What type of Europe?

The salience of European issues in EP elections reconsidered

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Abstract

How much and why do political parties emphasize Europe in election campaigns? The literature on EU politics has increasingly focused on both aspects of parties' issue competition, positions, and salience. However, recent studies on the salience aspect tend to ignore that Europe is a compound political issue. This article contributes to the debate by highlighting the crucial difference between constitutive and policy-related European issues. Using the new integrated data set from the Euromanifestos Project for 15 EU member states and the period 1979 to 2009, we first show that Europe is highly salient in elections to the European Parliament (EP). Second, EU issue salience depends on the polarization of party competition, mobilization potentials in the public, and on the positioning of individual parties toward Europe. Moreover, our findings show that very different explanations are at play once we bring in the constitutive-vs.-policy distinction. This has important implications for our understanding of party competition in EP elections.

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Introduction: Disentangling European integration

This paper contributes to recent studies on the salience of European integration to party competition (e.g., Adam and Maier, 2011; de Vries and Wardt, 2011; Guinaudeau and Persico, 2013; Netjes and Binnema, 2007; Pennings, 2006; Spoon, 2012; Kriesi, 2007; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015; Hoeglinger, forthcoming). The salience that parties attribute to a given issue is a crucial aspect of their strategic behavior. However, parties' positions on European integration attract far more attention in the scholarly literature (Williams and Spoon, 2015; e.g., Bakker et al., 2015). Although the number of studies' addressing the salience aspect has increased, it is still limited, especially in the context of elections to the European Parliament (EP). An exception to this is a recent article by Spoon (2012), which looks at the relative attention that national parties attribute to European integration in their manifestos for EP elections. Spoon's findings indicate that the salience of European issues has changed little over time. Moreover, she identifies crucial factors to explain differences in the salience of European integration in parties' Euromanifestos, such as party system polarization, intra-party dissent, and voter ambivalence related to integration.

Although Spoon's (2012) systematic study is a big step forward in understanding how much and why political parties emphasize Europe in the run-up to EP elections, her work shares a crucial shortcoming with other studies in the field. That is, these studies do not consider the compound or multifaceted nature of European integration as a political issue. As Marks (2004: 241) aptly put it, "European integration is diverse […]. It depends on what issue one is talking about." Thus, it is not only important to investigate whether Europe, in general, has become more salient and which parties tend to emphasize it but also which types of European issues are addressed. Our study thus adds to the literature, as we do not treat Europe like a simple and one-dimensional

issue. Instead, we disentangle European issues by referring to the conceptual distinction of constitutive and policy-related European issues (Bartolini, 2005: 310; see also Schmitt, 2007). Constitutive issues refer to the fundamental features of the EU polity (i.e., to questions of membership, competencies, and decision-making rules). Policy-related issues, by contrast, cover all sorts of questions in policy fields where European institutions are involved in policy making. This conceptualization takes into account the complexity of European issues, as it includes not only the mere institutional aspects, which played an important role in the earlier periods of European integration, but also policy issues that are expected to have become more significant in later periods (see also Guinaudeau and Persico, 2013; Pennings, 2006; Hutter et al., forthcoming; Hoeglinger, 2015).

This is relevant insofar as the EP has become the more and more co-responsible for policy decisions in the latest stages of EU integration, while it plays a far less decisive role when it comes to changing institutional features of the EU by means of treaty reforms or the accession of new member states. According to Mair (2000; 2013), this should make EP elections the main arena for contesting policy issues. As Mair (2000: 46) stated in his influential article on European integration and its impact on national party systems, "We might then reasonably anticipate that national elections should be more and more 'about' Europe, whereas European elections should be more and more about questions of day-to-day policy-making. To divide the responsibilities otherwise would be to risk having more and more meaningless contests in each of the arenas."

Note that taking into account the constitutive-vs.-policy distinction might affect our results on both how salient Europe is to party competition and why certain parties are more likely than others to emphasize it in their mobilization attempts. So far, theoretical arguments (and empirical findings) tend to be very much influenced by a focus on constitutive aspects of integration in

general and the challenge that Euroskeptic parties pose to more Europhile—but internally split—mainstream parties more specifically. Therefore, the key questions of this paper are *whether and how previous conclusions on the salience of Europe to party competition and its driving forces might change once we take the distinction between constitutive and policy-related issues into consideration.*

Empirically, we use the new integrated data set from the Euromanifestos Project for 15 EU member states, covering the period from 1979 to 2009 (see Braun et al., 2015). As the coding scheme of this project has been adapted to elections to the EP, this data source offers an ample basis for studying the compound nature of European issues. It provides information on both the share of constitutive and policy issues within a party's Euromanifesto. Altogether, we study 528 European party manifestos and explore the determinants of the salience of the two types of European issues separately and in combination, drawing on an OLS regression analysis with a Prais-Winsten transformation technique.

In the following section, we summarize how previous studies conceptualized and measured the salience of European integration, as well as what kind of factors they identified to explain parties' different EU issue emphases. Based on this, we formulate our hypotheses. We focus on the effects of polarization and individual parties' positions toward Europe (i.e., how extreme, critical, and/or internally contested is the position?). By doing so, we also contribute to the literature on the politicization of Europe, which considers polarization and salience as crucial components of politicization (de Wilde, 2011; Hutter and Grande, 2014; Hooghe and Marks, 2009; de Wilde et al., forthcoming; Hutter et al., forthcoming ; Rauh, 2015). After that, we introduce our data and methods before we present the empirical results. Overall, our findings show that a differentiated conceptualization of European issues has important implications for the understanding

of party competition in EP elections. Europe is more salient and different explanatory factors are at play once we bring in the constitutive-vs.-policy distinction. Most importantly, constitutive issues are more salient in polarized contexts, whereas policy issues are more emphasized in less polarized contexts.

