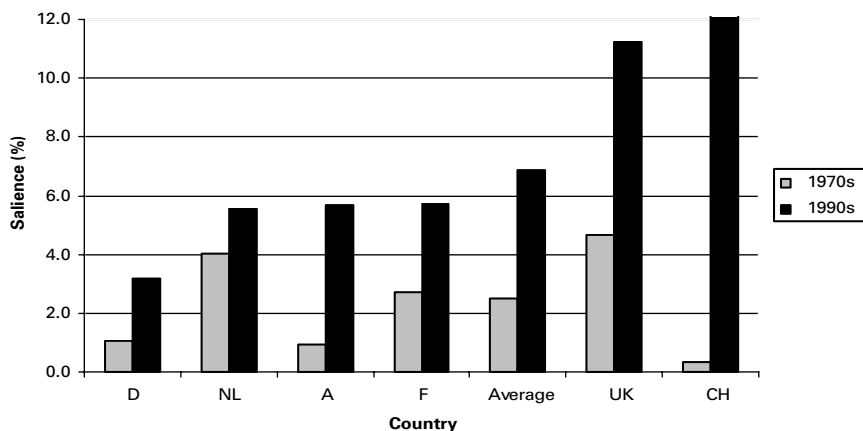
Figure 1 The salience of Europe in six European countries, 1970s and 1990s.
Notes: No. of cases – D: 756 (1970s)/3713 (1990s); NL: 1436/5883; A: 762/3160; F: 1737/5412; UK: 726/2671; CH: 845/3634.

Figure 2 presents the salience of Europe in the seven party families for the two time periods. As this figure makes clear, most but not all parties have paid increasing attention to the process of European integration.[5] The most important increase in mobilization with regard to Europe has been among conservatives and the new populist right (the radical right, rr). This confirms my hypothesis that it is the Eurosceptics on the right who drive mobilization on Europe in national election campaigns. As discussed above, three of these parties – the British Conservatives, the Swiss People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party – were mainstream parties that redefined their ideological profile in response to the new structural conflict. All three of these parties experienced an intensification of internal conflict over European integration in particular and the party's position with respect to the purported new cleavage more generally, and they resolved these conflicts by transforming the party's position in favour of Euroscepticism. Both the British Conservative Party and the Austrian Freedom Party had originally supported European integration, whereas Europe was originally a non-issue for the Swiss People's Party. The other two parties in this group – the French National Front and the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List – are parties of the new populist right that have been both xenophobic and Eurosceptic from the beginning.

Looking more closely at the mobilization patterns of the parties in the two most Eurosceptic countries – Switzerland and the UK (Figure 3) – we find that conservatives in both of these countries mobilized heavily on the European issue in more recent elections. In the 1990s, one in seven issue-specific statements by the British Conservatives was about Europe, and one
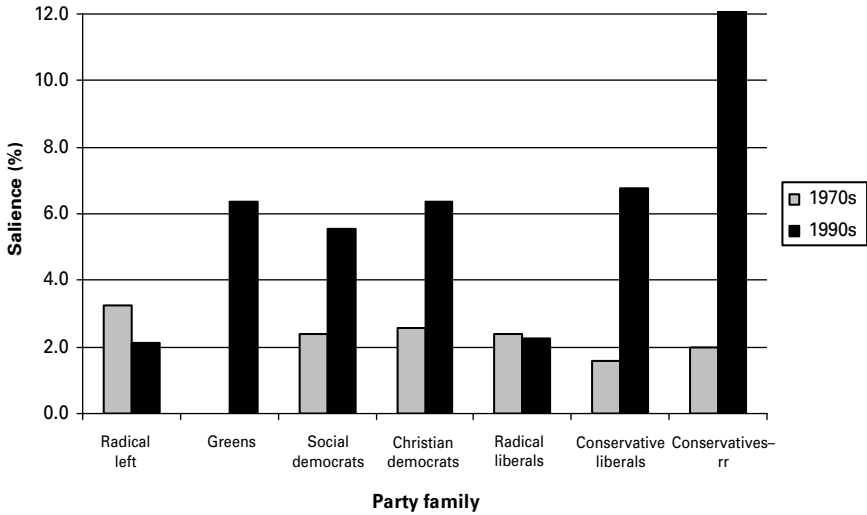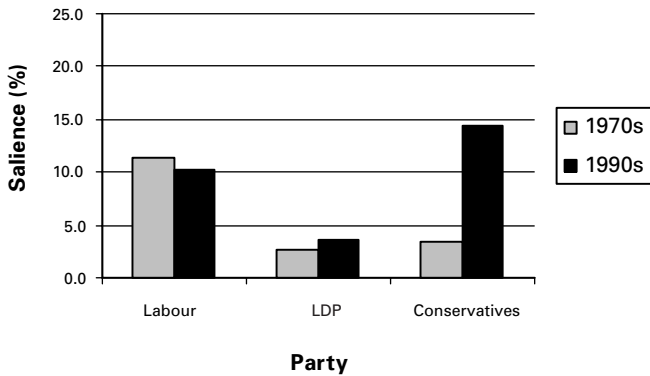
Figure 2 The salience of Europe in seven party families, 1970s and 1990s.
Notes: No. of cases – radical left: 309 (1970s)/662 (1990s); greens: 54/1116; social democrats: 1338/6337; Christian democrats: 1449/4122; radical liberals: 250/357; conservative liberals: 896/3920; conservatives–radical right: 609/3334

