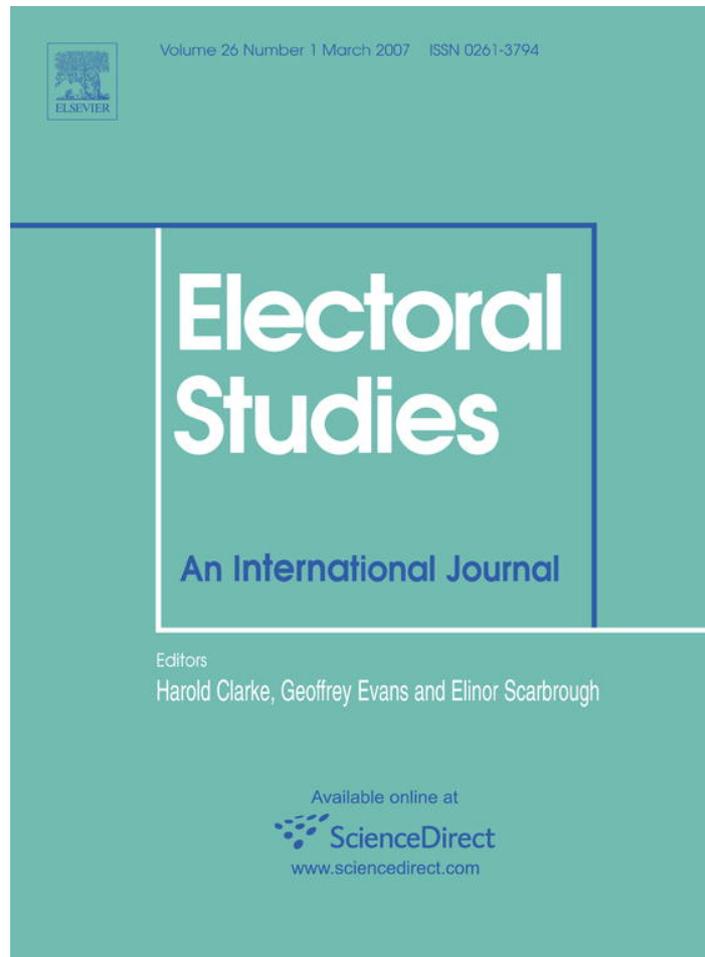


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Crossvalidating data on party positioning on European integration

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Abstract

Our purpose in this article is to cross-validate expert and manifesto measures of party positioning on European integration. We compare these data with each other and with measures from a European election survey and an elite survey of parliamentarians. We find that expert surveys provide the most accurate data for party positioning on European integration. In part, the errors of expert evaluations and electoral manifestos are shared. Both have some difficulty measuring the positioning of small, extreme, parties. But we also detect and explain errors that are unique to each measurement instrument.

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Keywords: European integration; Expert survey; Comparative manifesto project; Political party; Measurement

1. Introduction

Several data sets provide information on the positioning of national political parties, but few attempts have been made to compare them systematically, and none do so with respect to party positioning on European integration.¹

Our purpose in this article is to cross-validate measures of party positioning from electoral manifestos and an expert survey by comparing these data with

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¹ On measuring party positioning by coding electoral manifestos, see Budge et al. (2001), Laver et al. (2003), Pennings and Keman (2002). On measuring positioning through expert surveys, see Castles and Mair (1984), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Ray (1999), (2001), Steenbergen and Marks (2006). Gabel and Huber (2000) systematically compare different measures for extracting left/right positioning from electoral manifesto data.

each other, as well as with measures from a European election survey and an elite survey of parliamentarians (members of national parliaments and of the European parliament). While each of these data sets suffers from measurement error, there are good reasons for believing that their systematic biases do not overlap much. Hence, by comparing these data sets, we can shed light on their relative validity.

We focus on party positioning on European integration. The deepening and extension of the European Union is the most important institutional development to have taken place in Europe in the second half of the 20th century. An extensive literature is concerned with how national political parties respond to the issues raised by European integration, and accurate data on party positioning is a sine qua non for evaluating hypotheses put forward in this literature.

We consider European integration as a single, continuous dimension, ranging from support for national

independence to support for further European integration. This, of course, is a simplification. European integration covers a host of issues including, for example, reducing non-tariff barriers to create a single market; agricultural policy; social and employment policy; the creation of a unified currency area; and foreign and security policy. In principle, it is possible for a political party to be integrationist on one policy and autonomist on another. In practice, there is an underlying coherence to party positioning across these issues. The single dimension that we analyze here constrains party positioning across the range of European policies, and this dimension captures around three-quarters of the variation in party positioning on six issues tapped by an expert survey of EU political parties in 1999.²

Expert surveys are the most commonly used instrument for measuring party positioning—except for one: electoral manifesto data. How does the validity of these two measures compare? In this article we triangulate these two measures with two additional measures of party positioning on European integration. We find that expert evaluations and electoral manifestos have an explicable pattern of error. In part, their error is shared because they both have some difficulty measuring the positioning of certain kinds of political parties. Small, extreme, parties appear more difficult to pin down than larger, centrist ones. But some of the error appears to be unique to each measurement instrument. We probe these distinctive sources of error by examining political parties for which expert and manifesto measures are in sharpest disagreement. Our conclusion is that, despite their flaws, expert and manifesto data arrive at reasonably valid measures of party positioning on European integration. However, among the data sets currently available (December 2005), expert surveys provide the most accurate data for party positioning on European integration.

2. Data sources

We use the following data to construct indicators of party position on European integration:

² For 125 political parties in the EU-15 (minus Luxembourg), a single factor explains 75.5% of the variance in party positioning on EU fiscal policy, EU employment policy, EU cohesion policy, EU environment policy, EU asylum policy, EU foreign and security policy, and more power for the European Parliament. The resulting factor is positively associated with the general measure of party position on European integration ($r=0.85$) which we use in subsequent analyses.

- The European manifesto data set (1945–1998), published as a CD-Rom by Budge et al. (2001).

