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**Exploring the European Demos (or lack thereof):
the Structure of Citizen Attitudes and the European
Political Space**

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Abstract

A common concern regarding the viability of institutional reform of the EU is whether European citizens constitute a *demos*—a political community that facilitates democratic governance. One important aspect of this concern is whether or not public perceptions are structured so as to ease or impede political discourse across Europe. To investigate this question, we examine whether the EU mass public organizes its attitudes toward EU policy issues in systematic and meaningful ways. Specifically, we examine whether EU citizens' attitudes across a broad range of policies decided at the EU-level are structured consistent with several prominent models of the EU policy-space. Using Eurobarometer surveys collected in the 15 member states in 1996, we show that, for the mass public, policy positions on EU issues are systematically organized. Moreover, the substantive structure of this policy space is consistent with two common models of voter policy spaces at the domestic level: socio-economic left-right and 'new politics'. However, while these two dimensions underlie citizens' attitudes on EU issues, they are so strongly inter-related that essentially they merge to create a single dimension. An interesting further finding is that, although the EU space appears to have the flavor of domestic policy spaces, this single EU dimension is not related to citizens' left-right self-placements.

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A variety of scholars have noted that the absence of a European *demos* is fundamentally problematic for the future political integration of the European Union. For example, Scharpf (1999: 187) argues that the democratic deficit is due large part to the lack of common identity and European-wide policy discourse. This deficit cannot be filled simply by institutional reforms designed to enhance the opportunity for popular influence through, for example, a more powerful European Parliament. Similarly, Weiler (1995) argued that a shared identity and common purpose are necessary for democratic institutions functioning legitimately under majority-rule.

A *demos* facilitates legitimate democratic institutions, particularly those that rely on majority-rule. Given that proposals for further institutional reforms of the EU include the expansion of majoritarian decision-making in the European Parliament for a broad array of policy areas, it is therefore important to address the question of *demos*. Specifically, I want to focus on one aspect of mass attitudes relevant to EU governance: the existence (or not) of a common EU policy space. As Sharpf notes, one key aspect of the democratic deficit is the lack of a Europe-wide policy discourse. In national contexts, this discourse and policy space is usually defined by a simplifying language—often referred to in terms of ideology—that facilitates political communication and competition. For example, the left-right ideological dimension is crucial to how voter choose among parties, parties compete for voters, and policy positions are packaged in party platforms. In the absence of this structure on the policy space, citizens would lack a central component of political discourse, undermining meaningful political participation. Also, if citizens view all policies through a national or regional lens, then ideological discourse is basically impossible. In contrast, where a fairly simple ideological structure underlies political discourse, voters can identify policy packages that cross-cut ethnic or geographic differences and facilitate compromise and generate stable policy outcomes.

Thus, one key question for whether future institutional reforms of the EU can succeed is whether or not an ideological structure underlies mass attitudes on EU policy.

In the remainder of this paper, we examine this question. In the subsequent sections we will describe several contending models of the EU policy-space that generate testable predictions about how citizens structure their preferences over EU policy. We then test these predictions using survey data collected in the fifteen member states.

Models of the EU Policy-Space

How do citizens structure their preferences over EU policies? In the study of citizens' policy preferences in representative democracies, this question is typically answered by developing an empirical model that simplifies voters' preferences across a host of issues into a small number of dimensions. Fundamental to this approach is the assumption that policy positions are structured by underlying ideological dimensions that account for covariation in these positions. These ideological dimensions represent the structure of political discourse, representing a linguistic short-hand for political communication and competition. Consistent with a long tradition of research on mass political behavior, previous studies have conceived of these dimensions as ideological constraints on citizens' policy positions, such that citizens' positions on a broad range of issues are related to each other in consistent and identifiable ways (e.g., Converse 1964; Kinder and Sears 1985: 664).

Ideology therefore reduces differences in citizens' positions over many policies to differences in positions on a small number of dimensions. This implies that if one can uncover the relationships between specific policies and the ideological dimensions (i.e., the *policy content* of the dimension), then one can infer citizens' positions on the ideological dimension from their positions on the specific policies. Put another way, if we know how policy positions are structured, we can infer a citizen's position on one issue from his or her position on another issue. Again, if such an ideological structure exists, this represents the political structure of political discourse. If such a structure does not exist, political competition and communication may be inefficient, at best, and impossibly complicated at worst.