in five of the Swiss People's Party's issue-specific statements addressed Switzerland's relationship with Europe.[6] In fact, it is only in these two Eurosceptic countries that conservatives mainly mobilize around the European integration process. In Austria, the Freedom Party was concerned with Europe only in the 2002 elections, when one-seventh of its issue-specific statements addressed European integration. In the two previous elections, institutional reform (in 1994) and the welfare state (in 1999) were its main concerns. Meanwhile, the French National Front has devoted most of its mobilization efforts to combating immigration, and seriously addressed the European issue only in the 1995 elections. Finally, the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List was only minimally concerned about Europe.

We can summarize these results with a multiple regression analysis at the aggregate level, where a party in a given country constitutes a case for the 1970s and one for the 1990s. Table 1 presents the results. This analysis shows that the salience of Europe generally increased by three percentage points between the 1970s and the 1990s. But we cannot conclude from this that the Eurosceptic parties[7] or the opposition[8] are driving the increased politicization of Europe in national election campaigns. The effect for the Eurosceptic parties points in the expected direction, but is not significant, and the effect for the opposition is significant but weak. In contrast, the country-specific effects are highly significant and more substantial: the salience of

(a) UK

(b) Switzerland
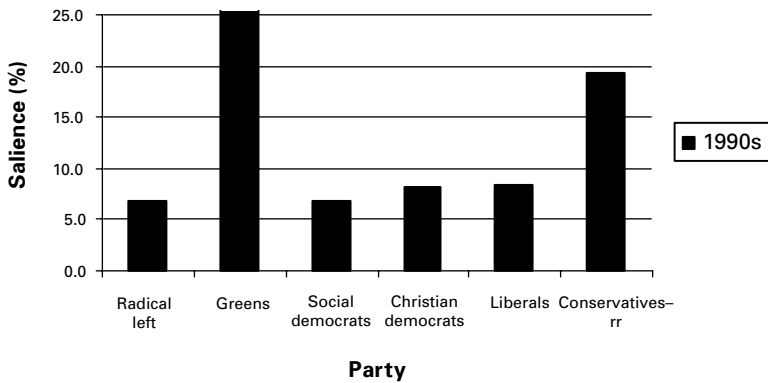
Figure 3   The salience of Europe by country and party family: UK and Switzerland compared, 1970s and 1990s.
Notes: UK – Labour: 176 (1970s)/1241 (1990s); LDP: 37/245; Conservatives: 346/1073. Switzerland – radical left (1990s): 29; greens: 230; social democrats: 501; Christian democrats: 563; liberals: 874; conservatives–radical right: 1013.

