

Understanding British MP attitudes to European integration

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EI Working Paper

2003 – 04

December 2003



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Abstract

This paper examines the results of a survey of British MPs, administered in the autumn, 2002. It seeks to illuminate MPs views on several questions of European integration, as well as domestic politics. In addition to providing a glimpse of the state of thinking among parliamentarians about Europe, it also sheds light on the causes of their views. The findings confirm that Labour MPs are far more 'pro-Europe' than Tories, and that MPs in general are highly polarised on the Euro, though this polarisation is not entirely explained by party affiliation.

Factor analysis reveals a dominant underlying dimension, with all five Europe variables loading highly on it, as well as MP views about the importance of British sovereignty and identity. In addition, a highly significant negative linear relationship exists between MPs' views on most matters of European integration and their position on two ideological dimensions: economic interventionism vs. liberalism and personal liberties vs. moral authority. Most explanatory power comes from the right end of both spectra. This finding confirms research by Hooghe et al on political parties in EU member states: parties to the left of centre on the interventionism spectrum favour integration as a means of checking full market liberalism. Parties to the right of centre on the liberties dimension oppose integration because of the association between moral authoritarianism and nationalism.

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This paper benefited from comments received at the Political Studies Association annual conference, Leicester, April, 2003, and at a workshop organised by the European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. My thanks to them.

The purpose of this paper is to report the results of a survey of British MPs which sought their views on selected questions of European integration and domestic politics.¹ In part, it was designed to establish a database of MPs' views on these important matters, but it also seeks to test theories about the causes of politicians' views on European integration. The survey was posted in early November, 2002, and 142 responses were received, 21.5% of the population of MPs.

The central findings are that attitudes to Europe have been assimilated into the Left-Right divide in British politics. This is partly partisan – Labour MPs are far more supportive of Europe than Conservative MPs. But MP positions are not entirely explained by partisanship. Position on two ideological dimensions – economic interventionism and personal liberties – are extremely important to understanding MP positions. Literature on the relationship between political party ideology and support for integration has posited at least three separate models (see Marks, 2003; Hooghe et al, 2002 Hix, 1999b). One is that ideology is unrelated to integration support (leftists could be either pro or anti-integration and the same for rightists); a second is that centrists are supportive of integration but right and left extremes are opposed; a third is that support and opposition to Europe has been assimilated into left-right space, with leftists supportive and rightists opposed (or vice versa, depending on the country, the issue, and the time). The data collected from British MPs points to the third model as the most appropriate.

In addition, there are virtually no concrete domestic political or economic issues that explain MP support for integration. While virtually all MPs, across every party, believed that British trade and inward investment were very important when considering integration issues, there was no

¹ The survey may be found in the Appendix (and results may be found at www.rgu.ac.uk/abs/staff/page.cfm?pge=6927). In drafting the survey I benefited from the comments and suggestions of numerous politicians and scholars, to whom I am very grateful. They include David

correlation to their position on specific EU policy issues or institutional issues. An MP who believed in the importance of British trade could be either strongly in favour of joining the Euro or strongly opposed to it. Finally, the single best correlate to position on European integration is the importance of sovereignty. MPs who believe British sovereignty is important oppose integration, showing the important link between these two issues in MPs' minds.

What questions?

MPs were asked for their views on five European Union (EU) questions: British membership of the Euro, strengthening EU defence capabilities, reducing the member state veto, strengthening the European Parliament, and British membership of the European Union. The possible responses ranged from 1 (most opposed) to 7 (most favourable). These five questions form the dependent variables in this study. Bar graphs below show the distribution of MP responses on these five questions (see Fig. 1). This distribution will be discussed in more detail below.

Figure 1 about here.

Three further sets of questions are designed to probe the potential causes of MPs' positions. The first sought views on the importance of selected domestic considerations when MPs consider matters of European integration. The specific domestic issues were British trade, inward investment, business views, trade union views, party unity, public opinion, British identity, and British sovereignty. They were asked to indicate on a similar seven-point scale (completely unimportant to extremely important) how important each of these issues is when considering integration generally.

The second set of questions asked them to place themselves on ideological or issue dimensions. The five dimensions were economic interventionism vs. economic liberalism; personal freedom vs. traditional values in lifestyle choices; environmental protection vs. growth; capital mobility vs. capital control in international economic matters; local vs. centralised democracy in national politics. These were chosen because they have in some cases been found to explain party positions on European integration (Hix, 1999a; Ray, 1999; Hooghe et al, 2002). Finally, the third set of questions asks for information on the level of lobbying they receive from business and labour groups, and personal information such as age, gender, party, and position (backbencher, shadow/minister, shadow/Cabinet). These provide some control variables and also form potential explanatory variables.

One reviewer pointed out that more individual-level information should be collected in order to determine the extent to which MPs' positions are caused by their own unique experiences, or by party affiliation. The extra information could have included class, education, length of parliamentary service, size of electoral majority, region of origin, and previous profession, among others. It would be useful to have this information, but in extensive consultations with MPs during the drafting of the survey, it was clear that anonymity was of paramount importance, such was the sensitivity of some of the issues (such as position on the Euro). In order to achieve a high response rate, nothing could be done that would potentially reveal the identity of MPs. Some of the information above *was* included in an early draft, but MPs pointed out that having it would enable someone to determine the identity of many MPs, and so they recommended not asking for it.

Why do MPs' views on European integration matter? One could argue that they are of little consequence. Much European legislation is produced which is directly applicable in the member states, and even where it must

be transposed, the broad contours of the legislation are worked out in Brussels. Moreover, the widely-heralded strengthening of the UK executive has come at the expense of the Parliament, which often complains about its marginalisation. In fact, two Labour backbenchers interviewed during follow-up work on this project were asked why they supported a stronger European Parliament. Their responses were the same: that the strengthening of the British executive and the growth of European-origin legislation dealt with by Westminster meant that British MPs were becoming marginalised anyway, so that a more effective democratic check at the European level was desirable.² Yet there are strong reasons why we should care about MP attitudes. For one thing, Parliament is widely considered by both elites and the public as the appropriate locus of democratic legitimacy. Equally, Parliament must agree to major Treaty changes in the EU, and can therefore constrain governments, even if its power is somewhat limited.

Finally, a note of methodological caution should be mentioned. While many of the results obtained by this survey are statistically highly significant, it is impossible to know whether self-selection among respondents has biased the results, and consequently whether the respondents are representative of the population as a whole. Nonetheless, as a first-cut approximation of MP attitudes it is reasonable to use this dataset, even if we cannot be fully confident of it.