The salience of Europe: emphasizing what and why?

Scholars of EU politics increasingly put the spotlight on the salience of Europe to party competition (e.g., Adam and Maier, 2011; Guinaudeau and Persico, 2013; de Vries and Wardt, 2011; Netjes and Binnema, 2007; Pennings, 2006; Spoon, 2012; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015; Kriesi, 2007; Hoeglinger, forthcoming). While existing studies rely on various data sources (mainly expert surveys, party manifestos, or media content), they share a tendency to treat European integration as a single political issue. That is, they do not differentiate between particular aspects or types of European issues. In the first systematic attempt to address the topic, Steenbergen and Scott (2004) rely on expert ratings of the "relative importance of European integration in the party's public stance" at four time points from 1984 to 1996. The salience is assessed by the experts on a five-point scale, ranging from "no importance, never mentioned" to "most important issue for the party." Other studies followed their example by updating the research (de Vries and Wardt, 2011), extending it to Eastern Europe (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015), comparing expert surveys to other data sources (Netjes and Binnema, 2007; Helbling and Tresch, 2011), or integrating the salience measure into a measure of "issue entrepreneurship" (Hobolt and de Vries, 2015; de Vries and Hobolt, 2012). What stays the same is the focus on the general dependent variable of EU issue salience. Based on another kind of data, the coding of newspaper articles, Kriesi (2007) also discusses the salience of European inte-

gration as a percentage of all issue-related party statements. Again, all issues related to European integration are aggregated into a single category (see also Hutter and Grande, 2014; Kriesi et al., 2008). Likewise, Spoon's (2012) study – which comes closest to the study we present here – looks at the percentage of a political party's Euromanifesto devoted to EU issues. More precisely, she relies on a variable called EUSUM in the Euromanifestos data. The variable includes "items such as favorable mentions of the EC/EU, competencies of various European institutions, and mentions of a European way of life" (Spoon, 2012: 565).

Focusing on general salience measures is important. However, it is not clear what kind of specific European issues experts had in mind, or which were covered by the press or party manifestos. For example, analyzing "co-mentions" of European integration and twenty policy areas in party manifestos, Pennings (2006) shows that there are pronounced party differences and shifts over time in the types of areas associated with European integration. As Pennings (2006: 268) concludes, "Parties are selective in how they co-mention Europe and policy domains, which indicates that the regulatory impact of Europe is not equally welcomed or recognized in all policy areas." Similarly, in an exploratory study of British, German, and French party manifestos, Guinaudeau and Persico (2013) highlight that the specific European issues addressed systematically vary across countries, across parties, and over time. Based on a qualitative reading of the texts, they identify sixty-nine issue categories (ranging from very specific policy proposals to general integration-related statements). Most importantly, Guinaudeau and Persico (2013: 262f.) emphasize cross-national differences in the specific types of European issues addressed by parties. For example, compared to British and German parties, French parties paid more attention to the adequacy of new authority transfers, the impact of liberalization on the national public sector, and general statements related to European integration.

Pennings (2006), as well as Guinaudeau and Persico (2013), offer interesting insights and underline the need to split the compound issue of European integration into its components. As Guinaudeau and Persico (2013: 163) nicely put it, "The EU does not enter domestic agendas in the same form everywhere." However, we argue that both issue classifications are too inductive and cover too many categories if one wants to systematically study variations across contexts and political parties in a larger setting. Therefore, we suggest supplementing this research with a more conceptually inspired distinction of European issues. As stated in the introduction, we propose to distinguish *constitutive* and *policy-related issues*. This follows Bartolini's (2005: 310) approach in his discussion of mass politics in the EU (for a related typology, see also Schmitt, 2007). Constitutive issues relate to the very nature of the EU polity (i.e., competencies, membership, and decision-making rules). In contrast to consolidated national political systems, the EU polity is still in the making, and this continually raises questions about its functional and territorial boundaries. When political actors fight over such constitutive issues – be it over competencies ("'deepening"') or membership ("'widening"') – they thus touch upon the crucial elements of the European political system. Policy issues, by contrast, relate to questions about whether and how the EU should make use of its competencies in daily policy making. Since these issues correspond to similarly structured national issues, such as economic, social, and environmental policies, Bartolini (2005: 310) labels them as "isomorphic issues."

While it is not always explicitly stated in the research cited above, the scholarly literature on the salience of Europe tends to focus on the "constitutive" side of integration. This is most obvious in Spoon's (2012) analysis of Euromanifestos, but it also appears in Kriesi's (2007: 9) description of the issue category ("support for European integration (including enlargement) or

for European membership in the case of Switzerland and Austria").[1] In the case of the expert surveys, it is not easy to tell, but the phrasing most likely evokes judging the salience of Europe in terms of its constitutive elements or very general statements related to integration rather than in terms of daily policy making. This is important because disentangling what is emphasized when political parties address European integration might affect the conclusions drawn about the salience of European integration to party competition.

The question of what European issues parties address might also have consequences for the findings on *why* particular political parties might be more or less likely to emphasize Europe in their public appeals. As answers to this question, the literature brings in explanatory factors at both the systemic and the party level. The factors on the systemic level mainly emphasize the interaction of the different parties in the party system and the mobilization potentials in the wider public. Party-level factors, by contrast, are more closely related to the literature on issue entrepreneurs (Hobolt and de Vries, 2015; de Vries and Hobolt, 2012) and focus on the strategic incentives faced by certain parties to (de-)emphasize Europe.