This data set has two codings of statements concerning European integration: per108 (percentage of quasi-sentences in a manifesto coded as: European community—positive) and per110 (percentage of quasi-sentences coded as: European community—negative). We operationalize party position on European integration in two ways: (1) as the *difference* between positive and negative quasi-sentences where both are measured as a proportion of the total quasi-sentences in a manifesto; (2) as the *ratio* of positive to total positive and negative quasi-sentences where both are measured as a proportion of the total quasi-sentences in a manifesto.³ The ratio measure is thus computed as follows⁴:

$$\frac{\text{per108}}{\text{per108} + \text{per110}}$$

- The 1999 Marks—Steenbergen expert data set on party positioning in the European Union (Steenbergen and Marks, 2006; <http://www.unc.edu/~gwmks>).⁵

Experts are asked to place the political parties of their country of expertise on a seven-point scale. ‘In each party column, please circle the number that corresponds to the statement that, in your mind, best describes the position towards the EU that the party’s leadership has taken over the course of 1999. Please, circle only one number.’ The response categories range are 1 = strongly opposed to European integration, 2 = opposed to European integration, 3 = somewhat opposed to European integration, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat in favor of European integration, 6 = in favor of European integration, and 7 = strongly in favor of European integration. Mail surveys were completed in 1999

³ An alternative measure is the *total* of positive and negative quasi-sentences as a proportion of the total quasi-sentences in a manifesto. However, this measure is only weakly associated with the other measures in this article (see *manifesto total* in Appendix 1(A)). It is best conceived as a measure of salience, not position (on salience, see Netjes and Binnema, in this issue).

⁴ This formula is mathematically equivalent to that used by Kim and Fording (1998) and Laver and Benoit, in this issue.

⁵ The 1999 data set is a follow-up and expansion of the 1996 Ray expert survey which provides party positioning for 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996 (Ray, 1999); it was in turn succeeded by the 2002 Chapel Hill expert survey, which provides estimates for 2002, and encompasses Central and Eastern Europe (Marks et al., 2006). See <http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe>.

by 116 academic experts in 14 largest EU member states. We measure party position as the means of expert evaluations for each party.

- The 1999 European election survey (Eijk et al., 2002; <http://www.europeanelectionstudies.net/>).

Respondents evaluate national parties on a 10-point scale measuring party position on European integration (Q 25a–g). ‘Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. ... On this scale, 1 means unification “has already gone too far,” and 10 means it “should be pushed further”. [... A]bout where would you place the views of the following parties on this scale?’ Surveys were conducted in the 15 member states in June and July 1999, following the European elections of that year, and the total number of respondents was 13,549. We measure party position as the *interpolated median* of respondent evaluations for a party, rather than the median or mean, because this takes account of skewness in addition to the central tendency.⁶

- The 1996 Political Representation in Europe survey of members of national and members of European parliaments (Katz et al., 1999).

Respondents (MPs and MEPs) evaluate their national party on a 10-point scale (Q11b in MP survey/Q12b in MEP survey): should <country> keep its <national currency> and make it more independent from the other European currencies, or should the aim be a new common European currency? Please indicate on the scale what you see as ..., with 1 = independent national currency, and 10 = new common European currency. This is the broadest survey question asking respondents to evaluate the position of their own party on European integration, and to distinguish that from their personal position. Remember that, in 1996, economic and monetary union was by far the most salient issue arising from European integration, and thus it can be used as a proxy for views on European integration. The authors conducted surveys in the European Parliament and in the national parliaments of 12 member states, producing a data set of 65 parties for which there are three or more MPs or MEP expert respondents. We averaged evaluations for each national party.

⁶ The interpolated median = $M - 0.5 + (0.5N - n_1)/n_2$, where N = total number of valid responses, M = the standard median of the responses, n_1 = number of responses less than M , and n_2 = number of responses equal to M .

3. Factor analysis

Imagine four rooms, each containing a source of evidence indicating how political parties are positioned on European integration. In the first there is a lectern with a party’s electoral manifesto setting out the party’s positions on the issues on which the leadership wishes to fight the next national election. In the second are eight experts who evaluate the positioning of parties in their country of expertise on a closed-ended questionnaire. The third room is a convention hall where a thousand voters place their country’s political parties on a 10-point scale for support or opposition to European integration. In the fourth room are 14 elected representatives of the party to the European Parliament or national lower house, who evaluate the position of their party on a 10-point scale describing the desirability of a European currency.⁷

Does the information from these diverse sources have a common structure? Principal axis factoring is the most appropriate method for detecting common variance among such measures. Since there is some debate about how best to operationalize manifesto data (Budge and Pennings, in this issue; Laver and Garry, 2000; Gabriel and Huber, 2000), we run the factor analysis with alternative operationalizations of manifesto data.

The results of the principal axis factor analysis, presented in Table 1, reveal that the four measures do indeed have a common structure. A factor derived from manifesto, expert, MP/MEP, and European election survey data captures 73.8% of the variance among these measures. Of the manifesto measures, *Manifesto ratio* is most closely associated with the other measures, and we will use it in the remainder of this paper as the most valid indicator extracted from manifesto data.

Expert data load very heavily on the principal factor in both columns of Table 1. That is to say, the variance in the expert data set is very similar in structure to the variance that is common to all four data sets. If one assumes that the common factor has less error than any single measure, then the expert data are the most valid of the four measures evaluated here.

The plausibility of this claim rests on two sets of considerations. The first is that each measure has partial validity. The second is that the errors across any two measures are imperfectly correlated. In the remainder of this article we test some priors concerning the structure of error in the expert and manifesto data sets.

⁷ The number of experts and MPs/MEPs mentioned here are medians in these data sets.

Table 1
Exploratory factor model with alternative manifesto measures

Item	Model with	
	<i>Manifesto-ratio</i>	<i>Manifesto-difference</i>
Expert survey 1999	0.994	0.994
MEP–MP survey 1996	0.877	0.875
European election survey 1999	0.728	0.729
Manifesto ratio (positive/total)	0.816	
Manifesto difference (positive–negative)		0.632
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.186	2.957
<i>Explained variance</i>	73.79	67.12

Note: entries are estimates of a principal axis factoring. $N = 65$.

4. Expert and manifesto data

Expert and manifesto data approach party positioning differently, and they have contrasting strengths and weaknesses. In this section, we summarize the virtues and vices of each instrument, and in the following section we hypothesize how error is structured within each measure.

A virtue of expert surveys is that they draw on broad knowledge—concerning what party leaders say and what they do (Mair, 2001). This arguably increases the validity of expert judgments, but it rules out analysis of the extent to which the behavior of political parties reflects their preferences (Laver, 2001).⁸ And because we do not know exactly how experts think, we can only guess at the kinds of information that experts bring to bear on their evaluations (Budge, 2001; but see Steenbergen and Marks, 2006).

4.1. Weaknesses of expert data

- *Subjective judgment.* The basis of judgment may vary from expert to expert, and hence reliability across experts may be a serious problem.
- *Informational asymmetry.* Experts are likely to have different levels of information for different parties. They are likely to know more about parties in the public eye and less about parties that, for one reason or another, are obscure (Steenbergen and Marks, 2006).

⁸ This is, of course, just one of the topics of interest to political scientists. Expert data have been appropriately used to estimate party positioning as a dependent variable, and as an independent variable explaining patterns of party competition, etc. (e.g. Marks et al., 2002; Ray, 2003; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004.)