European integration has been particularly high (+3%) in Switzerland and the UK and has increased especially among conservatives and the new populist right (+9%) in these two countries. In the other countries, however, conservative parties have not been particularly eager to mobilize around the issue of European integration. The final indicator in the model controls for the outlier of the Swiss greens (see note 6). These results contradict the opposition hypothesis, which maintains that mobilization with regard to Europe is simply the result of opposition politics, and they provide mixed support for the new cleavage hypothesis, according to which conservatives and the new populist right are the driving force behind the politicization of European

Table 1 Determinants of salience

	B	Std. error
Constant	0.02**	0.008
Direction	−0.04	0.021
Year	0.03***	0.007
Opposition	−0.02*	0.010
Conservatives–populist right	0.00	0.011
UK, CH	0.03**	0.010
Conservatives–populist right, UK, CH (1990s)	0.09***	0.023
Swiss Greens	0.20***	0.029
Adjusted R^2	0.72	

Notes: *n* = 56. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Significance levels: * = .05; ** = .01; *** = .001.

integration at the national level. The latter holds true only in Switzerland and the UK, where European integration is particularly contested.
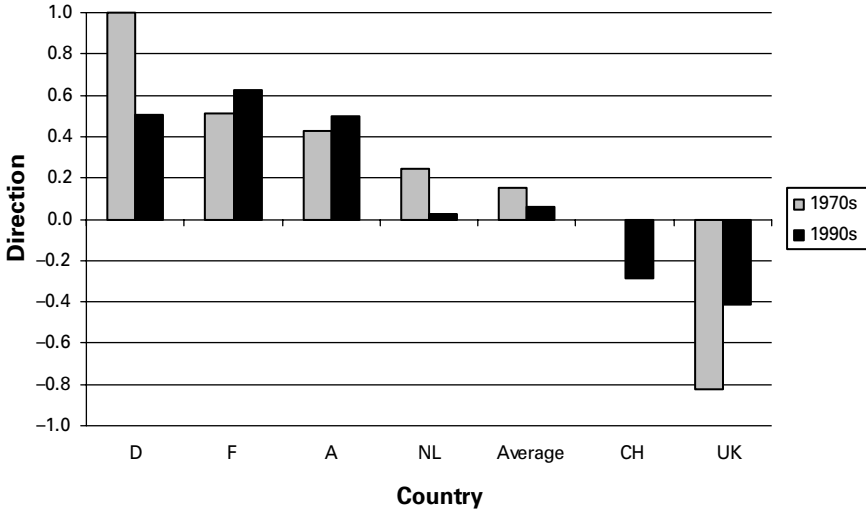
Direction

The direction of the mobilization displays analogous country-specific differences: as expected, Euroscepticism (indicated by negative average values in Figure 4) dominates political debate in Switzerland and the UK. In the UK, Euroscepticism was already predominant in the 1970s, whereas the Swiss did not discuss Europe at that time. The tone of the debate in the other four countries was predominantly pro-European in the 1970s and remained so in Germany, France and Austria. In the Netherlands, pro- and anti-European statements almost cancelled each other out in the campaigns of the 1990s.

Turning to party positions, we find the familiar inverted U-curve for the 1990s (Hooghe et al., 2002: 968–71), with mainstream parties at the centre of the political spectrum taking a predominantly pro-European position, while the radical left and the greens (regrouped into a single category) and the national conservatives and the populist right are predominantly Eurosceptic (Figure 5).[9]

For a more systematic test of the competing hypotheses, I performed another set of multiple regression analyses at the level of the core sentences. The first model tests the opposition hypothesis. As the results in Table 2 indicate, this model is not entirely wrong but its explanatory power is quite weak. The effect of the opposition indicator is highly significant but relatively weak: while governing parties are moderately pro-European (indicated by the