As Spoon (2012) argues, the level of polarization on the elite level is a key explanatory factor for why parties are more likely to address the topic of EU integration. This closely relates to the literature on the politicization of Europe, which considers both salience and increasingly polarized positions toward Europe as crucial components of politicization. More precisely, Spoon emphasizes the polarization in the party system regarding European integration. The argument is that the more parties differ in terms of their EU positions, the more likely it is that voters will vote on the basis of these positions in elections (e.g., de Vries, 2007). This offers strategic incentives for parties to publicly emphasize these differences. At the same time, the literature on elite-

[1] This is also what reproducing the Kriesi data based on a broader definition of "Europe" shows (see Hutter et al. 2016a).

mass linkages (e.g., de Vries and Edwards, 2009; Steenbergen et al., 2007a) indicates that parties also react to changing public opinion: the more citizens are aware of a given issue and hold clear-cut views, the more likely it is that parties will emphasize that issue. In this context, Spoon (2012) introduces ambivalence as an indicator for the mobilization potential in a given society(see also de Wilde and Zürn, 2012). Since support for EU integration has declined in the post-Maastricht period (Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007), we could furthermore expect that both decreasing ambivalence and increasing opposition on the side of citizens are associated with an increasing salience of Europe. Thus, increasing potentials for mobilization might also relate to the assumption that the more Euroskeptical the public gets, the more incentives political parties have to take advantage of the vanishing "permissive consensus." To sum up, we formulate the following two hypotheses on the systemic level:

(H1) The more polarized the party system is on European integration, the more parties will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.

(H2) The stronger the mobilization potential related to European integration is, the more parties will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.

Although polarization in the party system and stronger mobilization potentials in the public might increase the overall salience in the system, not all political parties have the same strategic incentives to emphasize Europe. Simplified somewhat, political parties that may profit more in electoral terms if Europe is salient are expected to be more likely to put the issue at the top of their agendas. Most contributions to the debate agree that profiting from emphasizing European integration is linked to the parties' positions on the issue, i.e., how extreme, critical, and/or internally accepted the party's position toward Europe is (de Vries and Wardt, 2011; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Kriesi, 2007; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015). More precisely, the main suspects for emphasizing Europe are political parties with a clear stance on European integration in

general, those with a more Euroskeptical position in particular, and those without substantial intra-party conflict. Turning the question upside-down, the scholarly literature highlights why most mainstream parties do not have strong incentives to attribute a lot of importance to Europe in their public appeals. The dominant role of Euroskeptic parties in controversies over European integration is explained not least by the fact that European issues cut across existing political divides, thus producing severe intra-party dissent within mainstream parties (Franklin et al., 1996). For this reason, mainstream parties tend to dismiss the issue of European integration with the aim of neutralizing internal conflicts. With respect to the party level, therefore, we formulate the following three hypotheses:

(H3) The more Euro-critical parties are, the more they will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.

(H4) The more extreme parties' positions toward Europe (pro or anti) are, the more they will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.

(H5) The less parties are internally divided on EU issues, the more they will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.

These five specific hypotheses reflect the state of the art in the literature, but, as mentioned previously, they were mainly developed and tested in view of struggles over Europe in general and over its more constitutive aspects in particular. For our research, it seems most important that they focus on the effects of polarization, mobilization potentials, and positions related to a general pro- and anti-Europe dimension. As highlighted above, a lot of research emphasizes that this dimension cuts across the traditional left–right dimension (e.g., de Vries and Marks, 2012; Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006; Kriesi et al., 2008). This argument is used to highlight the potential risks and gains for parties to bring in Europe into party competition (see also the more general framework of issue entrepreneurs developed by Hobolt and de Vries, 2015). Unlike

constitutive issues, policy-related issues can be assumed to be predominantly integrated into the socioeconomic left–right dimension of political conflict (Hix et al., 2007). Such conflicts tend not to pose the same threat to the internal cohesion of mainstream parties and can more easily be accommodated by them. For this reason, Börzel and Risse (2009: 219) argue that "European mass integration parties of the center-left and center-right could actually profit from politicization, the more Europeans stop fighting over the European *finalité politique* and start debating what kind of European policies they would prefer" (see also Risse, 2010: 249-252). This reasoning would imply that the so-called European mass integration parties should stress policy issues in their EP party manifestos. Illustrated by these examples, we guess that our hypotheses might only hold in case of constitutive European issues, if at all. By contrast, we should generally find much weaker or even reversed effects when studying under what conditions parties are more likely to emphasize European policy issues. Therefore, we formulate the following general hypothesis:

(H6) H1 to H5 explain why parties emphasize constitutive issues in their EP election manifestos, but not why they emphasize policy-related issues.

Data and methods

We use information from the Euromanifestos Project (EM) to measure our dependent variable and most of our independent variables.[2] The EM data covers party manifestos of all relevant parties issued ahead of EP elections. As the EM project coded manifestos for EP elections and not for national elections, the original coding scheme of the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) has been adapted accordingly (Wüst and Volkens, 2003). Therefore, the EM data source is unique and highly appropriate for our undertaking. Most importantly for our purpose, the data cover many issue categories related to the political system of the EU and a variable called "governmen-

[2] Unfortunately, data for the EP election 2014 is not available so far.