Why these questions? theoretical underpinnings to integration preferences

This is not the first systematic quantitative survey of MP attitudes on Europe. In the 1990s, David Baker and a group of collaborators tested MP views on a wide range of questions relating to European integration.³ However, there are at least two reasons why this present survey is felt to

² Views of the European Parliament among Labour MPs were mixed. In other comments, Labour MPs stated that the EP should be strengthened ‘if it was more democratic and accountable to ordinary people’ and it should be strengthened ‘vis-à-vis the Commission but not vis-à-vis national parliaments’.

³ This produced a large number of publications. For a review see Baker, 1997.

be necessary. First, earlier surveys tended to be of one party at a time. For example, Baker et al surveyed Tory parliamentarians in 1994 and Labour parliamentarians in 1996, before surveying all parliamentarians in 1998 (MEPs as well as MPs). Second, their questions focused almost exclusively on MPs' views of European integration. For example, in the 1996 survey of Labour MPs and MEPs, they sought views on specific policy areas, including monetary, social and environmental policies. They sought views on the 'IGC and the democratic deficit' and also on interventionism, though the latter set of questions was (with one exception) asked in a European context (ie, whether there should be EU strategies on dirigiste lines in certain areas). They distinguished between MPs and MEPs, and also between front and backbenchers. They also gathered information on the length of service of MPs, to distinguish between cohorts.

But there were few explanatory variables among their questions. Correlations were built into the questions: for example, on monetary integration, parliamentarians were asked whether a single currency would 'institutionalise neo-liberal economic policy in Britain.' But since there were no real independent variables created, little insight can be gained into what other factors may be causing MP attitudes to Europe at the time of their survey. The approach does not allow for statistical controls to be entered to determine how important neoliberalism is when controlling for, say, age. However, the Labour survey did test a 'cohort effect' which sought to understand whether there are different views held by parliamentarians who took office before and after 1983. They found that MPs elected after the 1983 general election were more likely to be positive about European integration. Likewise, Baker et al formulated a question designed to tap MPs' views on interventionism. They found a strong collectivist/interventionist tendency among Labour MPs, which is consistent with my findings, but did not undertake analysis of possible correlation to positions of scepticism.

Thus, the present survey differs from Baker et al's in that it asks fewer questions on European integration and more which might serve as independent variables explaining positions on European integration. The first set of 'independent variable' questions ask MPs how important they feel certain activities are when they consider European integration. These questions were guided partly by intuition – based on widespread media reporting they seem to be the appropriate questions to ask – and partly by several theoretical approaches to preference formation in the EU. It is important to emphasize that I do not intend that these questions serve as a test of these theories, since the theories are mainly concerned with explaining *party* or *government* support for integration, rather than MP support. Nonetheless, they help point us in the right direction in terms of looking for causality in MP views.

The first two of these questions tap MPs' beliefs about the importance of British trade and inward investment to decisions regarding European integration. Theorists and practitioners alike have claimed that these issues are crucial to determining the efficacy of integration in Europe. The academic research generally makes claims about government motivations rather than individual MP motivations; yet it is worth knowing whether the same logic applies to individual MPs. Anecdotal evidence points to the importance of trade and investment in MP positions on Europe. For example, Eurosceptic MPs, such as John Bercow and Roger Helmer, have explicitly made the link between British trade patterns and need to resist European integration (Bercow, 1998; Helmer, 1999).

Transactionalist theorists claim that changes in social and economic interaction create new demands for international cooperation, and conversely that the absence of these behavioural changes undermines the case for cooperation.⁴ Sandholtz and Stone Sweet point out that 'social

⁴See Aspinwall, 2003a for a discussion of how this theory accords with British economic and social patterns.

exchange across borders drives integration processes, generating social demands for supranational rules, and for higher levels of organizational capacity to respond to further demands' (1997: 300). They expect high levels of trade and investment to prompt demand for market liberalisation, and also to prompt subsequent demand for supranationalisation of corollary rules, including national standards and, presumably, national currencies. The argument is predicated on the notion that political integration will be welcomed where it is perceived to be useful as a pragmatic and instrumental step in securing specific goals, such as dealing with changing national and international circumstances, and above all, satisfying domestic interests.

It seems reasonable, given these theoretical approaches and views, to ask whether MPs themselves accord high or low importance to trade and investment. The answer is that they accord a high importance to both, higher than for any other of the eight specified variables in this section. However, there is no relationship between an MP's view about the importance of trade and investment and their position on matters of European integration, such as joining the Euro. MPs who believe that trade is important to their thinking on Europe may either strongly oppose or strongly support Euro membership. This suggests that MPs are divided in drawing conclusions about the importance of trade and investment to Britain's European policy. It could be that the MPs are not aware of the level of trade and investment between Britain and EU member states, or it could be that their interpretation of these levels differs. In fact, there is likely to be a contested interpretation of the relationship between trade interdependence and European integration. Euro-sceptics may focus on the trade *balance* (which is negative) rather than overall levels of trade to the EU.

MPs were also asked whether business and trade union views were important to them. A further question later in the survey also asked for

the number of representations per month they receive (on Europe) from business and trade unions. These questions are an extension of liberal preference formation theory to the level of individual MPs. Moravcsik (1998) asserted that government preferences on European integration are driven by the preferences of large economic producers. Where these interests are supportive of integration, governments will pursue it. Where interests are negative, governments will resist integration. Liberal preference formation theory is also a theory of government preferences rather than MP preferences, but it is worth establishing whether extending it to MPs is supported by the evidence. It is interesting to note that the average MP believes that business interests are somewhat important or important in forming positions on European integration, and there is virtually no difference between the parties on this (Labour MPs are more likely to believe that trade union views matter).

On the other hand there is almost no relationship between the number of representations made by businesses to MPs and the importance accorded to business interests by MPs. The same is true for labour interests. Therefore, the level of lobbying MPs receive appears to have no impact on their opinions about the importance of these interests. It is not possible to provide a test of liberal preference formation theory with the information available in this survey, but numerous interviews of backbench MPs, former ministers, civil servants, and advisers, have led to the conclusion that interests are among the least important factors governments take into account in making decisions about integration (Aspinwall, 2003b).