In the absence of theoretical or conceptual guidance, such a model of the ideological space could be created inductively by searching for patterns in policy positions. However, exploratory analyses of this sort come at a price. Usually, if the policy-space has more than one dimension, statistical techniques for identifying the policy-space do not generate unique solutions--i.e., there are multiple structures that fit the data equally well (Long 1983: 34). Consequently, we prefer to use conceptual models to specify *ex ante* the relationships between citizens' policy positions and the policy-content of the ideological dimension underlying these positions. We can then examine this underlying ideological structure through confirmatory analysis.

Previous research on EU politics provides several different models of the EU policy-space. None of these models has been explicitly specified for the mass public. Instead, these studies have modeled the policy space of competition between national governments and national political parties over EU policy (e.g., Garret and Tsebelis 1999). However, these models of the political space are generally based on a rationale that also applies to the electorate. For example, Marks and Wilson (2000) argue that the space of partisan competition in the EU is based on the cleavages that structure domestic politics—which are ultimately defined by voter preferences--because these cleavages structure the way parties view policy at the national and the supranational level.

In the following analysis, we will focus on four models of the EU policy-space presented in previous research. These models consist of two basic elements: an assumption about the number of dimensions and an assumption about the policy-content of those dimensions. Two models are one-dimensional. First, underlying an intergovernmentalist or neo-functionalist view of integration is the idea that all EU issues are fundamentally about national sovereignty (McNamara 1998). Viewed from this perspective, the European Union is not unique. Instead, it is simply an advanced example of a new political space created during a time of fundamental changes in the role of the contemporary nation-state (Kriesi 2000). According to this view, recent processes of globalization and denationalization undermine modern nation-states based on “territorially defined, fixed, and mutually exclusive enclaves of legitimate dominion” (Ruggie 1993: 151). We will refer to this as the *national sovereignty model*.

As a consequence, according to this view citizens' positions on issues ranging from the adoption of a common currency, increasing EU regulation of the environment, or decreasing EU aid to farmers are due to their position on a single national sovereignty-integration dimension. This dimension is defined by the concerns for the speed of integration and the delegation of national powers to the EU. Among others, this model of the political space was adopted in Garrett and Tsebelis (1996) and Garrett (1992).

A second one-dimensional model of the EU policy space is based on the economic component of the left-right dimension of national politics. Scharpf (1999) and Tsebelis and Garrett (2000) argue that the current political space is defined by battles over market regulation versus market liberalization. According to this view, issues of further integration and substantive EU policies all have implications for the level of regulation in the EU market. If this model is correct, issues of regulation--environmental protection, consumer protection, labor market constraints--should be prominent in defining the policy-content of the EU policy-space. We will describe this as the *regulation model*.

The third model, presented in Hix (1999), contends that the EU political space is two-dimensional, and that the two dimensions are unrelated or orthogonal to one another. One dimension spans the conflict over the proper allocation of authoritative competencies, similar to the national sovereignty-integration dimension described above. This dimension captures conflict over who has the power to implement political decisions. While some prefer that the Union exercise such authority, others favor the member-states as the proper forum. This dimension should structure citizens' attitudes on EU issues involving institutional reforms, the deepening of the integration process, or the evolution of issues from the national to the EU level. Hix posits that the traditional socio-economic left-right dimension structures the political space as well, and that this dimension is orthogonal to (independent of) the national sovereignty-integration dimension. This second dimension should structure citizens' attitudes toward policies over which the EU institutions currently governs--e.g., environmental regulation, agricultural policy or consumer safety.

Although there are many definitions of the socio-economic left-right in the literature, most portray this dimension as a combination of issues including government involvement in

the economy, the distribution of wealth and economic power in society, and ‘new politics’ issues such as environmental protection and enhancing participatory democracy. The left of the scale is defined by libertarian social values and calls for redistribution while the right is defined by authoritarian social values and liberal economic policies (Kitschelt 1994, 1995). If this two-dimensional model is accurate, the EU political space would resemble the traditional domestic political space on all issues but EU institutional or policy reform. Moreover, we would expect that the two dimensions would not be correlated with one another. We refer to this as the *national sovereignty/ left-right model*.