- *Temporal constraints.* If experts are asked to assess party positioning retroactively, their judgments may be contaminated by subsequent events (Tourangeau et al., 2000).
- *Conflating preferences and behavior.* Experts rely on party rhetoric as well as on a party's actions in making their evaluation. Such data are therefore not appropriate for causal analysis of the effect of preferences on behavior (Laver, 2001).

4.2. Strengths of expert data

- *Direct quantification.* Because experts are usually asked to evaluate positioning on a structured scale, quantification of expert judgments is unproblematic. Inter-expert reliability can be measured (Steenbergen and Marks, 2006).
- *Flexibility.* The researcher may gather information on any topic for which there are bona fide experts, including topics that do not surface in electoral manifestos.
- *Validity.* Experts rely on diverse sources of information, which for political parties would include the behavior of the party and opinions voiced by factions within the party, as well as official documents.

Electoral manifestos have the virtue of being historical exhibits: they are objective, measurable, written documents. As a consequence, party manifestos are valuable in examining how the rhetoric of party leaders relates to their actions. But manifestos do not provide unbiased information about party stances.⁹ Manifestos do not materialize out of thin air, and one can presume that they filter information to some degree as function of the self-interest of those leaders or factions which determine their content. This may involve de-emphasizing issues on which a party is divided or issues on which a party feels that it is at an electoral disadvantage.

4.3. Weaknesses of manifesto data

- *Declared salience.* Manifestos are strategic documents designed to put a party in a positive light during an electoral campaign. Manifestos

⁹ We have little systematic, let alone comparative, information that bears on this question. Some discussion of the political process by which electoral manifestos are produced may be found in Budge et al. (1987) and Gallagher et al. (1995). This is a topic ripe for a doctoral dissertation or research project.

are therefore unlikely to provide information that is tactically unimportant or an electoral liability. Also, some manifestos are brief and have limited policy coverage.

- *Timing.* Party manifestos appear prior to national elections, the timing of which varies from country to country. For time-sensitive issues (like European integration), this may be a source of noise. Since parties are particularly sensitive to electoral concerns during elections, this may produce an image of party positioning that differs from times when electoral concerns are more remote.
- *Dissent.* Manifestos represent a political party as a coherent entity and therefore do not provide information on intra-party dissent.

4.4. *Strengths of manifesto data*

- *Objective data.* Manifesto data are based on a written, publicly available record. This allows for competing and replicable measurement of party positions (Laver and Garry, 2000).
- *Cumulative research.* Manifestos are available as extended time series, far exceeding expert surveys or any other systematic form of data.
- *Separation of preferences and behavior.* Manifestos convey strategic intentions of political parties, as distinct from their actions. Manifestos can therefore be used to evaluate the causal link between a political party's intentions and its actions in or out of government.
- *Saliency.* The strategic character of party manifestos provides direct evidence of the declared saliency of issues for political parties in electoral competition.

Validity, reliability, efficiency, economy, flexibility, and replicability cannot be simultaneously maximized. Expert data are economical and flexible. Manifesto data are based on public texts and, in principle, are more amenable to replication (but see Benoit and Laver, in this issue). However, both expert data and manifesto data have distinctive blind spots with respect to validity. In the following section we set out expectations about where these blind spots might be.

5. Explaining error

The factor analysis reveals that the four data sets share a common structure. We assume that this common structure exhibits less error than any measure in

isolation. By regressing each data set on the others, we can triangulate our estimates of party positioning. Where do we expect expert surveys and electoral manifestos to go wrong?

5.1. *Expert surveys*

Expert data average individual judgments. The fewer the number of experts, the less one may trust their mean evaluation. Where experts are in sharp disagreement, their mean accuracy is most questionable. Hence, our confidence in expert judgments is an inverse function of their variation.

Experts are likely to be better informed about a party's positioning when a party is more visible and has greater political import. Hence, we expect the accuracy of expert evaluations to be positively associated with a party's vote share and with the saliency of European integration within the party system. In addition, political observers are likely to be best informed about governing parties rather than those in opposition.

By the same logic, experts might have less valid information on a new party or one that has been shifting its position. Also, where there are many rather than few parties, it may be more difficult for experts to place them. Finally, we have previously found that expert judgments are more reliable for countries where the spread of party positioning on European integration is relatively wide (Steenbergen and Marks, 2006).

5.2. *Electoral manifestos*

Some electoral manifestos may be too brief to capture variation among parties on an issue like European integration. The average manifesto in our data set has 579 quasi-sentences or roughly 5790 words, assuming that a quasi-sentence contains 10 words. One quarter of manifestos contain less than 110 quasi-sentences, or 1100 words. Manifestos have on average 34.3 quasi-sentences on European integration, with the bottom quintile having three or less. Shorter manifestos and manifestos containing fewer statements about Europe presumably yield more imprecise measurements.

Manifestos do not detect internal party dissent, yet such dissent may provide information about party positioning. If a party is deeply divided on an issue, the information conveyed in a manifesto may have questionable validity as a measure of party position.

We follow Gabel and Huber (2000) expecting that manifestos are more accurate for parties in, rather than out of, government on the grounds that government

parties write manifestos that explain their positions on a wider spectrum of issues. Governing parties apparently have less room for strategic issue targeting.

5.3. Common sources of error

We expect that both expert surveys and manifestos are most imprecise for political parties opposed to European integration. The reason for this has to do with the skewed distribution of party positions. Political parties that take a positive position on European integration tend to bunch at the high end of the measurement scale—and this compresses errors. In contrast, parties that take a negative position are spread over a long tail, and this raises the bar for point prediction. An implication of this is that parties at the extremes of left and right (on a conventional left/right scale) are particularly difficult to place accurately on a scale of support for European integration because such parties tend to be Euroskeptical (Hooghe et al., 2002).

6. Results

Testing these expectations requires that we operationalize error in these data sets. We do this by considering the residuals from a regression of one source on the other three sources of data. To assess error in expert surveys we standardize the data sets on a zero to one scale and regress the expert measure on the manifesto ratio measure, EES, and MP/MEP positions. We treat the residuals from this analysis as an indicator of error, i.e. the extent to which expert party placements deviate from the predictions of the other instruments. We repeat this exercise for the party manifestos. Rather than considering the raw residuals, we focus on their absolute values. Absolute residuals indicate the sheer extent of error, regardless of its direction (we take up the issue of direction of error, or bias, in the penultimate section of this paper). By focusing on absolute error we can get a sense of how far a source strays from other sources.

Table 2 displays the models of OLS regressions where the absolute residuals of expert and manifesto data are dependent variables.

