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An Empirical Analysis of the Europeanization of National Party Manifestos, 1960–2003

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comparative analysis of the degree of Europeanization of national party manifestos. The research is based on a newly established database, which comprises digitized party manifestos of relevant parties in the period 1960–2003 in most of the established member states. The unit of analysis is the frequency of 'co-mentions' of 20 policy areas and (aspects of) Europe and the European Union. The results show that the degree to which parties acknowledge the increasing impact of Europe on policy-making depends on factors such as the time period, the type of policy sector, the duration of EU membership, the general attitude of parties towards European integration and the degree of internal consensus on European issues. Hence, references to Europe do not (only) reflect the process of European integration itself, but are affected by both institutional and party strategic factors.

KEY WORDS

- Europeanization
- party manifestos
- political parties
- policy-making
- time series

Introduction

This article reveals empirical evidence for the programmatic Europeanization of political parties in 15 European countries.[1] Europeanization is broadly defined as the responses by national actors to the impact of European integration (Ladrech, 2002: 393). The significance of an *empirical* understanding of this impact is that it necessarily demonstrates to what extent European integration has invoked programmatic changes by national parties. Theoretically, studying Europeanization is important in order to reach a more comprehensive understanding of how the external environment, period effects and intra-party dynamics influence a party's policy formation (Van Biezen, 2005).

European integration entails European countries becoming more and more interdependent in their decision-making. This process affects European countries that are members of the European Union (EU), as well as non-members. For this reason the research includes manifesto references to both Europe and the European Union. These references are interpreted as signs that parties do acknowledge the relevance of Europe for policy-making in policy sectors. The more parties connect a policy domain to Europe, the more they recognize that Europe is important for that domain. However, Europeanization is not a linear process that gradually and increasingly affects all policy areas. On the basis of existing literature we expect that Europeanization is differentiated by the national institutional environment, the sectoral context and party strategic behaviour (Cowles et al., 2001; Ladrech, 2002; Mény et al., 1996). As a consequence, my hypotheses focus on how the Europeanization of manifestos is intermediated by the following contextual factors and party strategic considerations:

- The national context and, in particular, the phase of integration: the earlier countries join the EU, the sooner we will see the number of co-mentions between Europe and policy sectors increase (Wallace and Wallace, 2000).
- The sectoral context: some policy sectors are more prone to Europeanization than others. Specifically, sectors related to economic integration are expected to have stronger and earlier linkages to Europe than will sectors in the political or social policy-making domains (Scharpf, 1996).
- The general position that parties take on European integration and the degree of internal party cohesiveness (with regard to European issues) are each expected to have an effect on the number of references to Europe. Parties in favour of European integration will make co-mentions more frequently between policy sectors and Europe than will parties that are against it. In the case of internal cohesiveness, divided parties will refer

less to Europe than will united parties in order to prevent additional intra-party turmoil (Marks and Steenbergen, 2004).

The more the impact of these factors can be shown, the more the number of references to Europe in manifestos is the result of the national and sectoral context and of intra-party politics (Steenbergen and Scott, 2004).

Data and research design

Considering that Europeanization is a *process*, the strongest argument in favour of using manifestos as a data source is that they enable comparisons and analyses to take place over time. The available hand-coded party policy positions (as reported in Budge et al., 2001) include positive and negative references to Europe. Unfortunately, these codings are not sufficient for this analysis, because I am interested in the degree to which political parties relate all main policy sectors to Europe, and how this is related to the logic of partisan politics. Because it is not feasible to recode all manifestos manually, the only way to extract this information is by means of automated content analysis. This has been made possible by the digitization of the manifestos (Pennings and Keman, 2002).[2] These documents have been translated into English, which has enabled us to construct one single categorization dictionary with which all documents are coded. The categorization dictionary seeks to identify the main policy fields that are relevant both to Europe and to national policy-making. It departs from the official division into 30 policy areas, which is used by the EU, and presents the main activities that may have an impact on the policy positions of national parties.[3] In order to avoid overlap, several categories are merged and some new ones are added, correcting for some omissions in the EU categorization of policy domains.

The categorization dictionary allows specific words, word patterns or expressions to be changed to another word, category or concept; in our case, these are the 20 categories listed in Table 1. This feature is used to remove variant forms of a word in order to treat them as a single instance and to group related words under meaningful categories. The categorization dictionary is structured as a hierarchical tree where words, word patterns and phrases are grouped in a folder that represents a category name. The number of key words and phrases varies by policy sector because some descriptions of sectors need to be more elaborate than others owing to the inclusiveness of these sectors. The economic sector, for example, is very broad and incorporates more aspects than the public health sector (which is more focused).