Figure 4   Direction with regard to Europe in six European countries, 1970s and 1990s.
Notes: No. of cases – D: 8 (1970s)/118 (1990s); F: 47/309; A: 7/179; NL: 58/327; CH: (3)/443; UK: 34/300.
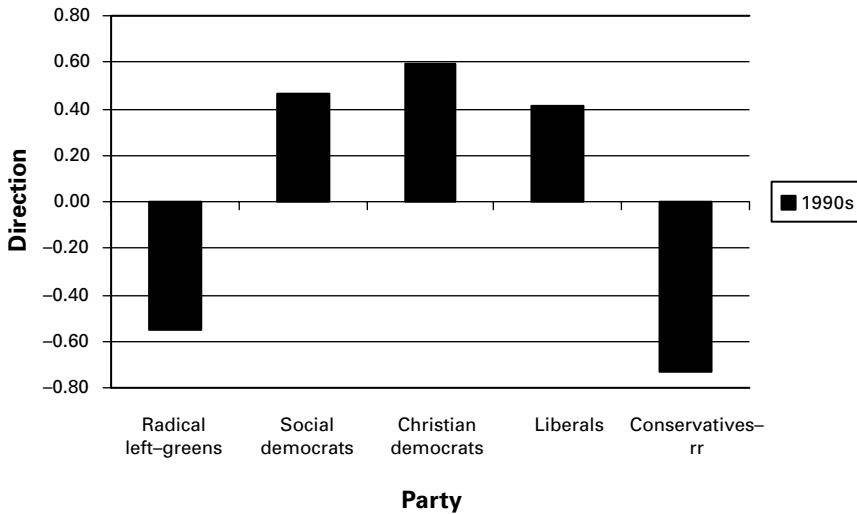
Figure 5   Direction with regard to Europe of seven party families, 1970s and 1990s.
Notes: No. of cases – radical left–greens: 85; social democrats: 351; Christian democrats: 262; liberals: 279; conservatives–radical right: 413.

Table 2 Determinants of direction with regard to Europe

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	0.35*	0.36*	0.40**
	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.14)
Year	–0.10	0.11	0.11
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.07)
Opposition	–0.53***	–0.59***	–0.28**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(–0.09)
Conservatives–populist right	.	–1.23***	–0.73***
	.	(0.04)	(0.10)
Radical left–Green	.	–0.59***	–0.43***
	.	(0.09)	(0.09)
UK, CH	.	.	–0.14**
	.	.	0.06
Opposition (UK, CH)	.	.	–0.49***
	.	.	(0.12)
Conservatives (UK, CH)	.	.	–0.49***
	.	.	(0.12)
Adjusted R^2	0.04	0.37	0.41

Notes: *n* = 1495. Unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors in parentheses.
Significance levels: * = .05; ** = .01; *** = .001.

constant: 0.35), the opposition parties are slightly Eurosceptic
(0.35–0.53=–0.18). The model also includes an effect for a time trend, which
turns out to be insignificant: our data do not show any increase in Euro-
scepticism in the parties in our six countries between the 1970s and the 1990s.

Model 2 adds the effect of the new cleavage hypothesis to the list of inde-
pendent variables, i.e. a dummy variable for each radical left/green party and
conservative/populist right party. Adding these effects greatly enhances the
explanatory power of the model. Both effects, but especially the effect for
conservative and populist right parties, are highly significant and point in the
expected Eurosceptic direction. Regardless of whether they are in the oppo-
sition or not, the conservative and new populist right parties are much more
Eurosceptic than all the other parties. Model 3 takes the specific situation of
the two particularly Eurosceptic countries into account. Both the opposition
hypothesis and the new cleavage hypothesis hold most clearly for these two
countries. Once we consider this, the corresponding direct effects are con-
siderably attenuated – especially the opposition effect. This suggests that, as
far as the direction of the mobilization with respect to Europe is concerned,
the opposition hypothesis may not be generally applicable, whereas the new

cleavage hypothesis seems to be applicable beyond the two particularly Eurosceptic countries of Switzerland and the UK.

These results on the direction of the debate are based on the average of each party's coded positions. However, many parties are internally divided over European integration, which means that their average position may not be as meaningful as the preceding discussion suggests. This is resolved by operationalizing the degree of fractionalization of a given party with the standard deviation of its position on European integration in a given election. The standard deviation increases as the statements attributed to the party on this issue during the campaign become more heterogeneous. Crum (in this issue) argues that opposition parties are most likely to be internally divided over European integration. He supports this hypothesis by arguing that pro-European opposition parties are most prone to factionalism, since they can be accused by their followers of 'sleeping with the enemy'. Table 3 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis used to predict such internal factionalization. The results do not confirm Crum's argument. Instead they indicate that pro-European parties and opposition parties are generally more likely to be internally cohesive on the issue of European integration. There is a significant interaction effect between direction and opposition, which to some extent offsets the cumulative effect of these two conditions and corresponds to Crum's predicted effect. However, the combined impact of these three effects is that the pro-European forces in opposition are least internally divided, whereas the anti-European forces in government are most divided. 'Sleeping with the enemy', therefore, appears to be more dangerous for Eurosceptics joining the government than for pro-European oppositions colluding with the government. However, conservative parties in Switzerland and the UK are particularly cohesive in this respect, whether they are in government (Switzerland) or not (UK). Opposition to the EU seems to have become a common denominator that holds these parties together.