Party unity is tapped because of the theoretical importance of party unity to governments in forming integration preferences (Aspinwall, 2000, 2003b). In this approach (which again applies to governments rather than MPs) British governments are thought to be constrained by backbenchers in times of low majority. Balancing pro-integrationists against anti-integrationists, the government performs a managing act to hold the party

and government together. This theory does not predict what government policy will be with a high majority, only that with a low majority, governments will be neither enthusiastically pro-European nor vociferously hostile. Results here also suggest caution when extending the theory to MPs. On average, MPs are 'neutral' or believe that party unity is 'somewhat important' to positions on European integration. Moreover, MPs' views about the importance of party unity bear no relationship to their views on specific EU measures. Since belief in the importance of party unity might be expected to lead to cautious views on Europe, this could be interpreted as a disappointing result for the party unity theory.

MPs' views on the importance of public opinion are also sought, because research has attempted (largely without success) to find a link between public opinion and government preferences (Nugent, 1992). As rational, office-seeking politicians competing for seats, it seems reasonable to presume that MPs believe public opinion is important. Furthermore, since public opinion on the Euro, for example, is quite negative, it is also reasonable to assume that MPs who believe public opinion is important would have a negative view of the Euro. Results show that with remarkable cross-party uniformity, MPs believe that public opinion is either 'somewhat important' or 'important.' However, there is no relationship between an MP's view of the importance of public opinion and his/her position on the Euro or other matters of European integration. When it comes to Europe, public opinion is not a factor in MPs' minds.

British identity and sovereignty have been raised by the popular press, by academics, and politicians themselves as crucial to understanding positions on Europe (Wallace, 1991). Moreover, identity and sovereignty are believed to be important to elite views as well as public views about Europe. Cultural features and historical experience are thought to give the British a greater sensitivity to loss of identity and sovereignty through integration. Therefore, if this line of thinking is right we should see a

negative relationship between the identity/sovereignty variables and the European integration variables: the more important an MP believes identity and sovereignty to be, the less supportive of Europe. The results show a sharp distinction between the parties, with Labour and the Liberal Democrats believing identity to be ‘neutral’ or ‘somewhat important’ while the Conservatives believe it to be ‘important’ or ‘extremely important’. The same is true for sovereignty. A large gulf has opened up between the two main parties in terms of how important they consider British identity and sovereignty to be in the context of European integration. Moreover, the negative relationship hypothesised above does in fact exist. This is discussed in more detail later.

The results for these eight questions are summarised in Table 1. They show that the most important of the eight considerations for all MPs are economic ones – trade followed closely by inward investment. The least important are party unity and British identity. However, this masks some important differences between the two main parties. Labour MPs, unsurprisingly, consider trade unions views to be far more important than do Conservative MPs. By contrast, Labour MPs consider British identity and sovereignty to be far less important than do Tories.

Table 1 about here.

MPs are also questioned on their position on five ideological/issue dimensions. The first three - economic interventionism, personal liberties, and environmentalism – are designed to test the approach taken by Hooghe et al (2002). These scholars found a strong linear correlation between a political party’s position on the ‘new politics’ spectrum (which comprised Green-Alternative-Libertarian versus Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist politics) and the party’s support for integration, with parties on the ‘GAL’ end supportive and parties on the ‘TAN’ end unsupportive. Most of the power of this correlation comes from the strong

opposition of nationalist parties to European integration, while green-alternative-libertarian parties hold more mixed views. They also found a relationship on the Left-Right dimension among mainstream (non-extremist) parties, correlated with European regulated capitalism policies (employment, cohesion, environment). Centre-left parties favour European integration in these areas and centre-right parties oppose it.

Given these findings, it seems reasonable to predict (if the same relationships hold for MPs) that a negative correlation will be found on all three dimensions: the more left-wing an MP on these three spectra, the more supportive of European integration. The ‘personal liberties’ dimension in the present survey taps much the same ideological space as Hooghe et al’s GAL-TAN dimension. There are two differences, however. The first is that I tap the environmental dimension separately, but then combine the two dimensions later. The second is that in this survey, ‘nationalism’ was kept out of the questionnaire altogether, to avoid possibilities of tautology. MPs who believe nationalism is important are likely by definition to reject European integration.⁵ Moreover, the ‘economic interventionism’ dimension that I test in this survey is similar to the economic dimension in Hooghe et al.

The ‘environmentalism’ dimension that I test is part of the GAL-TAN dimension in Hooghe et al but I argue that it is important enough in its own right to be tested separately. The other two variables – on capital mobility and decentralised democracy – are simply an effort to extend this research to new issue areas. Little relationship exists between the latter two variables and European integration. Where an MP stands on capital mobility and decentralised democracy makes little difference to their views on Europe, and they are dropped from the analysis. However, there

⁵ Hooghe et al’s survey was conducted of experts, so the risk of such tautology was minimized. Moreover, nationalism was one of three elements at the ‘right’ end of the spectrum, which included traditionalism and authoritarianism.

are significant relationships on the other three dimensions, and these are discussed in more detail below.

Finally, personal details of MPs are collected. They include age, gender, political party, and position (backbencher, minister, Cabinet). These act as control variables, and enable further tests of theories to be carried out. William Wallace, for example, has written that age differences and personal wartime experiences may underlie the cleavage between two groups in Westminster. A younger group, without experience of war or empire, are more likely to conceive of a 'European Britain', while the older cohort embraces an 'Anglo-Saxon Britain'. However, respondents to this survey demonstrated no correlation at all between age and support for European integration, either among MPs as a whole or within an individual party. This may be contrasted to Baker et al's finding of a strong cohort effect among Labour MPs, with the post-1983 intake more pro-European. Obviously, these are not testing the same indicator, but if both surveys are correct it suggests that length of service matters but age does not.

On the other hand, MPs are sharply divided on partisan grounds over Europe, with Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs far more pro-European than Conservatives (see Table 2). Analysis of the means confirms that the Liberal Democrats are the most pro-European in terms of their support for the EU, with Labour close behind and the Conservatives far more negative. This is especially the case for joining the Euro and strengthening the EU's defence capabilities. Moreover, MPs are highly polarised when it comes to joining the Euro, as the earlier bar graphs showed: fewer than 3% of MPs are neutral on Euro membership. On the other hand, there appears to be less partisan-driven polarisation on the questions of strengthening the European Parliament and reducing the member state veto, where opinion is more uniformly spread. Interestingly, where Baker et al (1996) found strong Labour support for strengthening the European

Parliament, my data show Labour MPs as only lukewarm enthusiasts for the EP. And on the matter of continued British membership of the EU, most MPs are strongly in favour of it, regardless of party.

Table 2 about here.