tal frame." This frame variable lists the policy level to which an argument in a sentence refers. The variable has four categories: national, European, global, or unspecified. The European political level is used by the coders when the governmental frame of the content *explicity* refers to the European level. These two innovations allow us to distinguish constitutive and policy-related European issues in a Euromanifesto. Constitutive issues cover all categories related to the fundamental features of the EU's political system, such as the competencies of different European institutions, membership issues, or questions related to the legitimacy or complexity of the EU (Table A1 in the Appendix provides detailed information on the assignment of the various coding categories). Policy-related issues, by contrast, refer to questions about how European institutions should use their competencies in policy making. Typical examples in this regard are categories related to economic policies, foreign special relationships, environmental protection, or immigration. For these categories, our categorization effort benefited from the inclusion of the governmental frame variable. In other words, we only coded statements as policy-related *European* issues when coders assigned the European political level as governmental frame. Due to the expanding competencies of the EC/EU over time, the assignment of some issue categories depends on the year in which they were raised. To illustrate, we treat support or opposition toward the European Single Market as a constitutive issue until the implementation of the Single European Act in 1987. Thereafter, such statements are classified as policy related (see Table A.1). In the end, our dependent variable is the share of quasi sentences on either constitutive or policy-related European issues in percent of all coded quasi-sentences in a manifesto.

To operationalize our independent variables, we draw on the Euromanifesto data, public opinion surveys, and the Chapel Hill expert survey. Detailed descriptions of the operationalization, data sources, and descriptive values are shown in Table 1. For the indicators of party system polarization and the positioning of a party toward Europe (H1, H3, and H4), we use the Pro-Anti-

EU-dimensional scale from the EM data set (which covers all constitutive European quasi-sentences mentioned in the EM). To calculate party positions, we subtracted the number of negative sentences from the number of positive sentences. To account for the different numbers of sentences by party, we divided this figure by the overall number of both positive and negative statements. In the end, the position measure ranges from -1 to 1, -1 indicating opposition to and +1 support for the constitutive deepening and widening of Europe.[3] For the analysis, we recoded the variable to indicate whether a party holds an extreme position and how critical a party is toward European integration. The indicator for party system polarization is based on Taylor and Herman's (1971) index, which was originally designed to measure the degree of left–right polarization in a party system. It indicates how much the parties' EU positions differ from each other and takes into account the size of a given party (as measured by its vote share). In case of indicators referring to voters' attitudes, we draw on data from the European Election Study as well as Eurobarometer Studies. As argued in the theory section, we decided to rely on two different indicators to measure the mobilization potentials in society: the ambivalence of attitudes and net opposition to EU integration. Finally, we take into account the well-known Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al., 2012; Ray, 1999; Steenbergen et al., 2007b) to generate values on intra-party dissent on European issues (H5).[4]

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[3] We counterchecked our results by using a different operationalization of these variables based on an individual rating of each party on the Pro-Anti-European Integration dimension by the expert coders of the EM project (for more information see Braun et al. 2015).

[4] As one could also assume a curvilinear relationship between intra-party dissent and the salience of European issues, we decided to take into account both variables, the single as well as the squared term.

Our unit of observation is one party per country and year represented by one manifesto issued ahead of an EP election. For instance, in the German case, our data set includes seven observations for the Social Democrats (SPD), one observation per election (1979-2009). Altogether, the number of observations per country pooled for all elections ranges from 16 (Greece) to 60 (Belgium). As a matter of fact, the number of Euromanifestos also varies over time in a single country; for example, the Austrian "Liste Hans-Peter Martin" or the Portuguese "Bloco de Esquerda" are only available for two elections. For methodological reasons, we included only parties that are represented at least twice in the data set. As for some earlier elections, not all party manifestos have been coded due to missing documents; we decided to exclude those country/election combinations from the analysis for which fewer than 50 percent of voters in an election are represented by the coded party manifestos. Moreover, since we are interested in the more long-term evolution and want to compare our results to the existing literature, we opted for the exclusion of the countries that joined the EU in the 2000s. This reduces our total cases to 528 European party manifestos in fifteen EU member states (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, and Ireland) and seven elections (1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009) in the analysis.

To identify the determinants of European issues in EP party manifestos, we use OLS regression analysis with a Prais-Winsten transformation technique. We decided to use this regression technique instead of a time-series cross-sectional analysis with a lagged dependent variable and panel-corrected standard errors (as proposed by Beck and Katz, 1995; applied by Spoon, 2012) because the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable "tends not only to absorb large parts of the trend in the dependent variable, but likely biases estimates" (Plümper et al., 2005). We cluster the standard errors by party because it seems unlikely that a party's manifestos are written

independently from each other. Moreover, we include all independent variables as lagged variables (t-1).

Empirical results

Mapping European issues in Euromanifestos

In addition to European issue categories, the EM data set also contains quasi-sentences that have been classified by the expert coders as purely national or not codable. As the descriptive results based on the pooled data in Table 2 show European issues (about 75 percent) are more important than national issues (about 25 percent), whereas the share of "uncodable" quasi-sentences is negligible. Given that our unit of observation is a *European* party manifesto, this result seems less surprising. However, it contrasts with previous research in this domain, which regards EP elections as (still) second-order elections being fought in the shadow of national political conflicts and issues (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt, 2005). By contrast, our results are in line with recent survey-based research showing that voters do to take European issues into account when making their voting decision in EP elections (see, e.g., Hobolt, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2009; Hix and Marsh, 2011; de Vries et al., 2011; Clark and Rohrschneider, 2009).

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Regarding trends over time, one would expect that political actors have directed more and more attention to European issues given increasing transfers of authority, the inclusion of new member states, and a general trend toward "constraining dissensus" in the last decades (Hooghe

and Marks, 2009). An increasing, although not linear, trend is also what research based on expert surveys (de Vries and Wardt, 2011: 174) and mass media content (Hutter and Grande, 2014: 1010) indicates. Based on the authoritative statements of parties in the context of EP elections, our findings do not support this expectation (see Table 2). As already shown by Spoon (2012), on average, European issues were as salient in Euromanifestos in 1979 as in 2009.