The simple correlation between expert and manifesto errors is 0.38. For both instruments, the strongest predictor of error is the extent to which a party holds an extreme position on the left/right dimension. As noted above, such parties usually take negative positions on the tail of the distribution, and are therefore more difficult to predict. Tables 3a and 3b reveal that extreme

Table 2
Explaining residuals for expert and manifesto data

	Expert data	Manifesto data
Expert errors		
Expert party number	0.026 (0.032)	–
Expert disagreement (SD)	–0.011 (0.047)	–
Competition space	–0.022 (0.030)	–0.035 (0.047)
System salience	–0.065 (0.030)*	–0.014 (0.046)
Manifesto errors		
Length of manifesto (# quasi-sentences)	–	0.022 (0.096)
Length of EU section (# quasi-sentences)	–	–0.058 (0.091)
Dissent in party	–0.037 (0.041)	0.145 (0.052)**
Common errors		
Extremism (left/right)	0.069 (0.034)*	0.168 (0.052)**
Party vote (%)	0.008 (0.035)	–0.002 (0.055)
Government participation	0.042 (0.038)	–0.058 (0.056)
New party	0.031 (0.035)	0.084 (0.055)
Position shift	0.119 (0.034)**	0.006 (0.051)
R^2	0.364	0.441
Adj. R^2	0.244	0.336

Note: B-coefficients with standard errors in brackets. All variables are standardized. $N = 65$. ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

parties also tend to have small vote shares and are less likely to participate in government. And, as one would expect, experts tend to disagree about where to place such parties.¹⁰

New parties, that is, parties established after 1984, also tend to be less accurately predicted in both data sets. Like extreme parties, new parties tend to gain smaller vote shares and participate less often in government. So we can begin to identify a syndrome of factors that lead to poor prediction in both expert and manifesto data: extreme, new, small, non-governmental parties. Parties with these attributes also tend to shift position more readily, a connection that might reflect the uncertainty of experts in placing such parties, as well as the behavior of such parties.

But we also confirm dissimilar biases in expert and manifesto data. Expert data that are relatively unreliable (as measured by the standard deviation of expert judgments) tend to be more invalid. Shorter manifestos and manifestos produced by divided parties yield less

¹⁰ Note that the coefficients for expert party number and competition space are differently signed. This is surprising since conventional wisdom suggest that the larger the competition space the greater the number of parties. However, recent empirical work presents convincing evidence that the ideological space for political competition does not systematically increase in countries that feature large numbers of parties (see Ezrow, 2006).

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Table 3
Correlations among error estimates

	<i>Expert survey residual</i>	<i>Extremism</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Government participation</i>	<i>New party</i>	<i>Position shift</i>	<i>Dissent</i>	<i>Competition space</i>	<i>System salience</i>	<i>Expert party number</i>
(a) Expert data										
Extremism	-0.27									
Vote for party	-0.10	-0.33								
Government participation	0.25	-0.44	0.45							
New party	-0.10	0.25	-0.34	-0.38						
Position shift	-0.25	0.20	-0.06	-0.13	0.15					
Dissent	-0.17	-0.08	0.16	-0.03	-0.12	0.43				
Competition space	-0.03	0.11	0.04	0.01	-0.10	0.05	0.20			
System salience	-0.14	0.01	0.09	-0.01	0.22	0.00	0.03	-0.01		0.10
Expert party number	-0.15	0.12	-0.28	-0.19	0.40	0.04	-0.13	-0.11	0.10	
Expert disagreement	-0.28	-0.30	-0.31	-0.44	0.16	0.49	0.52	-0.20	-0.16	0.10
(b) Manifesto ratio data										
	<i>Manifesto ratio residual</i>	<i>Extremism</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Government participation</i>	<i>New party</i>	<i>Position shift</i>	<i>Dissent</i>	<i>Competition space</i>	<i>System salience</i>	<i>Manifesto length</i>
Extremism	-0.03									
Vote for party	-0.01	-0.33								
Government participation	-0.05	-0.44	0.45							
New party	-0.19	0.25	-0.34	-0.38						
Position shift	0.03	0.20	-0.06	-0.13	0.15					
Dissent	0.21	-0.08	0.15	-0.03	-0.12	0.43				
Competition space	0.03	0.11	0.05	0.01	-0.10	0.05	0.20			
System salience	-0.31	-0.01	0.09	-0.01	-0.22	0.00	0.03	-0.01		
Manifesto length	0.02	-0.14	0.33	0.06	-0.29	-0.10	-0.10	-0.24	0.16	
Length of EU section	-0.01	-0.16	0.28	0.01	-0.23	-0.02	-0.06	-0.15	0.14	0.87

Bold $p < 0.01$; italics $p < 0.05$.

Table 4
Greatest absolute differences between expert and manifesto measures

Country	Absolute difference between expert and manifesto measures (Z scores)	Vote in national election (1999 or prior)	Left/right position (expert data 1999)	Party dissent on European integration (expert data 1999)	Position shift on European integration 1992–1999 (expert data)	Standard deviation among experts	N of quasi-sentences counted in manifesto	N of EU quasi-sentences counted in manifesto
Vlaams Blok	2.40	9.90	9.89	1.44	1.28	1.30	1468	23
Progressive Democrats	1.95	4.70	8.00	1.17	0.59	0.52	729	41
Northern League	1.86	10.10	7.00	2.40	2.95	0.98	538	32
PDS	1.41	5.10	1.27	1.92	0.37	1.08	444	29
KESK	1.38	22.40	5.60	2.80	0.75	1.00	41	3
SYN	1.04	5.10	3.43	2.86	1.40	1.53	660	20
UDC	0.97	9.00	2.80	1.80	0.03	1.14	2986	89
PCF	0.95	9.90	1.57	2.14	0.93	0.79	70	3
Fine Gael	0.87	27.90	6.50	1.50	0.31	0.55	1264	30
Volkswunie	0.80	5.60	5.13	1.75	0.33	1.32	795	12
Mean for all parties (N = 65)	0.45	17.05	5.06	1.82	0.71	0.76	1104.2	41.6
Median for all parties (N = 65)	0.28	12.00	5.22	1.71	0.61	0.68	579.0	23.0

accurate measures. Experts, by contrast, are able to locate divided parties with no less accuracy than united ones.¹¹

The residuals for expert and manifesto data are not white noise. On the contrary, they reflect the known systematic biases of each source of data. In part, the sources of error are shared; in part, they are unique to each data set. Each instrument delivers partial validity.

7. Cases of disagreement

We have evaluated the structure of error in measurements of party positioning on European integration. Now we investigate the substance of error in some carefully selected cases. Table 4 overviews 10 political parties for which expert data and manifesto data are most at odds. The sources of error that we hypothesize above characterize these parties. They tend to be on the extreme flanks of left and right: seven of the 10 parties are far-left or far-right (less than 3.5 or more than 6.5 on our 10 point left/right scale).¹² The first eight parties on the list are also in the long Euroskeptical tail. These are precisely the parties that are most difficult to predict.