The insertion of Euroscepticism into the overall national party space

In our analysis of the overall national political space (Kriesi et al., 2006), we have used these data to study the positioning of political parties in the six countries under examination here. We have analysed their positioning on the 12 issue categories with a weighted metrical multidimensional scaling procedure (WMMDS). The weights were based on the salience of these issues for each party. In other words, the more important an issue for a given party, the more its positioning on this issue counted in the overall solution.

Table 3 Determinants of internal factionalization (standard deviations of positioning)

	B	Std. error
Constant	0.83***	0.08
Direction	−0.49***	0.11
Opposition	−0.57***	0.15
Direction*opposition	0.35*	0.17
Conservatives–populist right	0.18	0.16
UK, CH	0.09	0.13
Conservatives–populist right, UK, CH	−0.76**	0.27
Adjusted R^2	0.44	

Notes: n = 39. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Significance levels: * = .05; ** = .01; *** = .001.

We found two-dimensional solutions – with an economic and a cultural dimension – for the national party space in all six countries and all the elections. In some cases, such as Switzerland and France, the two dimensions turned out to be partially correlated, but they never coincide. Second, we also found that parties' positions usually vary as much along the cultural dimension as they do with respect to the economic one. Both dimensions are polarizing. Furthermore, the cultural dimension (and not only its European integration aspect) has generally been gaining in importance, becoming the primary basis for new parties or renovated established parties to mobilize their electorate. Finally, and most importantly, from the point of view of this analysis, we also found that over the course of the 1990s the cultural dimension, which was originally defined in terms of cultural liberalism and the military, has become increasingly associated with the immigration issue in all these countries except the UK. Moreover, in the two most Eurosceptic countries – Switzerland and the UK – European integration now trumps cultural liberalism as the issue most clearly opposed to cultural closure (which usually means tougher immigration policies). We interpret this trans-formation of the meaning of the cultural dimension as strong evidence of the structuring capacity of the purported new integration/demarcation cleavage. However, we also conclude that the structuring capacity of this cleavage is not usually based on Euroscepticism. In fact, it is associated with Euro-scepticism only in the two most Eurosceptic countries – Switzerland and the UK – and in Austria.

This result is confirmed by the simple bivariate correlations between the parties' average positioning with regard to Europe and their positioning with regard to the two most important issues of the cultural dimension – cultural

Table 4 Structure of the national political space: Correlations between European integration and other key cultural issues

| Country | Correlations | | n | |
	Cultural liberalism	Immigration	Cultural liberalism	Immigration
CH	0.80	−0.34	18	17
A	0.64	−0.34	13	11
UK	0.53	0.01	7	5
F	0.21	−0.12	16	14
NL	0.05	−0.17	16	16
D	−0.53	0.71	8	8

liberalism and immigration policy – which are presented in Table 4. These correlations are calculated only for the 1990s. In Switzerland, the UK and Austria, the parties' positioning on European integration is positively correlated with their positioning on cultural liberalism. Moreover, in Switzerland and Austria, but not in the UK, it is negatively correlated with their positioning on immigration policy. The UK exception is owing to the fact that the UK parties largely abstained from mobilizing on this issue until the last general election in 2005. Thus, there is not a single statement on immigration for the Liberal Democrats in our data set.

In France and the Netherlands, by contrast, the positioning of the parties on Europe barely correlates with their positioning on cultural issues. This suggests that, contrary to the situation in Switzerland, the UK and Austria, European integration is not part of the cultural dimension in France and in the Netherlands. In Germany, the European issue is also strongly associated with the cultural dimension but not in the expected direction: in Germany, support for European integration goes together with opposition to cultural liberalism and with support for tougher immigration policies. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that Germany is the only country in our set without a conservative or new populist right party mobilizing against Europe. This may explain why, of all our cases, Europe has been least salient in German electoral campaigns (see Figure 1). The unexpected reversal of the sign of European integration on the cultural dimension can be attributed to the fact that the closest approximation of a conservative party in the German system – the CDU – has always been strongly pro-European, while becoming strongly opposed to immigration in the 1990s and taking a middle-of-the-road position on cultural liberalism.