What do we gain from taking into account both constitutive and policy-related European issues? First, the descriptive results in Table 2 show that European issues are much more salient if we consider policy-related discussions. While in Spoon's (2012: 561) analysis, the average salience of European issues in EMs ranges between 19 and 25 percent, our findings show that European issues are much more relevant (around 75 percent). Second, there is some increase of policy issues mentioned in EMs, whereas the salience of constitutive issues has rather decreased over time. More precisely, we observe a higher share of policy issues in all campaigns from 1989 onward, as compared to the first two EP elections in 1979 and 1984. In a way, this is good news, in view of Mair's (2000) normative argument on what should be discussed in the context of EP elections.

How to explain European issues in EP election manifestos?

In the explanatory part of our empirical analysis, we will run two different models: the first with the share of constitutive European issues as a dependent variable (*constitutive model*), and the second with policy-related European issues (*policy model*). Each of these models will be built up stepwise. In the first step (*systemic level*), we introduce all systemic-level indicators to single out the effect of polarization in the party system (H1: party polarization) and in the electorate (H2: mobilization potentials). In the next step, we extend this basic model by introducing party-level indicators *(systemic and party level combined).* In the combined model, we control for the gov-

ernment participation[5] of each party, as this has an impact on parties' involvement in European politics and might thus affect our findings.

The results presented in Table 3 corroborate our hypothesis on party system polarization (H1) and mobilization potentials. In the two *constitutive models*, the findings show that the more polarized conflicts over Europe are in a country, the more salient constitutive European issues are. This is in line with the expected polarization–salience nexus put forward by the literature on the politicization of Europe. Likewise, the potential for mobilizing of public opinion on Europe (H2) shows the expected effect. The negative relationship in the case of ambivalence reveals that the smaller the share of non-ambivalent voters (i.e., the fact that citizens are not ambivalent but either positive or negative with regard to the EU), the more salient constitutive European issues are in EMs.[6] In the case of constitutive issues as dependent variables, all remaining theoretical assumptions cannot be confirmed by empirical evidence. Neither the party's positioning toward Europe nor intra-party conflicts over Europe have a statistically significant effect on the salience of constitutive European issues. This contrasts to studies that rely on expert surveys (e.g., de Vries and Wardt, 2011; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015). It seems that party positions matter less in explaining EU issue emphasis in the context of EP elections in general and the manifestos issued for that puropose in particular.

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[5] This variable is measured whether a party was part of the national government at the time of the EP election (1) or not (0).

[6] We run all models without fixed effects for the different EP elections. Although, in our opinion fixed effects models are less appropriate for the present research question, we cross-checked our results in this regard and re-ran the models in addition with fixed effects for the time of election. The first election (1979) has been included in these models as reference category. In the case of running fixed effects models the results vary only with regard to H2 to the presented ones (table not presented). In the case of the variable for public ambivalence all previously statistically (although slightly) significant effects turned out to be insignificant.

We observe striking differences if we turn to the *policy models*. First of all, our results show that the more polarized party conflicts over Europe (H1) are, the less likely European policy issues are in EMs. The same can be observed for the mobilization potentials in society (H2). The stronger the potentials for mobilizing public opinion on Europe, the less salient policy issues get (but only in the systemic model; the significant effect disappears when we introduce party-level indicators). Moreover, the results in Table 3 show that, at the party level, policy issues are less salient if a party is extreme in its EU position. Moreover, the more critical the EU position of a party is, the less likely it is to address policy-related European issues. To put it differently, policy issues are more likely to be emphasized by non-extreme and Euro-friendly parties.[7]

In general, our initial idea for the need to differentiate among EU issues types matches the empirical evidence. Overall, this confirms our general hypothesis H6. The existing literature mainly offers arguments for why parties might emphasize constitutive European issues, but these arguments do not fit well when trying to explain parties' different emphasis on policy-related European issues. To illustrate this, the different effects for party system polarization and party positions are shown in Figures 1 and 2. For party system polarization (H1), we found a positive relationship if the dependent variable is the share of constitutive issues, but a negative relationship in the case of policy issues (see Figure 1). This means that the more polarized party positions toward Europe are in a country, the more salient constitutive European issues get, but the less

[7]To strengthen our findings, we added a reliability check to our analyses and re-ran all models using a different operationalization for our polarization and position measures. Instead of using the Pro-Anti-EU-dimensional scale gathered from selected EU-specific variables, we counterchecked our results by employing a different measurement: the individual rating of expert coders of each party on a Pro-Anti-EU Integration-scale (see also footnote 3; for more information see Braun et al. 2015),).The results are hardly affected by this decision (Tables not shown). This is insofar interesting as the expert coder rating originates from a personal judgement (although from country experts) whereas the Pro-Anti-EU-Dimension is generated from the coded documents.

salient policy issues get. To illustrate this finding, let us have a look at the salience of our EU issue types in two exemplary Euromanifestos of the EP election in 2009. The German Greens, for example, devoted only about 9 percent of their manifesto to constitutive issues but 80 percent to policy issues. At the same time, party polarization in the German 2009 campaign was at the very low value of 0.24. In Denmark, by contrast, the conflict over Europe was far more polarized; reaching a value of 0.71. This is also reflected in the types of issues being addressed by Danish parties. For example, the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) devoted 46 percent of its manifesto to constitutive issues and only 38 percent to policy issues. The selected examples illustrate, in brief, what our models were able to identify in terms of substantive significance. Based on the pooled dataset, we can predict that if party system polarization increases from the minimum value of 0 to the observed maximum value of .72, the share of constitutive issues increases by 9.93 percentage points, while the salience of policy issues decreases by 17.20 percentage points. Finally, the marginal effect plots in Figure 2 illustrate the different effects with respect to hypotheses 3 (extreme position) and 4 (Euro-critical position). The graphs shows that there is no significant relationship between party positions toward European integration and the salience of constitutive issues. However, with regard to policy issues, the empirical evidence shows that, in particular, anti-European parties are less likely to refer to policy issues in their EMs, while the relationship is less clear-cut at the other pro-European extreme.