Finally, a fourth model put forward by Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2000) essentially contends that the EU political space is defined by the same two dimensions that Kitschelt (1994) found in his study of the political space in current European democracies. One dimension is the economic left-right dimension defined by distributive issues and regulation of the economy. The second dimension is a ‘new politics’ dimension that is defined by support for Green/ Alternative/ Libertarian (GAL) values at the one end and Traditional/ Authoritarian/ Nationalism (TAN) values at the other. The policy-content of this dimension is defined by issues involving government transparency, environmental protection, and advancing human rights on the GAL end and the control of immigration, crime prevention, and protection of national cultures on the TAN end.

Consistent with the argument of Kitschelt (1994, 1995), Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2000) contend that the new and old politics are correlated in their constraint on the EU policy space and combine to generate essentially a single dimension of political competition that cross-cuts the two dimensions. If this is the case, we would expect that there are two dimensions—economic left-right and ‘new politics’-that structure citizen views on EU policy issues, but that these dimensions also are correlated to a significant degree.¹ We refer to this as the *new politics/ left-right model*.

¹ Empirically, this argument is difficult to separate from the argument Tsebelis and Garrett, for example, make because many of the policy indicators that would make up both a market intervention versus liberalization dimension and the traditional economic left-right dimension overlap.

Data and Analysis

To investigate whether EU citizens' attitudes to EU policy are structured according to the models described above, we conducted several confirmatory factor analyses of Eurobarometer survey data. Ideally, we would analyze a data set consisting of EU citizens' preferences over all the policies that constitute the EU policy space--i.e., all policy areas under EU authority. Using confirmatory factor analysis, we would then estimate how well the hypothesized underlying structure of attitudes accounts for the observed covariation among respondents' policy preferences.

Unfortunately, exactly such a data set does not exist. The Eurobarometer survey asks a uniform set of questions to respondents across all EU member-states, but rarely asks respondents' about their preferences over a large number of policies under EU authority.² However, one notable exception is the question presented in Table 1, which was asked in Eurobarometer 44.2 Bis (spring 1996).³ This question, applied to the list of policy statements (a-y), largely meets our data needs. First, the list of policy statements covers a broad range of areas of EU policy authority. Furthermore, while the list does not exhaust all EU policies, it does include policy areas that are central to distinguishing among the models of the EU policy space we seek to test. Second, the policy statements generally indicate a policy direction, not simply a policy area. For example, respondents were not asked whether EU activity in the area of international intervention is a priority. They were asked whether intervening "more firmly" is a priority. This directional component is important for our data analysis, since we want to examine how citizens' policy positions across policy areas covary so as to define the policy space.

(Table 1 about here)

² The Eurobarometer does include a variety of questions concerning the creation of new EU policy authority, but our focus is on preferences regarding existing EU policy areas.

³ The respondent could answer "key priority", "not a key priority" or "don't know." We coded these responses as (0) not a key priority, (1) don't know, and (2) key priority. We included "don't know" as an intermediate category because we expect it to capture indifference regarding the policy statement and because no indifference category was made available. Also, a dichotomous variable would be problematic for conducting factor analysis.

The one clear weakness of this survey question for our purposes is that the respondent is not simply asked whether he or she agrees with each policy statement. The respondent is also asked whether the policy statement is a priority. Thus, it is possible that a respondent might support EU policies that fight against drug trafficking but not consider it a priority, resulting in a response of “not a key priority.” If this is the case, we would not be able to distinguish such a respondent from one who was against more EU activity in the area of fighting drug trafficking. Put differently, the question is probably tapping salience and direction of each policy statement, and we simply want to extract the respondents’ preferred policy direction.

Lacking a better survey, we have no solution to this problem. However, we should note that the survey question design helps minimize this concern. The survey question does not limit the number of policies the respondent can identify as a priority. Consequently, respondents are not forced explicitly to prioritize among policy statements and can state their directional preference regarding each policy statement. We will return to this issue when interpreting the results of the analysis.

Table 2 presents the correlations among the responses to the policy statements (a-y) in Table 1. The focus of our analysis is whether these correlations among the policy positions is structured according to the systematic patterns identified in the models described in the previous section. We used confirmatory factor analysis to bring evidence to bear on this question. Confirmatory factor analysis evaluates the performance of a particular factor structure in accounting for the covariation among a set of variables--in this case, the set of policy statements. The factor structure specifies (a) how many dimensions or factors underlie the covariation in policy positions, and (b) how specific policy positions relate to particular underlying dimensions and to each other. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis for each factor structure will then allow us to compare the fit of each structure to the observed survey data.