Conclusion

This analysis has shown that Eurosceptic mobilization in national election campaigns has been most pronounced in Switzerland and the UK, where public attitudes have always been more or less Eurosceptic. Consistent with the new cleavage hypothesis, in these two countries this mobilization is primarily driven by conservatives and/or the new populist right. Moreover, European integration is most politically salient in countries where it has been clearly articulated in cultural terms. Overall, the results lend only weak support to the opposition hypothesis, and provide mixed support for the new cleavage hypothesis. European integration has not (yet) come to constitute the primary battleground for the conflict between the losers and winners from the opening of national boundaries. The relative importance of Euroscepticism in the national political space depends on the deep cultural roots referred to by Diez Medrano (2003). In countries such as the UK and Switzerland, where Euroscepticism resonates with deep-seated national anxieties, it has been able to stimulate a restructuring of the party system – with the conservative or new populist right becoming the decisive restructuring force. On the other hand, where European integration has less potential to mobilize along the new cleavage, conservatives and/or the new populist right have been less Eurosceptic to date. As a result, their anti-European mobilization and intra-party cohesion on this issue have been more limited in national election campaigns, with the corollary that European integration has become less clearly embedded in the cultural dimension of the transformed two-dimensional structure of the national political space. This does not preclude conservatives and the new populist right from picking up this issue in other countries as well. Nor does it mean that the salience of the European issue in the UK and Switzerland is not largely a result of mobilization by these Eurosceptic forces. In line with the reciprocal mass–elite linkages on European integration demonstrated by Steenbergen et al. (in this issue), the salience of European integration in a given country is certainly not independent of the mobilization efforts undertaken by conservatives and the new populist right. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that these political forces chose to mobilize around the issue of European integration in precisely the two countries where the issue has been (potentially) most salient.

Notes

1   Carey (2002), Christin and Trechsel (2002), Diez Medrano (2003), Hooghe and Marks (2004) and Kriesi (2002) provide empirical support for this idea.

McLaren (2004), on the other hand, shows that, although fear of loss of national identity has an impact on individual support for the EU, this impact is not very strong. Indeed, both individual utilitarianism and the benefits that accrue to various countries have a greater impact on levels of support for the EU.

2   My argument is similar to that of Marks and Wilson, but not identical, since they distinguish between 'economic' and 'political' integration. The cultural side of the European integration process is, of course, intimately connected to the political one, given the importance of national identities in this context.

3   Although the new politics dimension of party competition, ranging from GAL (green/alternative/libertarian) to TAN (traditional/authoritarian/nationalist), introduced by Hooghe et al. (2002) is closely related to the new cleavage introduced here, it is not entirely identical. It mixes the new cleavage within the new middle class that has been articulated by the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s and the Green parties with the new cleavage that separates the new middle-class winners from the old middle-class and working-class losers from denationalization articulated by the new populist right and its national conservative allies since the 1980s and especially since the 1990s.

4   The selected newspapers were *Die Presse* and *Kronenzeitung* in Austria, *The Times* and the *Sun* in the UK, *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien* in France, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Bild* in Germany, *NRC Handelsblad* and *Algemeen Dagblad* in the Netherlands, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Blick* in Switzerland.

5   The radical left and the two parties of the liberal radical family (the Dutch D66 and the French MRG) are exceptions. However, these exceptions are based on very few cases in the 1970s and should therefore be treated with caution.

6   In the 1990s, the Swiss greens paid even greater attention to this issue than the conservatives did. Nevertheless, in absolute terms, conservatives dominated the Swiss debate on Europe.

7   The effect of Euroscepticism is indicated by the effect of the average direction of all the claims attributed to a given party.

8   The opposition indicator equals 1 if a party is in opposition at the time of the national elections, and 0 otherwise.

9   For the 1970s, we do not have sufficient data. For the 1990s, the radical left and the greens as well as the two liberal currents had to be grouped together.

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