Discussion

How much and why do political parties emphasize European issues in their appeals to the public? Although some scholarly attention has already been devoted to answering this question, our study adds to the literature by focusing on EP elections and by disentangling Europe as a political issue

into its constitutive and policy-related components. This allows us to reconsider previous findings on the salience of Europe and its driving forces. We can summarize our main results as follows. *First*, taking into account constitutive and policy-related European issues, we are able to show that European issues are much more salient in elections to the EP than is often presumed. *Second*, the two types of European issues are salient under different conditions. In contexts characterized by highly polarized party systems and a large pontential for mobilizing public opinion, parties are more likely to emphasize constitutive European issues, whereas the opposite holds for policy-related issues. *Third*, the positioning of a party toward Europe is crucial to determine EU issue salience. However, this is only true in the case of policy issues: the more extreme a party's EU position and the more EU-critical it is, the smaller the share of policy-related European issues in its Euromanifesto will be. By contrast, we do not find a significant relationship between parties' EU positions and the salience of constitutive European issues

Altogether, our study provides new insights into the understanding of the salience of European issues to party competition. First, and most importantly, we were able to point to the obvious importance of distinguishing between different types of European issues. It matters what kind of European issues we are talking about. This raises further questions about comparisons to other arenas. Is the salience of policy and constitutive issues comparable in European manifestos and public debates? Why does it seem that although European policies are very salient in EP manifestos, they do not make it into the campaigns as reported in the mass media? For example, the four-country study by Dolezal (2012) shows that constitutive issues dominated the debate in the mass media before the EP elections in 1994 and 2004. It will be interesting to examine what role party stragies and the media logic play in explaining these differences. Second, we found that previous findings on the relation of parties' EU positions and EU emphasis do not hold in the context of EP elections in general and the manifestos issues for these elections more specifically. It seems

most noteworthy that polarization increases the salience of Europe in the party sytem at large, but there is no additional effect of having a very Eurosceptic positions. This might indicate that, in EP elections, the Eurosceptics can trigger increased polarization and act as an agenda-setter that forces all other parties to engage in debating the constitutive dimension of European integration. This would support a recent study that found some contagion effect of Euroscepticism (Meijers, 2015). However, this needs further research. In addition, we should investigate developments over time: for example, can we observe a normalization of European party competition as policy issues become more salient *relative* to constitutive issues? Finally, our closer look at the polarization–salience nexus offers interesting insights for the literature on the politicization of Europe. As shown, the more parties disagree on Europe's constitutive features, the more they emphasize these kinds of questions. However, when it comes to debating European policies, it seems that this is far more likely in contexts with less fundamental integration conflicts. In such contexts, we might, therefore, not necessarily observe less politicization but different manifestations of politicization. At the same time, future research should consider other explanatory factors than the ones emphasized in this paper. For example, it will interesting to see whether the "issue entrepreneur" model developed by Hobolt and de Vries (2015) works well for explaining the salience of constitutive but not the one of policy-related issues.

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Figures and Tables

Table 1: Hypotheses and operationalization of independent variables

Hypothesis	Indicator	Operationalization	Data source
Country level			
H1: The more polarized positions towards Europe in a country, the more salient European issues get.	Party polarization towards Europe (per country and election year)	Pro-Anti-European dimension from coded categories in a party's manifesto; It is computed as follow: $POLARIZATION = \sum_{k=1}^{K} \omega_k \left(x_k - \bar{x}\right)^2$ Where ω_k is the vote share of party k, x_k is the position of party k towards Europe, and $\bar{x}$ is the weighted average position of all parties, where weights are again provided by the vote shares. Since actor positions are measured on scales ranging from -1 to +1, the distance to the average (and our measure of polarization) can range between 0 and 1 (min: 0; max: .72; SD: .19).	Euromanifesto data 1979-2004; 2009
H2:. The stronger the mobilization potential related to European integration is, the more parties will emphasize European integration in their EP election manifestos.	Voters' ambivalence on EU membership (per country and election year)	Public opinion whether a country´s membership in the EU is good, bad, or neither. We take the percentage of the category *neither* as a measure for the voters´ ambivalence towards the EU (min: 6.44; max: 38.93; SD: 6.93).	European Election Study (EES 1989-2004, 2009); in cases where EES data was not available we used Eurobarometer (EB) data (1979, 1984)
	Voters' net opposition towards Europe (per country and election year)	Public opinion whether a country´s membership in the EU is good, bad, or neither. We take the net opposition, i.e. the share of Eurosceptic (=*bad*) voters minus the share of Eurofriendly (*good*) voters (min: -84.35; max: 9.39: SD: 25.14).	European Election Study (EES 1989-2004, 2009); in cases where EES data was not available we used Eurobarometer (EB) data (1979, 1984)