These parties also share some additional features that we associate with error—low levels of electoral support and relatively high standard deviation among experts. But their electoral manifestos are not particularly short, or do they skimp on references to European integration.

On the face of it, the length of manifestos should bolster our confidence in the validity of the manifesto scores. However, closer examination reveals just how difficult it is to code manifesto references to European integration. Whereas 26 coding categories relate to the left/right dimension of party competition (13 for left and 13 for right), European integration is coded into just two categories: European integration—positive; European integration—negative. As a result, coding involves simultaneous judgments. First, does a particular statement, regarding, for example, inflation and monetary policy, count as a statement about European integration, or does it fit in one of the 54 non-European coding categories? And second, is that statement unambiguously positive or

¹¹ However, we also find that party dissent is associated with greater variation in expert judgments (Steenbergen and Marks, 2006).

¹² 47.2% of all parties in our data set fall into one of these categories.

negative? There is, in other words, considerable scope for inter-coder variation. As we will show below, this appears to be responsible for the bulk of the differences we observe.¹³

Fig. 1 compares how party positioning on European integration is measured across the four datasets for the two most deviant parties, the *Vlaams Blok* (Flemish Block), the Irish *Progressive Democrats*, and the fourth most deviant party, the German *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (*Party of Democratic Socialism*). These parties generate the largest residuals for both expert and manifesto measures in the regression analysis above, so they are decidedly problematic for both data sets. In some other respects, however, they are diverse. They belong to very different party families (radical right, liberal, and radical left), and have sharply contrasting views of European integration. Let us take a closer look at each party in turn.

The *Vlaams Blok* views European integration from the standpoint of its core demand for a Flemish state with Brussels as its capital. The first 2550 words of the party's 1995 national election manifesto are devoted to this prickly issue, which is all the more problematic because Brussels has become a predominantly Francophone city. This section of the party's program concludes by rejecting the status of Brussels as the capital of the European Union and by describing EU citizenship laws that allow 400,000 non-Belgians to vote in local elections as a 'deadly attack' (een dodelijke aanslag) on the Flemish character of Brussels and its hinterland. Appendix 3, Table 1, excerpts relevant passages from the party's manifesto relating to European integration.

The *Blok's* desire for a culturally homogenous, sovereign state, leads the party to reject European federalism. Today the *Vlaams Belang* (the party was compelled to reconstitute itself after the Belgian Constitutional court declared the *Blok* illegal in November 2004) opposes the European Constitutional Treaty. In 1995 the party bluntly opposed the Maastricht Treaty and its purported goal of creating a European super-state. The manifesto is acerbic: the much praised subsidiarity principle is a joke.

¹³ The Marks–Steenbergen expert survey also asks experts to score parties on a single anti- to pro-European dimension. In doing so, experts presumably base their judgments on a variety of sources—electoral manifestos, party leaders' speeches, media reports, party behavior, etc. Hence, experts may be better placed to extract a common underlying factor from the party's stances on diverse European issues.

On issues that are removed from Flemish political and cultural autonomy, the *Blok* takes a more pragmatic stance. The party wishes to upgrade European defence capability, albeit within a confederal arrangement. It favors a European environmental policy, and is positively oriented to Eastern enlargement. Enlargement to Turkey, which the party opposes, was not yet on the agenda.

The 1995 electoral manifesto of the *Vlaams Blok* is, on balance, explicitly skeptical of European integration.¹⁴ Unlike the *PDS* which, as we shall see, takes

¹⁴ Deschouwer and Van Assche (2002) argue that the *Vlaams Blok* is not hard Euroskeptic, if by hard one means that the party wishes to pull out of the EU. The authors also argue that European integration is a low salience issue in Belgium. However, Deschouwer and van Assche note that the *Blok* is the most skeptical party in Belgium. Neither of these claims is at odds with the interpretation presented in this paper. Their discussion is worth quoting:

"It [the *Vlaams Blok*] does not exclude any form of European integration, although it refers to a rather limited and narrow definition of it, at least if one compares its view to that of the other parties in Belgium. These views can be nicely illustrated with some of the statements of the *Vlaams Blok* MPs. One said: 'This is not the Europe of the states, it is the Europe of the one and only grey state, it is the Europe of the non-transparent European super-state. This was, according to us, not the aim. (...) A European cooperation, yes please; a European external policy, yes please; European policy on those fields where a European policy is more efficient than at the lower levels, like for environmental care and defence, yes please; but a greedy Europe ... no thanks. What is a healthy Europe? That is easy and simple to explain: unity in diversity, European unity in its people-diversity. (...) What the nation does and can manage, should remain in the hands of the people and should not under any condition be absorbed by the common European competences. (...) We notice that there is not a healthy but an unhealthy Europe growing. This unhealthy Europe.... should be given clear names: European centralism, European Jacobinism and Eurocracy. (...) We defend a European confederalism.' (Parlementaire Handelingen – Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers van België, 14/07/1992, p. 1541–42). More specifically for Maastricht, the *Vlaams Blok* was seeking for a postponement of the ratification (because of the uncertainty on the position of Denmark), a referendum and a renegotiation of the Treaty. New negotiations, the party claimed, should be based on five criteria: a Europe of the people, no European citizenship, no European competencies in culture and education, a common foreign policy (but not as an alibi for no policy at all), no open borders. (...) What we have found in Belgium can only be labelled 'soft', in the sense that there is (except for the totally marginal extreme left parties) no principled rejection of the membership as such" (2002, 8 and 24).

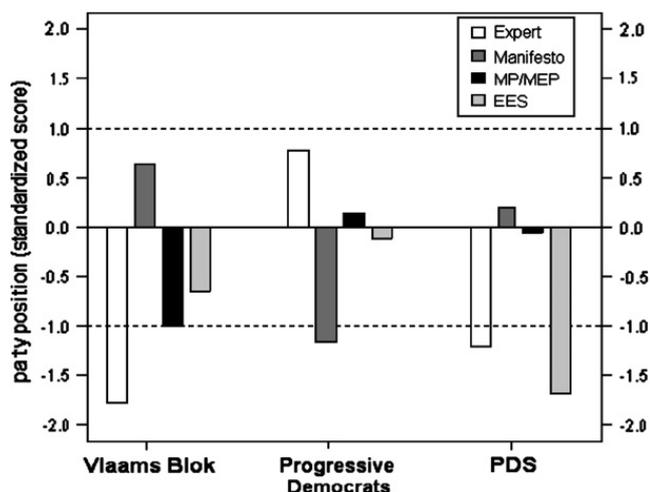


Fig. 1. Standardized scores for three cases of disagreement.

a passive aggressive posture, the *Blok* does not mince words. So it is surprising that the coding for negative statements in the manifesto data is zero.¹⁵ By our word count, negative references to European integration sum to 1037 words in the manifesto, while positive references sum to 604 words.¹⁶ The three alternative measures of the position of the *Vlaams Blok* on European integration—the MEP/MP, the EES, and expert data—are negative or highly negative. Nine experts rated the party 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 5 (on a scale from 1 to 7), which reveals a larger than average level of variation, but with all but one expert placing the *Blok* on the skeptical side of neutral.