The dictionary is used to extract so-called co-occurrence matrices with the software package WordStat by cross-tabulating all of the categories.[4] The

Table 1 Overview of the categorization dictionary, which is used to identify the co-mentions of policy areas and Europe

Category	*Description*	*Number of key words and phrases*
EUKEY	All references to Europe, the EU and its central institutions (abbreviated as Europe below). All co-occurrences between this 'key' and the following policy areas are counted at the sentence level	262
Agriculture	Agriculture; fisheries; food (safety); farmers	225
Spending and budget	Spending; subsidies; budget; deficit	93
Culture	Culture; art; leisure; sport	222
Democracy	Democracy; citizens; elections; executives; parliament; dictatorship	237
Economy	Financial, economic and monetary affairs (banks, business, capital, consumers, economy, industry, investment, prices, productivity)	641
Education	Education; training; youth	211
(Un)employment	(Un)employment; industrial relations; trade unions; wages	354
Infrastructure	Infrastructure; energy; transport; communications; research	391
Environment	Environment; animals; pollution	261
External relations	External relations; enlargement; international affairs	263
Humanitarian aid	Developing world; humanitarian aid; the UN	67
Public health	Public health; children; doctors; medicines	121
Judiciary	Judiciary; home affairs; immigration; courts; crime; drugs; police	488
National identity	National identity; (traditional) morality; religion	313
Regional policy	Regional policy	125
Security policy	Security policy (armed forces, weapons, war, defence, missiles, NATO)	404
Social issues	Social affairs (disabled, housing, pensions)	231
Taxation	Taxation	121
External trade	External trade; customs; competition; internal market; export; WTO	266

unit of analysis is the frequency of co-mentions – of policy areas and Europe – per party per election year. This format allows us to aggregate across parties, time periods and countries, and thus enables us to account for the variation in the Europeanization of party manifestos across spatial and temporal contexts. The co-occurrences are analysed by counting the number of references made per policy area. For instance, when agriculture is mentioned 10 times with respect to Europe and 100 times in relation to other areas, the EU linkage is 10%. This measurement closely relates to our conceptualization of Europeanization (in a given policy area), and it enables us to differentiate among policy areas. For example, it is expected that, depending on the phase of EU entry, trade will be more strongly linked to Europe than health care, and that the degree to which this is the case depends on institutional and party-related factors.

The co-occurrence matrices are stacked into a pooled data file with a total of nearly 15,000 rows covering 88 parties in the period 1960–2003 in 15 countries. This format allows for the diversity of Europeanization of manifestos to be analysed both cross-nationally and longitudinally. A shortcoming of this approach is that it is unable to detect implicit references to Europe since it will count only explicit references within sentences. For this reason, the references to Europe must be seen as proxies for the degree to which parties tend to co-mention policy domains and Europe.

Europeanization per phase of integration and policy sector

It is expected that the phase in which countries entered the EU will influence the degree to which parties relate policy sectors to Europe. The earlier a country entered the EU, the sooner parties are expected to co-mention policy sectors and Europe. The phases of EU enlargement are specified in Table 2.

Table 2 Phases of EU enlargement, 1952–2003

Phase	*Year*	*Countries*
Founders	1952	Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands
First enlargement	1973	Denmark, Ireland, the UK
Second enlargement[a]	1981	Greece
Third enlargement	1986	Portugal, Spain
Fourth enlargement	1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden

[a] not included

Table 3 References to Europe per phase of integration per country (% of linkages per policy domain)

	Year[a]	*1960–4*	*1965–9*	*1970–4*	*1975–9*	*1980–4*	*1985–90*	*1991–4*	*1995–9*	*2000–3*
Austria	1995	0.0	4.8	3.1	2.2	1.8	2.4	4.1	4.8	4.3
Belgium	1952	1.4	2.8	2.4	3.3	3.2	4.5	4.8	4.9	3.9
Denmark	1973	1.4	1.8	2.3	1.5	2.8	5.5	3.2	3.7	4.1
Finland	1995	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.0	0.4	3.2	4.9	1.8
France	1952	4.8	3.2	2.3	3.3	2.3	5.3	3.2	6.5	6.2
Germany	1952	3.0	5.3	3.0	4.6	2.6	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.2
Ireland	1973	0.2	1.1	13.9	2.5	2.1	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.8
Italy	1952	3.2	3.0	3.9	3.2	3.3	3.3	4.1	4.3	5.0
Netherlands	1952	4.3	3.9	2.9	3.8	3.1	3.8	5.6	4.4	3.9
Norway	–	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.8	0.8	2.7	1.3	1.4
Portugal	1986	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.9	3.4	4.4	3.8	3.0
Spain	1986	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.8	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.5
Sweden	1995	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.4	1.1	5.2	4.7	3.9
Switzerland	–	1.5	0.6	1.7	1.7	0.9	0.9	4.2	4.4	1.8
UK	1973	1.3	1.2	2.0	3.4	2.9	2.5	5.1	5.3	4.0

[a] Year denotes the year of joining the EU.