Party level			
H3: The more extreme a party's position towards Europe, the more salient European issues for the party.	Party extremeness	Pro-Anti-European dimension from coded categories in a party's manifesto; we subtracted the number of negative sentences from the number of positive statements. To account for the different number of sentences by party, we divided this figure by the overall number of both positive and negative statements. All positions are coded as extreme (=1) if the party position is one standard deviation above or below the average position (min: 0; max: 1; SD: .38)	Euromanifesto data 1979-2004, 2009
H4: The more EU-critical a party, the more salient European issues for the party.	A party's general position towards the EU	Pro-Anti-European dimension from coded categories in a party's manifesto; we recoded the EU position so that positive values indicate opposition to and negative values indicate support for European integration (min: -1; max: 1; SD: .63)	Euromanifesto data 1979-2004, 2009
H5: The more a party is internally divided on EU issues, the less salient European issues for the party.	Intra-party dissent	Degree of dissent within a party on European integration (min: 0; max: 15.4; SD: 1.61) and squared term (min: 0; max: 237.16; SD: 16.2). We use the data closest to the EP election (in case of missing data, we use values from the preceding or the following dataset depending on availability).	Chapel Hill expert surveys (1984-2010). We combined the five-point coding of the variable from 1984, 1988, 1992 with the eleven-point scaling from 1999, 2002 and 2010

Table 2: Salience of European and national issues in Euromanifestos (share in per cent)

Election	National issues	European issues		Uncodable
		Policy issues	*Constitutive issues*	
1979	25.15	48.84	25.63	0.37
1984	30.27	46.18	22.99	0.57
1989	25.97	55.29	18.39	0.35
1994	24.55	54.65	20.31	0.49
1999	22.51	54.51	22.48	0.51
2004	23.38	56.28	20.02	0.32
2009	26.20	57.22	15.87	0.71
All	24.79	54.56	20.16	0.49

Note: The table shows the average share of European and national issues in the pooled dataset.
Source: Euromanifesto data 1979-2009. See Braun et al. (2015).

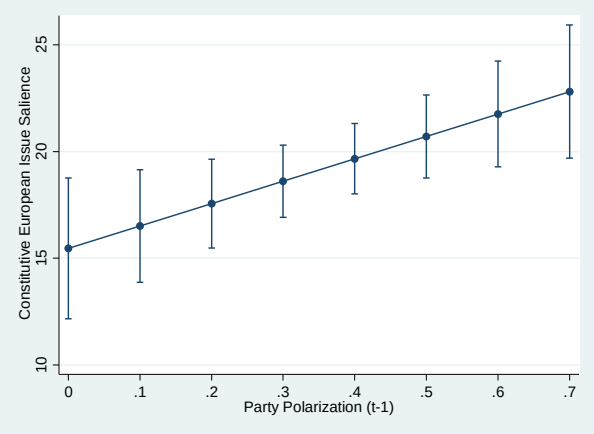
Table 3: The impact of systemic and party level factors on the salience of European integration

	Systemic level		**Systemic and party level**	
	Constitutive model	***Policy model***	***Constitutive model***	***Policy model***
Systemic level				
H1: Party system polarization	10.49**	-23.39***	9.93**	-17.20***
	(4.037)	(4.965)	(3.846)	(5.267)
H2a: Public ambivalence	-0.18**	0.22*	-0.19**	0.15
	(0.090)	(0.123)	(0.092)	(0.126)
H2b: Public opposition	0.01	-0.05	0.01	-0.05
	(0.021)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.037)
Party level				
H3: Party extremeness			1.20	-8.02***
			(1.614)	(2.017)
H4: EU-critical parties			-1.43	-3.82*
			(1.379)	(2.231)
H5a: Intra-party dissent			-0.15	-2.62
			(1.526)	(2.091)
H5b: Intra-party dissent²			0.04	0.33
			(0.166)	(0.239)
Control: Government party			*-1.02*	*3.48***
			(0.927)	*(1.318)*
Constant	20.24***	57.02***	21.30***	58.17***
	(2.926)	(3.912)	(4.177)	(5.509)
Adjusted R^2	0.17	0.24	0.19	0.22
Observations	396	396	357	357

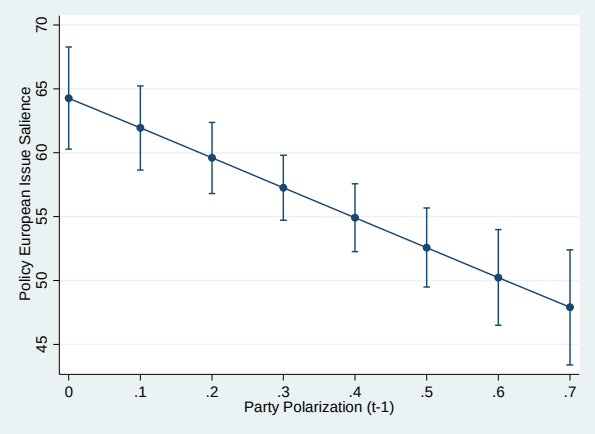
Notes: Table entries are regression coefficients (b-values) from a Prais-Winsten regression correcting for panel-specific autocorrelation in error terms over one period (AR 1). Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are the salience of constitutive and policy European issues as well as the full (compound) salience of European issues in 14 Western European countries (as data for Luxembourg is missing in the Chapel Hill data, we omitted the country from our analysis) for seven EP elections (1979 – 2009). Independent variables have been centered for the analysis. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 1: Link between European (constitutive and policy) issues and party polarization