As Fig. 1 illustrates, the data sets score the Irish *Progressive Democrats* diversely. This time it is the expert data set that positions the party on the pro-side, while the manifesto data set places the party on the anti-side. The *Progressive Democratic* party is an economically right-wing, new politics-oriented, liberal party. In the European parliament it is a member of the European Liberal, Democratic and Reform Group which is one of the most pro-European party fractions (Thomassen et al., 2004). According to Karin Gilland, who has surveyed Euroscepticism in Ireland (2002), the *Progressive Democrats* had a more strongly articulated sense of Europeaness in 1997 than Fianna Fail and Fine Gail, mainly because they evaluated the economic consequences of integration in a positive light.

The party was united in campaigning on the yes side in referenda on the Single European Act (1986), and the Maastricht (1993), Amsterdam (2000), and Nice (2002) Treaties.

There is little disagreement among experts in their evaluation of the *Progressive Democrats*. Four score the party at seven on a seven-point scale, and two score the party at six. As Fig. 1 shows, this is considerably more pro-integration than the other measures, but the gap separating the manifesto measure from the others is greater yet. The manifesto data set codes the *Progressive Democrats*' 1997 manifesto as, on balance, negatively oriented to European integration, 2.3% of quasi-sentences in the party's manifesto are judged to be positive on European integration, and 3.3% negative.

As the excerpts from the party's 1997 manifesto reveal (see Appendix 3, Table 2), the party views European integration through the lens of Ireland's economic interests. Until 2000, when the party's leader, Mary Harney, set out an anti-federalist standpoint on EU reform, party leaders said little about federalism or supranationalism in the European Union. The 1997 manifesto focuses instead on the implications of EMU, agricultural subsidies, state aid, enlargement, and cohesion policy for the Irish economy. The first mention of the EU in the program summarizes the party's position: Ireland has benefited greatly from its membership of the European Union. Not all is rosy though. The party wishes to renegotiate the Irish fisheries quota and agricultural export refunds. And while EMU is viewed as good, in principle, the fact that the UK may not join could give rise to asymmetric exogenous economic shocks which could destabilize the Irish economy. Hence the party's suggestion is that Ireland keep its options open on EMU. This is one area where one might interpret the *Progressive Democrats*' position on European integration as negative, though even this does not derive from Eurosceptical principles. The same national economic self-interest that underpins agnosticism on currency union also drives pro-European attitudes on the remaining issues.

Our third case of disagreement is the German post-communist *PDS*. The manifesto data set finds that the party's 1998 election manifesto is 5.6% positive and 0.9% negative. MP/MEP data suggest a neutral position. Thirteen *PDS* members of the Bundestag average 7.2 (on a scale from 1 to 10) when asked to evaluate the extent to which their party supports a common European currency. This is slightly less than the mean

¹⁵ The electoral manifesto data do not code a single negative statement for any of the 10 Belgian political parties in our data set.

¹⁶ The total word count of the 1995 electoral manifesto is 25,982 words.

for all parties, but it does show that *PDS* deputies do not consider their party to be knee-jerk Euroskeptical. By contrast, the European election survey and the expert survey place the party far to the skeptical side. The raw expert scores are distributed normally around a mean of 3.2 as follows: 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5. What should one make of the difference?

A discrepancy in the MP/MEP data is telling. The *PDS* is one of very few parties where MPs and MEPs have a considerably different stance on the single currency than on unifying Europe. On currency union, as noted above, the majority is favorable. However, when asked whether ‘In general, are you for or against efforts to unify Western Europe?’ the mean for *PDS* deputies falls in the most skeptical 10% of all parties.¹⁷ On this measure, expert survey and MEP/MP data tell much the same story.

The 1998 manifesto of the *PDS* papers over deep divisions on Europe. In the late 1990s, the party was rift between moderates, including the vice chairman of the party and election campaign manager, André Brie, who supported Western integration, market reforms, and collaboration with the SPD, and fundamentalists, such as Sarah Wagenknecht, speaker for the *Communist Platform*, a hard-line pro-GDR grouping. Moderates drew up the party’s 1998 manifesto, but they had to make concessions. While the manifesto does not directly criticize the European Union, it proposes to radically democratize European institutions, create a social Europe, extend workers’ rights, redirect EU structural funds to increase employment, and eliminate competition among national regulations. One does not have to read between the lines to realize that the party is deeply critical of the present institutional form of the European Union and its current policies. The subtitle of the manifesto calls for ‘For real political change: social and solidaristic—for a just Republic’¹⁸.

These cases are instructive. Textual analysis of the electoral manifestos of the *Vlaams Blok*, the *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*, and the *Progressive Democrats* suggests that coding manifestos on a single broad category—European integration—is complex and, in some cases, questionable. The

manifesto coding for the *Vlaams Blok* illustrates this. The party’s 1995 electoral manifesto makes more than 10 explicitly skeptical statements on European integration, yet not one is coded as a negative quasi-statement in the manifesto data. The manifestos of the German *PDS* and Irish *Progressive Democrats* reveal the scope for textual ambiguity. The *PDS* is persistently, but passively, critical of the European Union; the Irish Progressive Democrats are positively oriented to European integration, but from the standpoint of national economic self-interest. To evaluate these manifestos accurately, they have to be read in their political context. In electoral manifestos, as in other walks of life, words do not always speak for themselves.

8. Conclusion

Expert, manifesto, European election, and MP/MEP data sets provide convergent measures of party positioning on European integration. Factor analysis reveals that a single underlying factor accounts for almost three-quarters of the variance. This finding is all the more noteworthy because these data sets are constructed differently.

While it is not possible to partition error in these measures between white noise and systematic bias, it is plausible to believe that such diverse measures do not suffer *the same* systematic bias. If we assume (1) that each measure is part valid, part random error, and part systematic bias, and (2) that the systematic bias is different in each case, then it is possible to examine the structure of error for any one measure by regressing it on the other three. When we do this for expert data and manifesto data, we find explicable patterns. Errors in both manifesto and expert measures are greatest for extreme parties. Expert measures are error-prone for parties that are moving targets; manifesto measures are error-prone for parties that are internally divided. Finally, our case studies suggest that it may be difficult to code electoral manifestos on a single category that encompasses a large and diverse issue such as European integration.