Each of the four models specifies a particular factor structure underlying the survey responses related to the set of policy positions. The *national sovereignty model* posits that the EU policy space has one dimension that accounts for respondents’ positions on the policy statements. In particular, policy statements that raise issues of national sovereignty should load

particularly strongly on that dimension. The set of policy statements provided in the survey does not include many of these statements. Partly, that is because we sought a survey question involving policy areas that the EU already exercises supranational authority over, not issues that are still largely controlled by national governments. However, several policy statements address issues areas over which, at the time of the survey (1996), the EU institutions did not explicitly exercise supranational authority. Specifically, policy statements (b), (d), (k), (l), (m), and (p) concern EU activity in policy areas in which the EU did not as yet exercise concrete authority.⁴ The EU did not have an army or a currency and issues of immigration, international crime, drug trafficking, and border controls were decided through intergovernmental cooperation under the EU third pillar. Consequently, these policy statements refer to activity by the EU that would serve to increase supranational authority over these issues at the expense of national sovereignty. If the national sovereignty model structure citizens' EU policy space, we expect these policy statements to all relate to the dimension in the same direction (positive or negative) and to have particularly strong loadings on that dimension. If citizens strictly view the EU through a national lens—i.e., their support for EU policy is derivative of their level of concern about protecting national sovereignty, then this dimension should dominate citizens' policy attitudes.

The *regulation model* also assumes one dimension underlies citizens' positions on the policy statements, but that the dimension is characterized by economic concerns regarding regulation of the economy. The policy statements (g), (i), (r), (t) and (y) most closely capture these concerns, as they call for greater protection of the environment and consumers and greater activity by the EU in promoting equal opportunities and fighting unemployment, presumably through regulation in the market place. Thus, if this model defines citizens' EU policy space, we expect these statements to relate to the dimension in the same direction and to demonstrate strong loadings on that dimension.

The *national sovereignty/ left-right model* posits that two dimensions underlie the covariation in respondents' policy positions. The first dimension is the national sovereignty dimension described above. The second dimension is the primary dimension of contestation in the EU

⁴ Note that we have also conducted the analysis with subsets of these statements as markers for this dimension. The results are consistent with those presented here.

member-states' domestic political arenas, the left-right dimension. In the context of our data, we interpret this second dimension to be relevant to essentially all issues over which the EU exerts supranational authority. However, issues of environmental protection and providing help to the poor should serve as 'marker' policy statements for this dimension. This model also assumes that these two dimensions are unrelated (orthogonal) to each other. Thus, in our analysis of this model we will specify two unrelated dimensions, where one dimension structures attitudes on the national sovereignty policy statements and the other dimension structure attitudes on the policy statements concerning policy decided supra-nationally.

The *new politics/ economic left-right model* also posits two dimensions but differs in two important ways from the previous model. The second dimension is assumed to be structured by the 'new politics' cleavage based on a distinction between GAL values and TAN values. We expect several policy statements to serve as 'markers' for this dimension. Statement (g) focuses on the environment. Statement (c) involves protecting tradition. Statements (l) and (m) address crime issues, which Kitschelt (1994: 28) argues constitute part of the 'new politics' dimension. Statements (h), (r), and (s) call for reforms of traditional governing practices and regulation to promote participatory democracy and consumer safety. Thus, we expect these statements to load exclusively on the 'new politics' dimension. We do not expect policy statements that address issues of economic left-right politics to load on this dimension. Thus, we do not allow the policy statement about fighting unemployment to be structured by the 'new politics' dimension.

For the economic left-right dimension, we consider statements regarding regulation of the market and distribution of income as 'markers.' These include statements (i), (j), (k), (q), (u), (w), and (x). There are also several policy areas that may have both a 'new politics' and 'economic left-right' component to them. Lacking any clear theoretical guidance, we did not constrain these items to be structured exclusively by either dimension.

In this context, it is important to note that this model is also distinct from the national sovereignty/traditional left-right model in that the dimensions are expected to correlate highly with each other. As Kitschelt (1994) argues in the domestic context, while these two dimensions should have some independent substantive character, they are closely related that

they can form a hybrid dimension that cuts across their two dimensions. Consequently, we do not constrain the dimension to be orthogonal in estimating this model.