Constitutive Issues



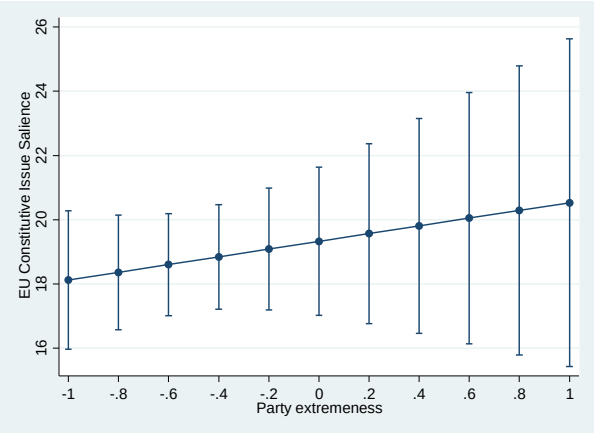
Policy Issues



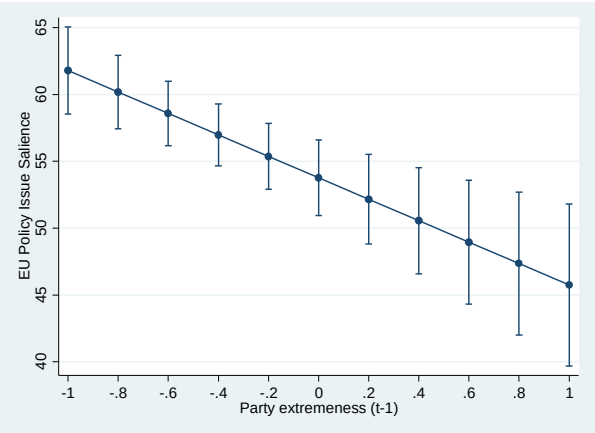
Note: Estimations are based on the models at the systemic level (constitutive and policy model). Adjusted predictions with 95 percent confidence intervals. Y-axis represents the share of constitutive or policy issues in a EM per country and election (constitutive issues ranging from 0 to 75 percent; policy issues from 0 to 91 percent). X-axis represents the party system polarization per country and election (ranging from 0 to .72).

Figure 2: Link between European (constitutive and policy) issues and Euro-criticism

Constitutive Issues



Policy Issues



Note: Estimations are based on the models at the party level (constitutive and policy model). Adjusted predictions with 95 percent confidence intervals. Y-axis represents the share of constitutive or policy issues in a EM per country and election (constitutive issues ranging from 0 to 75 percent; policy issues from 0 to 91 percent). X-axis represents the party position towards Europe, ranging from -1 (=Pro-EU) to 1 (=Anti-EU).

Appendix

Table A.1: Operationalization of the two types of European issues

Constitutive issues
Europe, European Community/ Union in general, Transfer of Power to EU/EC[#], Competences of the European Parliament[#], Competences of the European Commission[#], Competences of the European Council/ Council of Ministers[#], Voting Procedures in the (European) Council[#], Competences of the European Court of Justice[#], Competences of other EU/EC Institutions[#], Mentions of European Central Bank (until 1993), EU/EC Enlargement[#], Membership Turkey[#], Complexity of EU/EC Political System[#], EU/EC Structural Funds (until 1987) [#], European Monetary Union/European Currency (until 1993; in Euro countries until now) [#], European Single Market (until 1987) [#], EU Integration[#], Constitutionalism *, Decentralization*, National Way of Life*
Policy issues
Incentives*, Keynesian Demand Management*, Productivity*, Technology and Infrastructure*, Protectionism*, Anti-Growth Economy*, Economic Orthodoxy*, Economic Goals*, Creating Jobs*, Labor Migration*, European Single Market (after 1987) [#], Labor Groups*, Agriculture and Farmers*, Middle Class and Professional Groups*, Foreign Special Relationships (FSR), [#]Foreign Special Relationships (FSR) to Eastern European Countries of EU[#], FSR to Eastern European Countries not in the EU*, FSR to Russia*, Mentions of European Central Bank (after 1993) [#], Environmental Protection*, Culture in the Manifesto Country*, Social Harmony*, Anti-Imperialism*, Military*, Peace*, Internationalism*, Financing the EU/EC[#], Human Rights*, Freedom*, Democracy*, Multiculturalism*, Traditional Morality*, Immigration*, Political Corruption*, Political Authority*, Free Enterprise*, Property-Restitution*, Controlled Economy*, Social Ownership: Positive*, Mixed Economy*, Economic Planning*, Nationalization*, Corporatism*, Market Regulations*, Marxist Analysis*, Publicly-Owned Industry*, Socialist Property*, Privatization*, Executive and Administrative Efficiency*, Underprivileged Minority Groups (UMG)*, UMG: Handicapped*, UMG: Homosexuals*, UMG: Immigrants and Foreigners, UMG: Ethnic Minorities/People of the Manifesto Country Living Abroad*, Law and Order*, Fight against terrorism*, Welfare State*, Education (Limitation vs. Expansion)*, Job Programs*, Social Justice*, Pensions*, Health care and Nursing Service*, Social Housing*, Child Care*, European Monetary Union/European Currency (after 1993 and in Euro countries) [#], EU/EC Structural Funds (after 1987) [#], Non-economic Demographic Groups (NEDG)*, NEDG: Women*, NEDG: Old People*, NEDG: Young People*, NEDG: Linguistic Groups*

Source: Euromanifestos Codebook (Braun et al. 2015)
Notes: [#] = coding categories at the national, EU, and global level have been used; *= coding categories at the EU level only have been used whereas remaining coding categories at the national level are considered as purely national issues and not taken into account for the analysis of European issues. In some cases we used the coding category for one time period (mostly the earlier time period) as indicator for constitutive issues, while the later period we treated it as a policy issue (e.g. European Single Market: before 1987 constitutive issue, after 1987 policy issue). In the 2009 data, each coding category consists of a positive and a negative occurrence, in the 1979-2004 data this applies not to the full range of coding categories. Nevertheless, these deviations in the data are less relevant for our study, as we are only interested in the salience of European issues.