First, I examine the impact of time by counting the references to Europe as a percentage of all linkages per policy area, per country. For convenience, these references are presented in five-year time periods so that large fluctuations between individual manifestos are flattened out.

Table 3 shows the references to Europe in the manifestos of parties belonging both to member states and to non-member states. Notice that non-member states are not restricted to Switzerland and Norway since established member states such as Austria, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and the UK were also non-members for considerable periods of time.

The results in Table 3 demonstrate that the phase of enlargement matters for the number of co-mentions between policy areas and Europe. In the case of established member states (i.e. those that have been EU members from the start), there is either no rise in the number of references or only a very slight rise. This indicates that, according to the saliency theory of party competition, parties in these countries have not used European issues in order to distinguish themselves from other parties (Budge and Farlie, 1983).

Among the non-member states we can distinguish between states in the core of Europe, on the one hand, and those that are more on the periphery, on the other. In the case of the former, EU membership did not come as a 'big bang' and so it did not provoke much extra attention in manifestos. Here, the membership experiences of Austria and the UK come to mind. In contrast, in Finland and especially in Ireland EU membership invoked significant, albeit temporary, increases in the number of references to Europe.

Table 3 shows that parties in member states make more references to Europe than do non-member states. The non-members Norway and Switzerland demonstrate the same pattern as the countries that entered the EU in 1995. It is likely that the Treaty on the European Union (1992) and the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) led parties in the non-member states to discuss European issues in the 1990s. The main difference between parties in member and non-member states is that the latter show a much stronger decline in linkages for the period 2000–3.

The patterns in Table 3 reveal that parties in non-member states do indeed refer differently to Europe than do parties in member states. At the same time, there are enough references to Europe in non-member states to claim that an increase in co-mentions of Europe and policy sectors is not limited to the member states.

Table 4 shows the references to Europe per policy sector per time period. These co-mentions occur frequently in the domains of financial and economic policy-making as well as in external relations and security and much less so in the cases of education, health and social security. This result is consistent with other historical accounts of European integration, which have viewed

Table 4 References to Europe per policy sector per time period (% of linkages per policy domain)

	1960–4	*1965–9*	*1970–4*	*1975–9*	*1980–4*	*1985–90*	*1991–4*	*1995–9*	*2000–3*
Agriculture	3.2	2.6	2.3	3.0	2.0	4.3	4.8	6.1	5.1
Spending and budget	0.1	0.8	1.1	2.0	1.0	2.4	2.5	3.6	3.8
Culture	0.6	2.1	1.1	1.4	1.7	2.9	2.6	2.9	1.7
Democracy	1.9	1.8	2.8	2.7	2.2	3.7	6.6	5.7	5.8
Economy	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.1	1.8	3.7	4.3	4.2	3.2
Education	0.7	0.5	2.0	0.7	0.6	2.2	2.1	1.4	1.2
(Un)employment	0.8	0.6	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.9	2.6	2.3	2.0
Environment	1.2	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.6	3.4	4.7	4.1	3.3
External relations	5.3	8.3	8.1	5.0	5.9	8.1	11.0	13.1	9.3
Humanitarian aid	2.5	3.2	5.1	6.7	7.3	5.4	8.8	8.0	6.8
Public health	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	1.2	1.0	1.1
Infrastructure	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.4	1.0	3.5	3.3	2.9	3.1
Judiciary	0.9	0.7	1.9	1.3	1.5	2.6	4.0	4.3	3.9
National identity	0.9	1.8	0.8	1.5	1.0	2.3	2.4	2.8	1.8
Regional policy	1.2	0.6	2.2	1.5	1.2	2.8	4.1	6.0	3.2
Security policy	4.0	5.7	8.0	4.5	9.2	7.4	8.1	9.5	7.8
Social issues	0.5	0.6	1.6	1.1	0.9	1.6	2.5	2.1	2.1
Taxation	0.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.5	1.1	2.3	2.2	2.4
External trade	3.9	3.3	2.4	1.8	1.6	4.2	5.5	4.1	4.4