Explaining support for Europe

One of the most common assumptions about MP positions on Europe is that they are determined by party affiliation. The results of this survey partly confirm this. Using a fixed effects model to determine the influence of party, it is clear that on the Euro and EU defence, party makes an important difference to MPs' position ($r^2 = .589$ and $.541$ respectively). However, on the other three European issues the relationship is much weaker. Party membership also influences position on the interventionism dimension, unsurprisingly ($r^2 = .666$), but has little influence on the personal liberties or other dimensions. So while party is an important first cut on understanding MP attitudes, we need to dig a little deeper.

Principal factors analysis was used to identify strong relationships between variables. A number of variables load highly on one factor; other potential factors may be discarded in our interpretation of MPs' positions on Europe. All five of the dependent variables load highly on this factor. In terms of explanatory variables, of interest first of all is that domestic economic and political considerations such as trade and investment, which MPs consider so important, bear little if any relationship to their positions on the five dependent variables. There are three exceptions: importance of trade union views, British identity, and British sovereignty. MPs' views of the importance of trade union positions are positively correlated with their positions on Europe. Identity and sovereignty are negatively correlated: the more important an MP thinks identity and sovereignty are, the less

they support integration (see Table 3).⁶ In the ideology dimensions (economic interventionism, personal liberties, and environmentalism) the correlations are also negative, as we expected from the predictions of Marks, Hooghe, and other scholars.⁷ Controlling for age does not alter these findings: MPs who favour economic freedom and moral traditionalism oppose European integration.

Table 3 about here.

The next stage in the analysis is to build multivariate models using the variables that load highly on the principal factor identified. Table 4 shows the results of multivariate regressions on each of the five dependent variables (position on questions of European integration). The explanatory variables are (1) trade union views, (2) the importance of British identity, (3) the importance of British sovereignty, (4) position on the economic interventionism spectrum, (5) position on the personal liberties spectrum, and (6) position on the environmentalism spectrum.

Table 4 about here.

It is clear from these results that trade union views, which correlate highly to positions on European integration, fall out in multivariate analysis. In only one of the models (the Euro) does this variable achieve statistical significance of .05. Intuitively, the probable cause of this is significant collinearity between trade union views and position on interventionism, and this is precisely the case. The trade union and economic intervention variables covary strongly.⁸ It is likely therefore,

⁶ Interestingly, Marks and Hooghe (n.d.), in an analysis of public opinion across the EU, find that national identity and European identity are positively correlated: people have simultaneous affinities for multiple levels. Where people have *exclusively* national identity, they tend to be less likely to identify positively with Europe. Their research is different from this report, but the data here would suggest that British MPs do not hold simultaneous attachments to Britain and to Europe.

⁷ Capital mobility and democratic centralisation are weak correlates to positions on Europe, and are not reported here.

⁸ $r = -.575$, significant at the .001 level.

that position on trade union views is explained by ideological position on interventionism. The high level of correlation between the importance of trade union views and position on the Euro is likely to be spurious, therefore, and mainly caused by another independent variable.

A second observation from Table 4 is that the importance of British identity does not achieve significance in any of the multivariate models. This is due to an even higher degree of collinearity, with identity position being explained by position on the importance of sovereignty. Covariance is very high on these two measures.⁹ Finally, environmentalism achieves statistical significance in only one model (position on strengthening the European Parliament). Environmentalism does not show collinearity with interventionism or liberties, but seems only marginally relevant as an explanatory variable.

The most important explanatory variable across all five models is position on the importance of British sovereignty. The more important an MP feels sovereignty to be, the less supportive of integration they are. This is to be expected, of course, since there is an obvious relationship between sovereignty and integration. Using concern about sovereignty as an explanatory variable for positions on integration may seem tautological. But it does show the close association between integration and sovereignty in the minds of MPs. Economic interventionism and personal liberties are also significant explanatory variables in some but not all of the cases. Interventionism helps explain position on the Euro, EU defence, and to a lesser extent, reduction of the veto and membership of the EU. The liberties dimension is most powerfully associated with position on membership of the EU and common defence, and to a lesser extent position on the Euro.

⁹ $r = .730$, significant at the .001 level.

Table 5 displays a second set of multivariate models, in which all independent variables not meeting 5% significance are dropped. Of note is that the r^2 value for the models is only slightly reduced by dropping these variables. Sovereignty provides the most powerful explanation of MP positions on Europe, but the ideological dimensions also add explanatory value in certain cases. For example, intervention and sovereignty together explain more than half of the positions taken on defence, and though sovereignty is the stronger variable, when interventionism is added, the level of explanation increases to more than 50% of variation.¹⁰ Adding liberties to the model increases the explanatory power slightly.¹¹

Table 5 about here.

Table 5 shows that sovereignty is far more important than interventionism in explaining MP position on reducing the veto, with the latter adding little to the explanatory power of the two variables together. Sovereignty and environmental ideology are the two strongest correlates to position on strengthening the European Parliament. Again, environmentalism is weak in multivariate analysis. Finally, the results provide strong confirmation of Hooghe et al's finding that the personal liberties dimension is strongly and negatively correlated to support for the EU. The correlation matrix shows that liberties has the strongest covariation with support for EU membership.¹² Together, sovereignty and position on the liberties dimension explain nearly half of MPs' position on membership of the EU.¹³ Adding position on the interventionism dimension improves this explanation only slightly.¹⁴ Since liberties and sovereignty are themselves not highly correlated¹⁵, this is a significant

¹⁰ from $r^2 = .418$ to $r^2 = .524$.

¹¹ to $r^2 = .551$.

¹² $r = -.498$.

¹³ $r^2 = .460$.

¹⁴ to $r^2 = .496$.

¹⁵ $r = .298$.

result, since two unrelated dimensions help explain a great deal of support for European Union membership.

An interesting result emerges in more detailed analysis of the effect of personal liberties. Examining only the ‘left’ end of this dimension (ie, only those favouring personal liberties), there is a very weak correlation to positions on all five European issues. Looking at the ‘right’ end of this dimension (those favouring moral traditions), the correlation to positions on Europe is higher, though not statistically significant in many cases. This would suggest that it is the ‘moral authority’ end of this spectrum is more significant than the liberty end of the spectrum. This is consistent with Hooghe et al’s findings in the case of political party positions, where the ‘traditional-authoritarian-nationalist’ end of the spectrum was responsible for much of the covariation with position on Europe. The difference between left and right is more striking in the case of economic interventionism: here it is clearer that the economic freedom end of the spectrum is responsible for more of the correlation to views on Europe than the interventionism end of the spectrum.