In this article we assume that none of the four sources of data we examine has a monopoly of truth. Even though we lack a gold standard for measuring party positioning on European integration—a criterion measure (Ray, this issue)—it is possible to generalize about, and test, sources of error. Our analysis shows

¹⁷ The mean score for *PDS* Members of the Bundestag is 2.69 on a four-point scale, with four being very much in favor. The mean for all parties in our data set is 3.58 and the median is 3.71.

¹⁸ Für den politischen Richtungswechsel! Sozial und solidarisch — für eine gerechte Republik!

that the expert data set is the most valid among those at our disposal, but that, combined, these four data produce more valid measures than any one source alone.

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Appendix 1. Correlations

A. Correlations among six position measures

	Expert survey	MP/MEP survey	European election survey	Manifesto ratio	Manifesto difference
Expert survey	1.000				
MP/MEP survey	0.873**	1.000			
European election survey	0.754**	0.601**	1.000		
Manifesto ratio	0.782**	0.747**	0.595**	1.000	
Manifesto difference	0.591**	0.591**	0.466**	0.772**	1.000
Manifesto total	-0.118	-0.134	-0.097	-0.092	0.358*

Note: ** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.01$. Listwise deletion $N = 65$.

B. Correlations among residuals for four instruments

	Expert survey	MP/MEP survey	European election survey	Manifesto ratio
Expert survey	1.000			
MP/MEP survey	0.321**	1.000		
European election survey	0.339**	-0.202	1.000	
Manifesto ratio	0.384**	0.503**	-0.116	1.000

Note: residuals of OLS regression where one instrument is regressed on the three other data sources.

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Listwise deletion $N = 65$.

Appendix 2. Description of independent variables

	<i>Expert biases</i>
Expert party number	The number of parties that country experts were asked to evaluate. Values for countries range from 5 for Portugal and Austria to 20 for Italy. Mean = 10. Source: Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
Expert disagreement	Standard deviation among experts on party's position on European integration. Values for parties range between 0 and 1.72 across 65 parties. Mean = 0.76. Source: Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
Competition space	Standard deviation across parties on European integration in a particular country. Values by country range from 1.03 to 2.05. Mean = 1.45. Source: Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
Saliency	Average saliency of European integration in a particular country. Mean responses from the European election survey to question 19a: Thinking about European integration, is this compared to other important topics in <country> a topic of great importance (4), some importance (3), little importance (2) or no importance at all (1)? Country values range from 2.74 to 3.54. Mean = 3.10. Source: 1999 European election survey (Eijk, van der, C. et al., 2002).
	<i>Manifesto biases</i>
Length of manifesto	As measured by the total number of quasi-sentences coded per manifesto. Values for parties range between 41 and 7336 across 65 parties. Mean = 1104. Source: manifesto data (Budge et al., 2001).
Length of EU manifesto section	As measured by the number of quasi-sentences devoted to European integration. Values for parties range between 0 and 396 across 65 parties. Mean = 41.6. Source: manifesto data (Budge et al., 2001).
Dissent	Degree of dissent in a party on European integration in 1999, ranging from 1 (complete unity) to 5 (leadership opposed by party majority). Range is from 1 to 3.56. Mean = 1.82. Source: Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
	<i>Common biases</i>
Extremism (left/right)	Square of the distance of a political party from the median left/right position for all parties in the expert dataset. Values for parties range between 0.00 and 21.99 across 65 parties. Mean = 4.43. Source: Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
Party vote	Percentage of vote in 1999 or the most recent national election prior to 1999 (for residuals of expert data). Percentage of vote in the election for which the manifesto is written (for residuals of manifesto data). Range is from 1.27 to 44.61%. Mean = 17.4.
Government participation	Months in government for the period January 1990–December 1999. Values for parties range between zero and 120 months among 65 parties. Mean = 42 months. Source: Woldendorp et al. (2000); Keesing's Contemporary Archive of World Events, 1945–1998; Electoral studies for 1999; various government websites.
New party	Takes value of 1 if a party was created, split, or merged after 1985, and value of 0 otherwise. Fourteen out of 65 parties are new or recently merged. Source: Ray (1999) and Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).
Position shift	Absolute shift in position on European integration between 1992 and 1999, calculated by adding the absolute shift 92–96 and absolute shift 96–99. Values for parties range between 0 and 3.15 for 64 parties. Mean = 0.71. Source: Ray (1999) and Marks–Steenbergen expert data (2006).

Appendix 3. Extracts from party manifestos

Table 1
European integration in the 1995 *Vlaams Blok* manifesto

<p><i>Identity</i></p> <p>We want to go to Europe as Flanders, but we want to remain first and foremost Flanders.</p> <p>... The <i>Vlaams Blok</i> has always strictly rejected European citizenship because it has insufficient consideration for the cultural identities of diverse peoples which should be preserved within the European Union.</p> <p>... European unity means for the <i>Vlaams Blok</i> a unity of diverse peoples with common civilizational roots while each [people's] own richness, language and culture is preserved.</p> <p>... The <i>Vlaams Blok</i> states it crystal-clear: we are, and wish to remain, the true Europeans. Europe is a compelling necessity.</p>	<p><i>Maastricht</i></p> <p>The Treaty of Maastricht is beyond any doubt a step towards a federal Europe ... It creates the single gray and intransparent European super-state. That was never the intention.</p> <p>... The much praised subsidiarity principle is a joke.</p> <p>... Rejection of the Maastricht Treaty.</p> <p>... More and more Eurocrats interfere with matters beyond the spirit and letter of the European Treaties.</p>
<p><i>Brussels as Europe's capital</i></p> <p>The <i>Vlaams Blok</i> rejects Brussels as capital of all EU political institutions. This means in practical terms that the European Parliament, the European Commission and European Council of Ministers should not remain located in Brussels.</p>	<p><i>Eurovoting</i></p> <p>Voting rights for about 400,000 subjects of the European Union constitutes, especially in Flemish Brabant, constitute a deadly attack on the Flemish character of plenty of communes.</p> <p>... Rejection of voting rights for EU subjects.</p>
<p><i>Enlargement</i></p> <p>Europe is larger than Western Europe and obviously does not stop at the previous Iron Curtain. No effort should be spared to include the peoples of East- and Central Europe.</p>	<p><i>Foreign and defense policy</i></p> <p>We make a case for a confederal Europe with a common foreign policy and a common defense ... This means that the European defense pillar needs to be strengthened.</p> <p>... Europe must be capable of defending itself against any aggression, terrorism or nuclear blackmail. Therefore it needs to maintain a military apparatus with sufficient clout to defend the member states' territory.</p>
<p><i>Cultural policy, language</i></p> <p>We, Flemish nationalists, have waged a very long struggle to gain control over education and culture and to extract this from the Belgian state. We do not want to concede these to a European state—not even partially. They belong fundamentally to the people, just as, by the way, social security. Hence we oppose the expansion of EU competencies [in these areas.]</p>	<p><i>Environment</i></p> <p>The <i>Vlaams Blok</i> believes that a genuinely efficient environmental policy can only succeed within a European framework. Environment is a clear example of a political competence that belongs primarily at the European level.</p>
	<p><i>Trade and economic policy</i></p> <p>Europe and the peoples of Europe must have the right to avoid the destruction of economic activities (e.g. agriculture) that are vital to them. Only that way can Europe and the European peoples maintain their independence and identity.</p>