economic goal-setting as being dominant at the European level and social policy-making being largely confined to the national level (Scharpf, 1996; Van Kersbergen, 2000). According to this view, voters and parties accept the influence of Europe as long as it adds to the economic welfare of the member states. The (re)distribution of this economic welfare in the form of public goods and services, however, is a national affair and not much interference from the EU is accepted. Those areas that are part of the welfare state remain strongly anchored within the national decision-making framework (Falkner et al., 2005). Consequently, in the extraction–distribution cycle, Europe plays an important role on the extraction side (financial and economic matters, etc.) and a moderate role on the distribution side (all sectors of the welfare state). As far as the EU is involved in social policy-making, it is frequently done through channels such as the Open Method of Coordination that do not impose decisions and rules on nation-states and, instead, are bottom-up and flexible (Leibfried and Pierson, 2000; Arnold and Pennings, 2004).

A second observation is that the number of linkages to Europe is low. This is partly owing to the employed measure, which reveals only a fraction of all references to Europe. It is likely that more factors have an impact on the low number of linkages, such as the national character of the manifestos, party strategic motivations and the institutional features of national party systems (Mair, 2000). The relative absence of references to Europe should not be interpreted as a lack of impact, for several reasons. The low number of co-mentions in some policy areas may be a deliberate choice if it results from the wish of national political parties to retain the final say over some policy areas. The degree to which Europeanization is controversial also depends on the policy area. European issues would become a central element of party competition if, for example, the social democratic parties demanded that all social policy-making become Europeanized. In that case, the EU cleavage would coincide with the left–right cleavage. However, the manifestos do not give a strong indication that this is likely to happen. Even in the field of employment (on which, since the introduction of the European Employment Strategy, the EU is very active but not very successful), political parties (even parties of the Left) hardly look to Europe for solutions.

Europeanization and partisan politics

It is not self-evident what manifestos actually reflect: is it an ideal position or a strategic position (i.e. one that incorporates anticipated electoral incentives and/or organizational goals)? A party that is internally divided on Europe may avoid this topic, but it cannot be concluded from this that it

Table 5 Means of references to Europe per policy area, differentiated by the expert data on position and dissent

	Position on EU				*Internal dissent on EU*			
	Anti		*Pro*		*United*		*Dissent*	
	1980–9	*1990–9*	*1980–9*	*1990–9*	*1980–9*	*1990–9*	*1980–9*	*1990–9*
Agriculture	1.8	3.4	4.0	6.4	3.6	6.4	1.9	4.2
Spending and budget	1.2	2.3	1.6	3.7	2.6	3.3	1.1	3.3
Culture	1.3	2.4	2.2	3.4	2.1	3.8	1.3	1.9
Democracy	1.7	5.9	3.9	7.0	3.1	7.0	3.0	6.3
Economy	1.3	4.0	4.0	5.2	3.2	5.4	1.8	3.9
Education	0.4	1.5	1.1	2.8	0.9	4.4	1.0	1.1
(Un)employment	0.9	2.4	1.4	3.3	1.2	3.4	1.4	2.2
Environment	1.4	3.5	2.9	5.0	2.6	4.7	1.6	6.0
External relations	4.8	11.1	8.1	12.6	7.2	13.0	6.7	11.1
Humanitarian aid	5.3	11.0	6.0	8.1	6.7	11.3	8.6	8.3
Public health	0.5	1.4	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.2	0.4	1.0
Infrastructure	1.3	2.8	3.2	4.1	2.7	4.8	1.8	1.9
Judiciary	1.7	4.6	2.1	4.8	1.7	5.5	3.3	3.5
National identity	0.6	2.4	1.6	2.2	2.2	2.7	1.1	1.7
Regional policy	1.3	5.0	2.5	3.7	2.2	5.7	1.4	5.2
Security policy	5.4	7.0	7.8	10.3	7.5	10.4	13.1	7.6
Social issues	0.8	2.9	1.3	2.7	1.1	3.3	1.2	1.9
Taxation	0.6	1.7	1.1	2.6	0.8	2.5	1.2	2.1
External trade	1.5	5.2	3.4	6.0	3.0	6.0	1.9	5.4
Means	*1.7*	*4.1*	*3.1*	*5.0*	*2.6*	*5.2*	*2.1*	*3.7*

Notes: The means are taken across countries, parties and years on a stacked data set (n = 5341). An ANOVA test shows that the group differences have a small but statistically significant effect on the number of references to Europe.

is unimportant and unrelated to party competition. On the contrary, de-emphasizing 'Europe' could be the result of the increasing importance of European issues for inter- and intra-party politics (Marks and Steenbergen, 2004).