New ideological variables

The next step in the analysis is to create several new independent variables from the data on the existing ideological variables. A new ‘Left-Right’ variable, which combines the interventionism and liberties dimensions, increases the correlate to position on the Euro. Moreover, this new variable together with the sovereignty dimension explains over half of MPs’ support for the Euro (see Table 6). Both variables are highly significant. The two variables achieve a slightly higher explanatory value in the case of EU defence, and are nearly equal in their contribution. R squared values are slightly lower for the other dependent variables, but interestingly Left-Right emerges as the more robust of the two variables in explaining MP support for membership of the EU.

Table 6 about here.

A second new variable called ‘new politics’ combines the liberties dimension and the environmental dimension. In bivariate correlations, the new politics variable is a significant correlate to MPs’ positions on membership of the EU and strengthening the EU defence.¹⁶ However, in multivariate analysis, this new variable is far less important than sovereignty in explaining MP views, with the exception of EU membership, where it is only slightly less important (see Table 7).

Table 7 about here.

Combining all three ideologies into a single ‘super ideology’ variable and correlating it to support for the Euro shows a very strong relationship.¹⁷ The correlation is even stronger for membership of the EU and EU defence.¹⁸ Multivariate analysis indicates that this broad ideology variable plus the sovereignty variable together explain more than 53% of variance in positions on the Euro and strengthening EU defence (see Table 8). Most striking, ‘super ideology’ survives control for sovereignty, and is the more robust of the two variables in the cases of defence and EU membership. Left-Right ideology matters to views on Europe.

Table 8 about here.

Understanding the correlates of support for integration

What do these findings tell us about the causes of MP attitudes to Europe? First, their views about the importance of sovereignty are clearly related to their positions on the five measures of European integration. This is

¹⁶ $r = -.560$ and $-.516$ respectively, significant at the 0.01 level.

¹⁷ $r = -.599$, significant at .01.

perhaps the least surprising of the findings here, since all five measures imply a loss (or potential loss) of domestic decisionmaking authority. Therefore, the sovereignty question and the European questions are tapping the same underlying dimension: European authority versus domestic authority, or what Baker and colleagues (1993: 425) term the 'national sovereignty/interdependence' axis. However, this technical relationship between sovereignty and integration may be augmented by an emotional relationship: like the term 'freedom' in the United States, sovereignty may be gaining ideological momentum beyond its immediate relevance to measures of integration. A comparison to other EU member states would be useful to determine whether this is indeed happening. In any case, the robustness of this variable gives us confidence that this underlying domestic versus European authority dimension is indeed relevant and important to MPs.

A second underlying dimension is ideological, although here the results are somewhat more difficult to interpret. The correlation between the three principal variables: interventionism, liberties, and environmentalism is fairly weak. Yet each of these ideological variables on their own correlates strongly, significantly, and negatively with most of the European variables. Moreover, they withstand controls (except for the sovereignty variable), and when combined into 'Left-Right' and 'new politics' variables, their explanatory strength is increased. Their predictive power is greatest when the three ideologies are combined into a single underlying Left-Right dimension, though it appears that 'environmentalism' adds little to the explanatory power of the other two variables.

Clearly, then, there is an ideological space which can be distinguished from the domestic v. European authority space in the minds of MPs. It is

¹⁸ -.612 and -.623 respectively. Among those MPs 40 years old or younger, the correlation between defence and 'super ideology' is -.768, and the relationship is significant at the 0.01 level with an N of only 13.

not quite the same thing as the Baker et al (1993: 425) characterisation of an 'extended government/limited government' axis, because on the left end of the liberty axis we find limited government but on the left end of the interventionism axis we find extended government (and vice versa for the right). In other words, extended government opposes integration when considered in the liberties context, but supports integration when considered in the economic context. Moreover, it appears that the right end of both the interventionism and liberties dimensions does more explaining than the left end (though both together are more important than either alone). The relationship between the two dimensions is linear and negative: libertarians and economic interventionists support European integration, moral traditionalists and free marketeers oppose it.

How do these results square with research on ideology and support for European integration more generally? One body of research has examined the relationship between left-right *party* ideology and support for integration. As Hooghe et al (2002) point out, three schools of thought may be discerned: one claims that conflict over Europe has been subsumed into Left-Right party competition, such that Left parties support integration to control market forces while Right parties oppose it in favour of market liberalism. A second claims that conflict over Europe is unrelated to conflict on Left-Right grounds, since the former is about powersharing between the nation-state and the supranational organisation while the latter is about redistribution. A third school of thought claims that 'Left/right contestation shapes positioning only on European policies that are concerned with redistribution and regulating capitalism' Hooghe et al (2002). These authors find evidence of the latter in political parties.

Hooghe et al (2002) have found that social democratic parties across Europe have come to support European integration as policies and institutions are built that provide an authoritative check on international capitalism. These include employment, environmental, and cohesion

policies (tending to correct market failures), and stronger EU-level institutions to provide democratic and social checks upon the forces of capitalism. Baker et al (1996: 360) also find that parliamentarians ‘favour strategic economic intervention at the EU level on a wide range of matters’ related to regulated European capitalism. I have not been able to provide a definitive extension of these findings to British MPs in 2002, because I did not ask questions specifically about European regulatory policies. However, the evidence strongly suggests that this relationship does exist.

A second body of research has examined British MPs and come to somewhat different conclusions. Baker et al (2002) maintain that a new *modus vivendi* between the nation state and ‘hyperglobalisation,’ has grown in Conservative thinking in recent decades. They define in hyperglobalisation as extremely high interdependence between states which sharply reduces national policy autonomy. The *modus vivendi* is ‘a programme of low taxation, low government spending, deregulation and privatisation ... combined with strong attachment to national sovereignty and the nation state as the guarantor of national identity and national independence’ (Baker et al, 2002: 409).

The basic idea is that many Conservatives favour global economic relationships, a streamlined state in domestic economic policy, and a strong state externally, fighting off the challenge of the EU. They note the ‘existence of [a] powerful hyperglobalist strand within British Conservatism’ (Baker et al, 2002: 421). This is contrasted to an intergovernmental approach, in which national sovereignty is still promoted but national economic management also (to a limited extent) is pursued. In this perspective nation states have not lost all power to international markets, but control their destinies to a certain extent. A final category is ‘open regionalism’ which sees European cooperation as a healthy response to the effects of globalisation.