Results

Tables 3-5 present maximum likelihood results of the confirmatory factor analyses designed to estimate how well the four models of the EU policy space account for the observed structure of policy positions in the EU mass public.⁵ In addition to the standardized results for the loadings of the policy statements on each dimension, we also report measures of model fit. Consistent with recommendation of Hoyle and Panter (1995), we use the following fit indexes: the goodness-of-fit-index (GFI, Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1981), the non-normed fit index (NNFI, Bentler and Bonnett, 1980), the incremental fit index (IFI, Bollen, 1989), and the comparative fit index (CFI, Bentler, 1990). The values of GFI, NNFI, IFI, and CFI range from 0 to 1.0, with higher values indicating better model fit (Bentler and Bonnet, 1980; Hoyle and Panter, 1995).

Note that the null hypothesis—that there is no structure to mass attitudes toward EU politics—is fundamentally of interest here. Certainly the generally low level of public sophistication and knowledge regarding EU policy issues would suggest that citizens lack any structure to their attitudes on EU policy.

Model 1 in Table 3 provides evidence regarding the *national sovereignty model*. Consistent with expectations, the underlying dimension relates in the same direction (positive) to the policy statements calling for loss of national sovereignty over policy (e.g., creating an EU army). That is, respondents who felt that “having a strong European currency” was a key priority were also likely to consider “setting up a European army for common defense” a key priority. However, the marker policy statements regarding national sovereignty are not among the strongest loading policy statements on this dimension. Thus, we would not consider this evidence of a single national sovereignty defining the EU political space for the mass public.

(Table 3 about here)

The results in Model 1 in Table 3 also test the *regulation model*. The marker policy statements for this economic dimension load in the same direction (positive), as expected. For example, respondents who considered “developing joint programs to fight unemployment” as a key priority were also likely to identify “protecting consumers” as a key priority for more EU activity. Thus, this dimension is consistent with the regulation dimension defined by Tsebelis and Garrett (2000). However, while some of the marker statements have strong loadings, the statements with the strongest loadings are difficult to characterize as economic in nature. For example, promoting human rights and improving EU transparency are certainly more representative of ‘new politics’ issues than economic regulation. Thus, while the substantive character of this dimension appears much closer to the regulation model than the national sovereignty model, the one-dimensional policy space has a broader character than simply regulation.

Model 3 in Table 4 is designed to capture the constraints imposed by the *national sovereignty/ traditional left-right model* of the EU policy space. Consistent with expectations, the sovereignty dimension (Factor 2), constrained to account for variation among the sovereignty marker policy statements, is related to these statements in the same direction (positive). Thus, respondents who identify fighting drug trafficking and increasing controls on external borders as key priorities also tend to consider creating an EU army and having a strong EU currency as key priorities. Put more generally, citizens who support (oppose) increasing supranational political authority at the expense of national sovereignty in one policy area tend to support (oppose) it in other areas.⁶ Thus, the character of this dimension appears to involve national sovereignty. In addition, the domestic left-right dimension (Factor 1) also has a substantive policy character that is consistent with expectations. Respondents who support (oppose) redistributive policies also support (oppose) libertarian policies like environmental protection and equality of opportunity. This structure of attitudes is consistent with the substantive character of the domestic left-right dimension (e.g., Kitschelt 1994).

Although the factors appear to capture the substantive structure posited by the national sovereignty and domestic left-right model, the model fit is relatively poor. All fit measures

⁵ We used EQS statistical software.

indicate that the one-factor model reported in Model 1, Table 3, is better. Thus, the added complexity of this conceptual model actually provides a poorer account of the covariation among respondents' policy positions than the simple one-factor model.

(Table 4 about here)

Finally, Model 4 in Table 5 provides a test of the *new politics/ economic left-right model* of the EU policy space. The results for this model are largely consistent with expectations and the model fit is better than that any of the factor structures discussed previously. The policy statements that load most strongly on the 'new politics' dimension (Factor 1) are two of the 'marker' statements that we expected to identify this dimension: human rights and consumer protection. The economic left-right dimension (Factor 2) also has the expected substantive character. The four strongest loading policy statement on this dimension involved policies designed to promote economic equality--a key economic 'left' component.