Here, I focus on two party-related factors that may influence the number of references to Europe: the general position on European integration and the degree of internal dissent on European issues (Steenbergen and Scott, 2004). In order to see how these factors matter, the manifestos are combined with expert surveys, since the latter provide information on these party characteristics. I use the Marks/Steenbergen party expert data set.[5] By linking both types of data it is possible to determine to what extent linkages to Europe in manifestos are affected by party characteristics. One drawback of this approach, however, is that combining these data involves losing some information since the time period, the countries and the parties are not identical in both databases.

The expert data are matched with the stacked electronic manifestos data file that comprises the co-occurrence matrices. The degree to which the manifestos link different policy areas to Europe is controlled for by two relevant variables stemming from the expert data set. The first is the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration.[6] The second is the degree of internal dissent over the party's position on European issues.[7]

In order to control for position and dissent, these variables have been dichotomized. The means of Table 5 indicate that the 'anti-parties' do not connect policy areas to Europe as much as the 'pro-parties' do. This is understandable because parties usually put more emphasis on policies they are in favour of rather than on those that they are against. In the 1990s, Eurosceptic parties put slightly more emphasis on 'nation' and 'region' than did parties that favour the EU, which is also as expected. In the case of dissent, a similar pattern occurs. Parties that are divided on Europe put less emphasis on it when they discuss their policy preferences. This is the expected pattern since divided parties would only provoke more internal dissent by putting Europe higher on the agenda (for a detailed analysis, see Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks and Steenbergen, 2004).

The analysis shows that party position and internal dissent on European issues have an impact on the degree to which parties integrate Europe in their manifestos. Table 5 confirms that the degree to which there is a Europeanization of manifestos is affected by these characteristics of parties. However, the analysis also shows that these factors are not decisive, since all parties show an increase in co-mentions in relation to Europe.

Conclusions

The Europeanization of national party manifestos has been analysed by comparing phases of integration, policy sectors and time periods. The results show that the phase of integration is relevant: the earlier countries became a member of the EU, the sooner the national parties started to co-mention policy areas and Europe. Europeanization also differs by policy sector. The areas that have especially demonstrated these sector-specific effects (in how they are related to Europe) include the economic domain, external relations and security issues. 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.

The differences of Europeanization per time period, phase of integration and policy area indicate that manifestos do not reflect the 'real' degree of Europeanization of policy sectors. When more than 60% of all decision-making and rule-making is (in)directly affected by the EU, and less than 10% of the explicit co-mentions per policy domain concern Europe, this suggests that Europe is deliberately being underemphasized.

The number of references to Europe is affected by the position that parties take on European integration and by the degree of internal dissent on European issues. These findings illustrate and underline that the way parties approach Europe in national manifestos is strategically motivated.

Notes

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1 Luxembourg was excluded from the collection of digitized documents owing to its size, and Greece was excluded owing to translation problems. Switzerland and Norway, two non-EU countries, are included in order to make comparisons with the EU members.

2 The digital database takes 1960 as a starting point. Before this year party manifestos were often small documents without many specific references to policy-making. In total, 88 parties are included. In a few instances two different parties have been analysed as one single party, for example the Dutch KVP and CDA (the KVP is taken as the predecessor of the CDA) and several Flemish and Wallonian parties that had split owing to the language divide in the Belgian party system and that have been merged for the sake of the analysis.

The digitized party manifestos are made available upon request to the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA) at the University of Cologne, under certain conditions regarding their usage. The data are part of

the Comparative Electronic Manifestos Project (http://research.fsw.vu.nl/DoingResearch) directed by Paul Pennings and Hans Keman, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in cooperation with the ZA. This project has been financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (project No. 480–42–005) and partly by ZA. Contact address: za@za.uni-koeln.de.

3 See http://www.europa.eu.int/pol/index-en.htm (consulted 16 December 2005).

4 For a description of this software, see http://www.simstat.com.

5 This data set combines data from Leonard Ray for 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996 (Ray, 1999) with data collected by Gary Marks and Marco Steenbergen for 1999 (with the help of Liesbet Hooghe, David Scott and Carole Wilson.) The data are available at http://www.unc.edu/~gwmarks/data.htm (consulted 16 December 2005).

6 The variable *Position* in the expert file ranges from 1 (strongly opposed to European integration) to 7 (strongly in favour of European integration).

7 The variable *Dissent* ranges from 1 (complete unity) to 5 (leadership position opposed by a majority of party activists).

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