Using the survey reported here it is possible to test whether Conservative MPs do base their Euroscepticism on a view that global capitalism is important and contradictory to European integration. Their survey data is taken from 1994 and 1998, and it shows a strong sovereignty-conscious Conservative party, consistent with the findings here. Tories oppose many aspects of European integration. They also show lukewarm support at best for EU level support for various market-enhancing measures. The Tories come across as both market-favourable and anti-integrationist. If the hyperglobalisation theory is correct, we should see in the survey reported here a relationship between support for measures of integration and indicators such as position on the interventionism scale, support for capital mobility, importance of British trade, and importance of inward investment. Position on the economic freedom end of the interventionism scale should correlate to anti-integrationism; position on the capital mobility end of the 'globalisation' scale should correlate to anti-integrationism; belief in the importance of British trade and inward investment should also correlate to anti-integrationism.

In fact there is no relationship whatsoever between any of these economic freedom or globalisation variables and a Tory MP's position on Europe. Why not? One possibility is that the different times in which the surveys were conducted obscures a shift in Conservative MP beliefs in European integration. If that were the case the years from 1998 to 2002 would have seen a change in the party away from hyperglobalist source of Euroscepticism. A second possibility is that the hyperglobalist element in the Conservative party and its purported anti-integrationism was never in fact shown by the Baker et al data. The reason is that their data do not permit correlations between separate independent variables to be made.

They do show strong support for national sovereignty and they also show support for market principles. They demonstrate that many Conservatives believe that the EU is excessively regulatory, bureaucratic, and anti-free

market. But what they do not show is that individual MPs who support national sovereignty *are also the ones* who support market principles. Still less do they show that individual MPs who support national sovereignty *are also the ones* who support global capitalism, such as free capital mobility. Without these direct correlations it does not seem possible to test their hypothesis of an important and growing ‘hyperglobalist’ source of Tory anti-Europeanism.

Conclusion

This essay has tried to demonstrate that MPs have subsumed conflict over Europe (somewhat imperfectly) into the general Left-Right ideological space. The three constructed ideological dimensions (Left-Right, new politics, and super ideology) correlate fairly well to sovereignty.¹⁹ Moreover, since sovereignty loaded highly on the one factor identified by our factor analysis, it seems safe to predict that Left-Right is the key underlying dimension.²⁰ It is not simply regulated capitalism that matters, but also personal liberty. Where Hooghe et al (2002) found that parties on the ‘traditional-authoritarian-nationalist’ right were primarily responsible for the strength of the ‘new politics’ dimension in predicting party positions on Europe (in a linear negative slope), in my research only partly bears this out: the right is indeed more important, but neither the left nor right of the liberties dimension alone are sufficient to predict position on Europe with as much confidence as they are together. Moreover, separating out the environmental dimension yields evidence that it is not a strong contributor to MP views on Europe.

Thus, leftist politicians appear to support integration because Europe is seen as providing a check on pure market capitalism, and to a lesser extent because new quality of life policies, such as environmentalism, are associated with Europe. On the other hand, rightist politicians oppose

¹⁹ $r = .406$ to $.490$.

²⁰ See Gabel and Hix (2002) for similar findings at the European Parliament level among political parties.

integration because it is perceived as excessively interventionist in market terms, and also because their adherence to traditional moral authority is probably associated with belief in state power (though more research would need to be done to confirm these causes). It is important to note however that analyzing one side alone (ie, just right-wingers or just left-wingers) weakens the strength of the findings, so that both left-wing ideology and right-wing ideology must be contributing to the effect on MPs views of European integration.

Finally, despite the impression that Labour is pro-European and Conservative anti-European, there remain some deeply sceptical Labour MPs. Comments accompanying returned questionnaires from these MPs suggested both a sense of fatalism and a concern about integration. One stated that he supports a 'looser association of independent democratic states working together where appropriate for mutual benefit.' He also supports enlargement because 'this would promote looser cooperative arrangements and weaken undemocratic central control by the European Commission and ECB [European Central Bank]'. Another Labour MP said that 'Euro-scepticism doesn't bring promotion. For some [Europe] is an obsession, but it's mainly a dim and distant nonsense, an unhappy relationship in which we're always negotiating uphill ... but not serious enough to justify coming out because the public doesn't like it but would be scared to withdraw. We'd be better off out but it's not a salient issue.'

The numbers are far too small to suggest a pattern, but these Euro-sceptic Labour MPs tend to be in their 60s and male. Interestingly, it does not appear that (even with such small responses) it is 'Old Labour' values driving Euro-scepticism. They were both supportive of economic interventionism but they differed on other value scales, which arguably might identify them as Old Labour: one was strongly in favour of growth over environmentalism but the other favoured environmentalism. One

was strongly in favour of centralisation but the other favoured local democracy.