In addition to the factor loadings, the results also suggest that the inter-relationship between these two dimensions is consistent with expectations. The correlation between factors is quite high (.840) and positive. This means that those who identify policies on the economic 'left' as priorities are likely to consider policies on the libertarian/alternative/green end of the 'new politics' dimension. This is consistent with findings in the domestic arena of the EU member-states (Kitschelt 1994).

The model fit indices all indicate that this two-factor model better accounts for the covariation in respondents' priorities across policy statements than any other model we estimated. The combination of the evidence regarding the substantive character of these dimensions and the level of model fit show that new politics plus economic left-right provides an accurate model of the EU policy space and the best explanation for the structure of this policy space among those models considered here.

(Table 5 about here)

⁶ Note that if only the statements that most obviously involve a decrease in national sovereignty (creating an army and having an EU currency) are used to mark this dimension, the results are consistent with expectations.

It is important to note that the very high correlation between the two factors in Model 4 indicates that the two dimensions essentially collapse to one dimension. The fairly small difference in model fit between Model 4 and Model 1 (Table 3) suggests this as well. This helps explain the apparently surprising loadings in Model 1 given the expectations of the *regulation model*. If Model 1 is capturing a combination of ‘new politics’ and economic left-right, then issues related to economic equality should load highly on this dimension as should the marker policies for ‘new politics’—e.g., consumer protection. This, of course, is what we found in discussing Model 1.

Having found evidence that the EU policy space has a very similar substantive structure to that of the domestic political space in the EU member-states, we were curious as to whether these policy spaces—that is, the European and domestic new politics plus economic left-right—were effectively the same. This is difficult to assess without a battery of relevant policy questions that distinguish level of governance. Such data is unavailable. However, one way to address this question is to use citizens’ left-right self-placement as a proxy for their position in the domestic political space. As Kitschelt (1994) has argued, the left-right dimension of competition at the domestic level is a combination of traditional economic left-right issues and ‘new politics’ concerns. Previous studies indicate that citizens’ left-right self-placements capture these two types of policies well. In addition, these left-right self-placements are comparable across nations, meaning that a position of, say, four on a ten-point left-right scale is similar across European nations in terms of what substantive policies that position represents (Huber 1989). Thus, if citizens’ structure their domestic and the EU political space in the same way, their left-right self-placements based on domestic politics should explain their positions on EU issues.

To test this hypothesis, we estimated a one-factor model that included all the policy statements analyzed in Model 1 but added respondents’ left-right self-placements.⁷ If respondents’ domestic and EU policy spaces are structured similarly then we should be able to predict a respondent’s position on EU issues with their position on their domestic left-right dimension. Model 2 in Table 3 presents the results from this analysis. Surprisingly,

⁷ The Eurobarometer 44.2bis included a question asking respondents to place themselves on a ten-point scale, where 1 was labeled “left” and 10 was labeled “Right”.

respondents' left-right self-placement had an extremely low loading on this dimension. This means that if we know a respondent's left-right position, we cannot infer much, if anything, about her position on the battery of EU issues analyzed here.

Alternative Explanations

Before concluding, we want to return to our concern about the survey question and how this might influence the results of our analysis. Recall that the survey question asked respondents to identify whether or not they considered each policy statement a 'key priority' for more EU activity. The potential problem with this question design is that it asks both whether the respondent agrees with the policy statement and whether the respondent considers it a priority. Thus, the question taps salience as well as policy position. Our hope is that, because the question did not limit the number of priorities the respondent could choose, differences in the responses largely reflect policy positions. However, the variation in responses may actually represent differences in citizens' priorities over areas of EU governance. If respondents are not reading the statements closely enough to discern policy direction they may simply be responding based on their preferences over which issues should be conducted at the EU level. Thus, we want to consider whether such preferences could explain the results of the analyses before we accept the interpretations based on the models of the EU policy space.

Dalton and Eichenberg (1998) developed three hypotheses regarding how citizens vary in their preferences for EU governance over particular policies. We will examine whether the results of the confirmatory factor analysis are consistent with any of these hypotheses. First, based on functionalist theory, Dalton and Eichenberg (1998: 254) argued that support for EU governance of policy should be greatest (weakest) for issues that are difficult (easy) to solve at the national level and which have clear (dubious) benefits from international coordination. For example, citizens should support EU policies that involve protecting the environment, fighting international crime, and managing immigration and oppose policies designed to address equal opportunity or protecting consumers. The evidence from Model 1 in Table 1 is inconsistent with this hypothesis. Respondents who considered environmental protection or fighting

international crime as priorities also considered improving equal opportunities and protecting consumers.