Table 2
European integration in the 1997 Progressive Democrats' manifesto

<p><i>European integration</i></p> <p>Ireland has benefited greatly from its membership of the European Union.</p> <p>... We will face major challenges on the European front over the next five years and the new government will have to ensure that Irish interests are fully defended.</p> <p><i>Institutional reform</i></p> <p>We will work to protect the interests of smaller member states in any reform of the institutions of the EU.</p> <p><i>European monetary union</i></p> <p>The <i>Progressive Democrats</i> believe that Ireland must keep its options open in relation to membership of the European monetary union.</p> <p>... EMU will be good for Irish business and good for Irish jobs. It will reduce trade barriers right across Europe. If we enter EMU without the UK we are vulnerable to an asymmetric shock. The consequences of such a shock to the Irish economic system could be extremely serious.</p> <p>... Meeting the Maastricht convergence criteria will not be enough. If we do enter EMU, we don't want to limp in, we want to march in. If we are going into a hard currency then we must pursue a hard fiscal strategy.</p> <p><i>State aids</i></p> <p>Ireland must lead the campaign for a reduction in the level of state aids to industry in Europe.</p> <p><i>Environmental policy</i></p> <p>The <i>Progressive Democrats</i> strongly support the central thrust of EU environmental policy.</p> <p>... The progressive democrats will not put substantial EU funds at risk by introducing a 'free water' policy in direct contravention of European directives.</p>	<p><i>Enlargement</i></p> <p>We support the eastward expansion of the EU. We must be careful, however, that enlargement of the union does not result in renegotiation of the CAP to the detriment of this country.</p> <p><i>Fisheries</i></p> <p>We must renegotiate our fisheries agreement with the EU so that Irish fishermen can have greater access to the fish stocks in our own waters.</p> <p><i>Agriculture</i></p> <p>The European Union is pumping £30m a week into Irish agriculture. It is now apparent that all farmers are not getting their fair share of this largesse. The forthcoming renegotiation of the common agricultural policy provides the next Irish government with a real opportunity to deal with the problems confronting Irish agriculture. Reform of the CAP must involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income support: a greater share of the budget must be concentrated on direct income support for farmers...; • family farms: the income-support system must be biased in favour of smaller producers...; • commercialization: large-scale commercial producers must be given the freedom to increase their output.... <p>... We also need a coherent national strategy for the management of our currency to ensure that Irish agriculture does not lose out from our prospective membership of EMU.</p> <p>... The Irish government must press the European Union for the reversal of the cuts which have taken place in the value of export refunds [for agricultural products].</p> <p><i>Structural funds</i></p> <p>Ireland has done much to close the income gap with the rest of Europe. We must now adopt a regional approach to make sure that the more disadvantaged and peripheral regions retain objective one status and maintain their entitlement to continued funding from Brussels.</p>
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Table 3
European integration in the 1998 PDS manifesto

<p><i>Image of Europe</i></p> <p>As a European socialist party the PDS recommends and is committed to European integration. We want a peaceful, socially equitable, democratic and ecologically conscious Europe, open to the world and with open borders, a Europe without nationalism and xenophobia. A Europe that considers itself to be a part of this one world which it is responsible for and gives shape jointly with peoples and states across continents.</p> <p>... The European Union must be social, productive, democratic, ecological, peace-bringing and cosmopolitan.</p> <p>... This requires first and foremost a fundamental democratization of the European Union.</p>	<p><i>Democracy</i></p> <p>This requires first and foremost a democratization of all EU policy areas, a democratization of institutions and structures including strengthening co-decision of the European Parliament, stronger cooperation with the national parliaments ... [The] European constitution ... must be decided by referenda in the EU member states.</p> <p>... We want direct opportunities for citizens, e.g. through referenda in all EU member states, to co-shape and co-decide fundamental choices about the formation of the EU.</p> <p>... The PDS demands full direct parliamentary control over European police cooperation.</p>
<p><i>Political economy</i></p> <p>Alternative politics can only be successful if it succeeds in averting the neoconservative assault on the foundations of the social welfare state and democracy in Germany and the European Union.</p> <p>... Europe needs "die Wende" in EU politics. The PDS is committed to transform the Treaty obligation of "an open market economy with free competition" into an obligation to a social Europe.</p> <p>... Economic, industrial, structural, financial and taxation policy must be made subordinate to labor market, employment and environmental policy.</p> <p>... We insist giving the EU treaty competence to steer social and employment policy by means of regulatory interventions in the market.</p>	<p><i>Maastricht and Amsterdam</i></p> <p>The Maastricht and Amsterdam treaty have worsened the conditions [for a democratic, social, ecological Europe] and have achieved no real progress in the necessary democratization of the European Union.</p> <p>... Since the Maastricht Treaty has come into force political and economic elites determine and shape the European integration process wholly outside democratic control.</p> <p><i>Enlargement</i></p> <p>We want an open Europe and will oppose all attempts to insulate the European Union from the south and the east or to play power politics with the idea of a core Europe.</p>
<p><i>Monetary policy</i></p> <p>The introduction of the Euro erodes the social welfare state. The European monetary union ... signifies a one-sided focus on monetary stability and greater capital profits. Introduction of the Euro ... leads in the member states to steady erosion of the welfare state and destruction of jobs, and it sets citizens up against one another in a competition for lower wages. The creation of an all-powerful European central bank without political or democratic control, the division between members and non-members of the monetary union, and the strengthened buffer against non-EU states are to us further important grounds to reject the Euro as planned.</p>	<p><i>Environmental and social policy</i></p> <p>We demand the international and European convergence of social and ecological minimal standards.</p> <p>... A binding EU directive on the shortening of the working time should be decided. We will pursue harmonization and extension of workers' rights on codetermination, information and protection, as well as a European directive on labor law and collective bargaining and on labor courts. Most importantly, we want to strengthen trade union rights; this requires that the right to cross-border strikes be safeguarded in the Treaty.</p>
<p><i>Industrial and regional policy</i></p> <p>The EU structural funds should be redirected in favor of employment-creating measures</p> <p>... We want a public investment program in the European Union.</p>	<p><i>Taxation policy</i></p> <p>The taxation and contribution system must be harmonized in the European Union to stem tax evasion and tax dumping.</p>

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