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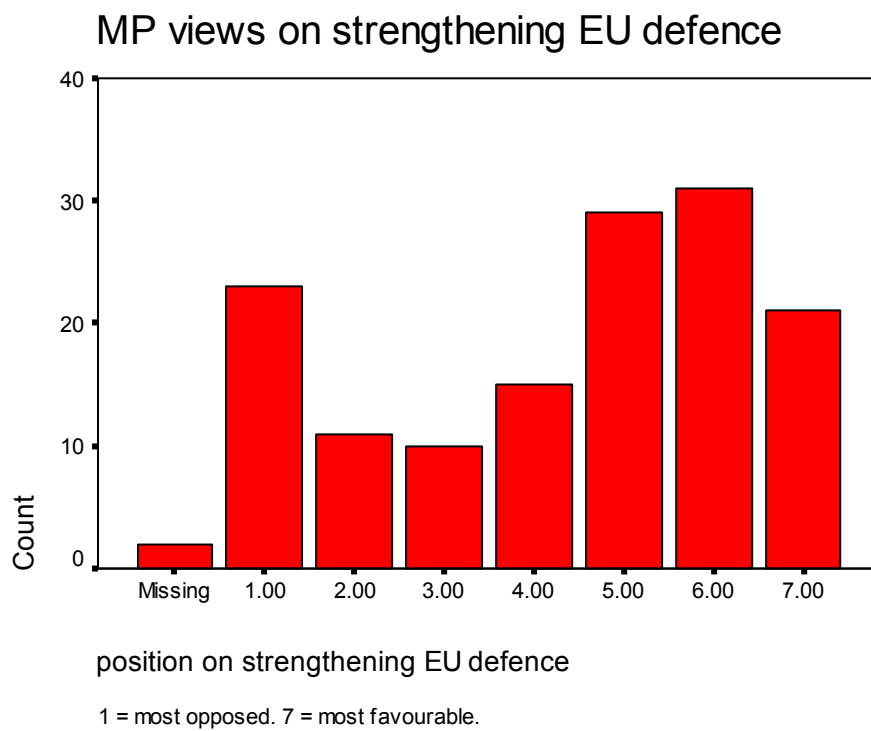
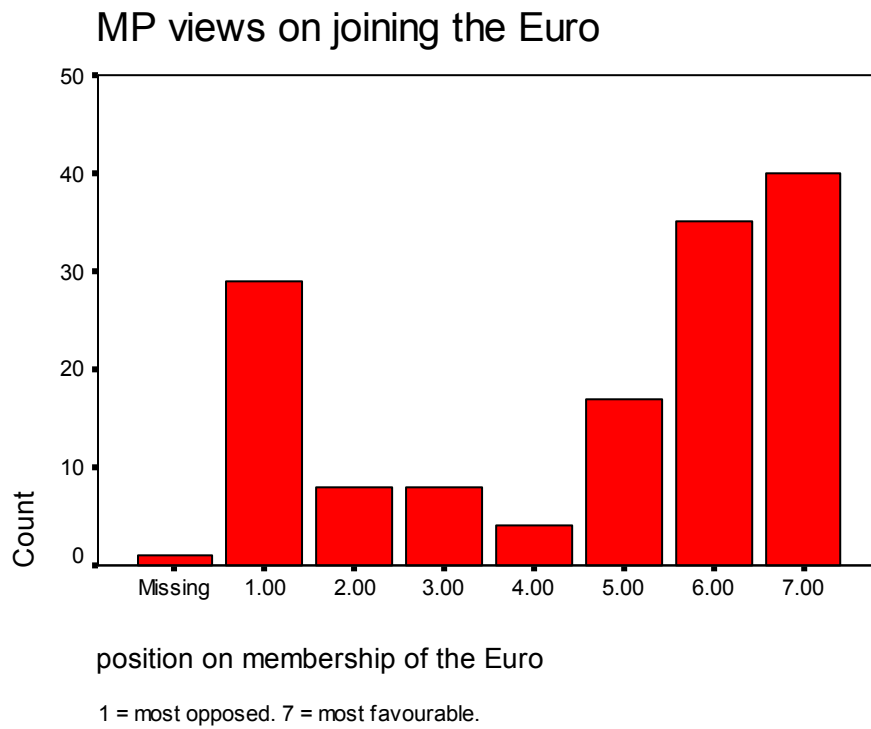
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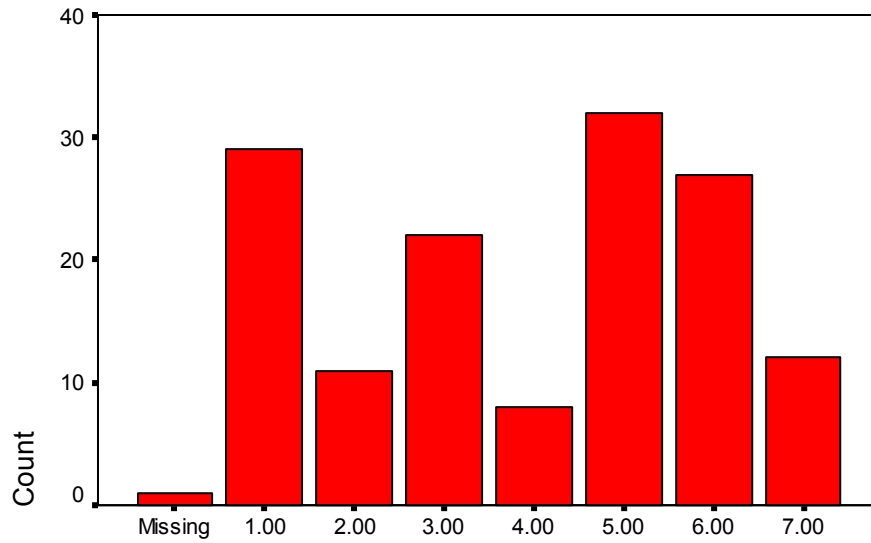
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Figure 1



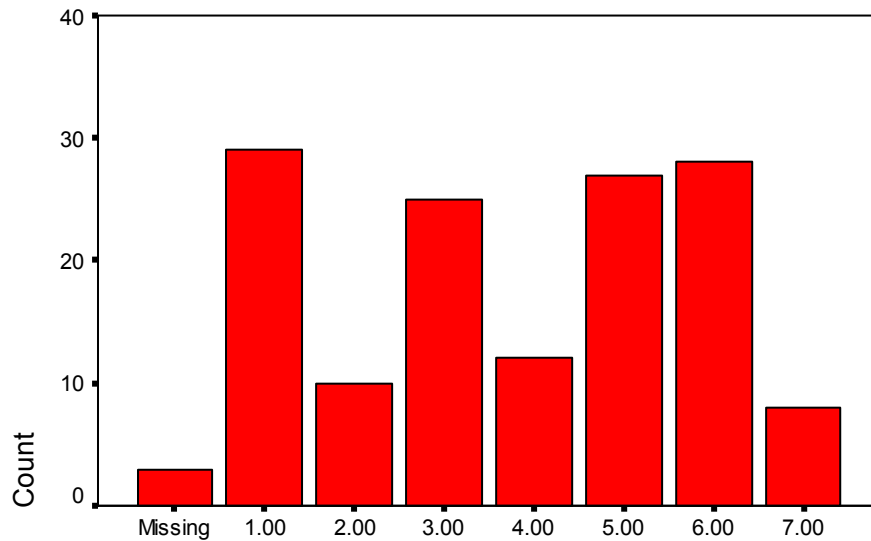
MP views on decreasing member state veto



position on decreasing member state veto power

1 = most opposed. 7 = most favourable.

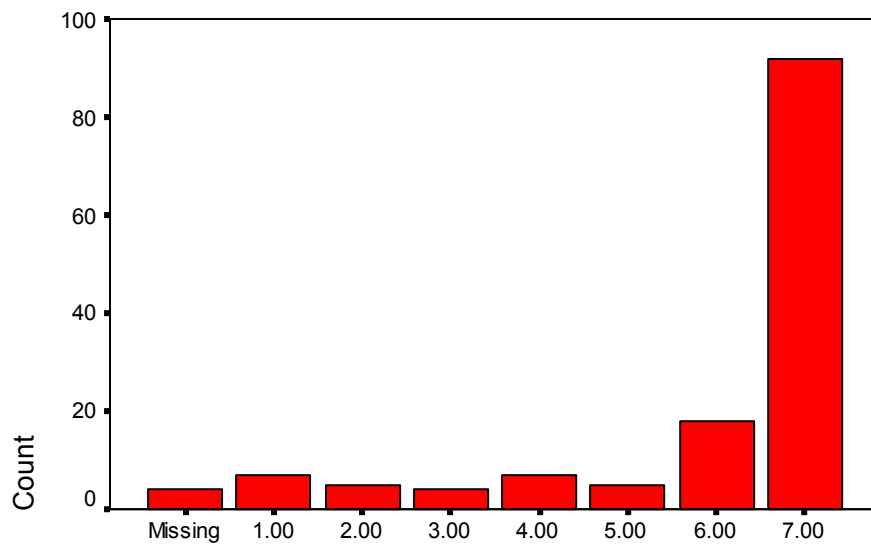
MP views on strengthening the EP



position on strengthening the European Parliament

1 = most opposed. 7 = most favourable.

MP views on British membership of the EU



position on British membership of the EU

1 = most opposed. 7 = most favourable.

Table 1**When considering European integration generally, how important are ...**

	Labour	Conservative	All MPs
UK trade	6.35	6.31	6.32
Inward investment	6.18	6.28	6.14
Business views	5.36	5.52	5.40
Trade union views	5.58	3.76	5.05
Party unity	4.81	4.47	4.66
Public opinion	5.73	5.53	5.69
British identity	4.47	6.23	4.76
British sovereignty	4.51	6.41	4.87

Average level of importance reported (1 = extremely unimportant; 7 = extremely important).

Table 2**Joining the Euro**

	Labour	Tory	Lib Dem
Strongly opposed	4	21	
Opposed	2	6	
Somewhat opposed	5	3	
Neutral	3	1	
Somewhat in favour	12	1	2
In favour	24	1	7
Strongly in favour	28	1	8

Strengthening the EU defence capability

	Labour	Tory	Lib Dem
Strongly opposed	2	17	
Opposed	4	7	
Somewhat opposed	3	6	1
Neutral	11	1	2
Somewhat in favour	23	1	3
In favour	19	2	9
Strongly in favour	16		2

Decreasing the member state veto

	Labour	Tory	Lib Dem
Strongly opposed	6	19	
Opposed	2	8	1
Somewhat opposed	15	3	3
Neutral	7		1
Somewhat in favour	24	2	4
In favour	16	1	7
Strongly in favour	9	1	1

Strengthening the European Parliament

	Labour	Tory	Lib Dem
Strongly opposed	4	20	
Opposed	7	3	
Somewhat opposed	19	2	3
Neutral	11		
Somewhat in favour	19	5	1
In favour	15	3	8
Strongly in favour	3		5

British membership of the European Union

	Labour	Tory	Lib Dem
Strongly opposed	1	5	
Opposed		2	
Somewhat opposed	1	3	
Neutral	3	4	
Somewhat in favour		4	1
In favour	11	6	1
Strongly in favour	62	8	15

Table 3**Principal factors**

	Euro membership	Defence strengthened	Reduced veto	EP strength	EU membership
Trade union views	.549	.487	.385	.361	.402
Importance of identity	-.621	-.566	-.511	-.428	-.485
Importance of sovereignty	-.632	-.634	-.602	-.532	-.567
Economic ideology	-.584	-.545	-.453	-.342	-.520
Liberties ideology	-.490	-.503	-.460	-.345	-.606
Environmental ideology	-.386	-.414	-.365	-.481	-.468

Note: these values were extracted from a principal components analysis in SPSS 10 with all factors included in the analysis. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4**Multivariate Models**

Beta coefficients reported; standard errors in parentheses.

	Euro	Defence	Veto	EP	Member
union views	.173* (.132)	.124 (.117)	.060 (.125)	.147 (.132)	.024 (.108)
identity	-.100 (.122)	-.107 (.108)	-.027 (.116)	-.083 (.123)	.041 (.099)
sovereignty	-.382*** (.125)	-.331*** (.111)	-.467*** (.119)	-.362*** (.127)	-.394*** (.103)
intervention	-.209** (.090)	-.229** (.080)	-.163* (.086)	-.001 (.091)	-.161* (.074)
liberties	-.144* (.082)	-.189** (.073)	-.111 (.078)	-.094 (.082)	-.338*** (.067)
environment	-.028 (.088)	-.065 (.078)	-.099 (.084)	-.190* (.088)	-.099 (.072)
R ² full model	.574	.562	.489	.402	.506

* p > .05
 ** p > .01
 *** p > .001

Table 5

	Euro	Defence	Veto	EP	Membershi p
union views	.170* (.126)	--	--	--	--
identity	--	--	--	--	--
sovereignty	-.470*** (.093)	-.430*** (.083)	-.555*** (.084)	-.501*** (.086)	-.372*** (.077)
intervention	-.194* (.089)	-.313*** (.069)	-.232*** (.072)	--	-.212** (.065)
liberties	-.178** (.079)	-.223*** (.070)	--	--	-.347*** (.065)
environment	--	--	--	-.235** (.079)	--
R ² full model	.568	.551	.473	.375	.496

* p > .05
 ** p > .01
 *** p > .001

Table 6

	Euro	Defence	Veto	EP	Membership
Sovereignty	-.482*** (.095)	-.433*** (.083)	-.520*** (.088)	-.454*** (.096)	-.366*** (.078)
Left-Right	-.376*** (.103)	-.429*** (.090)	-.274*** (.095)	-.220** (.104)	-.449*** (.084)
R ² full model	.546	.549	.481	.348	.488

* p > .05
 ** p > .01
 *** p > .001

Left-Right = mean position of interventionism, liberties.

Table 7

	Euro	Defence	Veto	EP	Membership
Sovereignty	-.549*** (.098)	-.500*** (.086)	-.549*** (.087)	-.448*** (.091)	-.421*** (.075)
New politics	-.260*** (.110)	-.321*** (.097)	-.239*** (.098)	-.278*** (.102)	-.400*** (.085)
R ² full model	.486	.484	.465	.378	.469

* p > .05
 ** p > .01
 *** p > .001

New politics = mean position of liberties, environmentalism.

Table 8

	Euro	Defence	Veto	EP	Membership
Sovereignty	-.474*** (.098)	-.422*** (.086)	-.496*** (.089)	-.419*** (.096)	-.364*** (.078)
Super ideology	-.370*** (.119)	-.425*** (.104)	-.306*** (.108)	-.291*** (.116)	-.446*** (.095)
R ² full model	.533	.536	.488	.379	.487

* p > .05
 ** p > .01
 *** p > .001

Super ideology = mean position of interventionism, liberties, environmentalism.