Second, Dalton and Eichenberg (1998: 255) hypothesized that citizens would support EU authority in areas of “low politics” but oppose EU authority over “high politics” issues. “High politics” include foreign policy, defense, and control of the national economy. “Low Politics” include welfare policies and tariff policies. Thus, we would expect respondents to identify issues such involving the creation of a single EU currency and EU army as “not a key priority” and issues such as trade policy and environmental policy as a “key priority.” This hypothesis is not consistent with the results of the confirmatory factor analyses. In Model 1, the low and high politics policies are positively related. Respondents who consider protecting the EU from imports and protecting the environment as key priorities also tend to feel that the creation of an EU army and having and a common currency are key priorities.

Third, Dalton and Eichenberg (1998: 255) hypothesized that citizens will support EU governance over policies that they personally benefit from and oppose those policies that decrease their welfare in a utilitarian sense. While it is difficult to identify what this hypothesis implies about variation in respondents’ priorities across policy statements, it seems highly unlikely that the results of the factor analysis are due to such calculations by the respondents. Note that all the policy statements load positively on a single dimension (see Model 1). The only way that the utilitarian hypothesis could account for this is if respondents generally felt they benefited from all of these policy statements. This seems very unlikely, particularly since some of the policy statements concern redistribution of resources. Thus, we are confident that the results of the confirmatory factor analysis cannot be explained by alternative explanations related to these three hypotheses about citizens’ preferences over EU policy authority.

Discussion

Returning to our original concern, the results presented here indicate that citizens’ attitudes toward EU policies are far from random. In fact, we find systematic evidence that the cognitive map of European voters has a meaningful structure that is theoretically interpretable. Taken together, our results indicate that the European political space is essentially one-

dimensional in voters' minds. This speaks in favor of the proposition that European policy issues can be subsumed under a single dimension that includes both old and new politics. Moreover, the results show that this dimension appears to be European in character, as it is independent of citizens' left-right self-placements. Thus, Europeans appear to organize their thinking about European policy issues along a single continuum, but this continuum appears to be generally unrelated to the left-right dimensions that exist within member states.

The results also speak against the idea that citizens' attitudes toward European policy issues are determined by a sovereignty dimension. Recall that if we assume that citizens see all EU policy as a question of national sovereignty versus supranational authority, this dimension should dominate citizens' policy attitudes. Instead, we find support for the notion that the primary dimension concerns a European socio-economic or interventionist-noninterventionist dimension that is supplemented by orientations toward New Politics issues such as human rights, transparency, and consumer protection. Thus, we would argue that voters' attitudes about Europe are structured not in terms of the proper allocation of authority (nation vs. EU), but in terms of a European-wide socio-economic or interventionist-noninterventionist dimension.

There are several questions this analysis was not designed to and therefore could not address. For example, we do not know whether the attitudinal structure uncovered here is stable over time; that is, whether this structure is a recent phenomenon or whether Europeans' attitudes have been structured this way for a long time. Moreover, this study was not designed to examine the structure of attitudes *within* member states. The analysis of a truly *European* policy space requires the analysis of the European electorate as a whole. It is possible if not likely that there are cross-national differences that may be worth investigating. However, it is difficult to explain the results reported here with a story about widely varying structures underlying national publics' views on EU policy. We accept that the degree to which the findings here speak to any national public may vary in degree, but it is unlikely that very many national publics differ dramatically in the structure of the EP policy space from this model.

In addition, our results should be comforting to those interested in reforming the democratic institutions of the united Europe. They suggest that voters' conceptual map is not

random, and that the considerable political heterogeneity that exists across the member-states does not necessarily pose an obstacle to achieving meaningful democratic representation in the European Union. Thus, there appears to be a structure to citizens' conceptual map of European policy issues, and the structure matches up with what European political parties compete on—namely a economic left-right continuum with New Politics overtones. If this structure endures, existing parties will not have to reinvent themselves to contest European elections when truly European issues come to the forefront of voters' interests. As a result, building a European party system may not be as difficult as it may seem at first glance. However, a fairly stable set of ideological constraints on how people view European policy issues means also that parties may have a difficult time leading public opinion on European issues. Instead, and in clear contrast to the notion of the permissive consensus, party competition may be constrained by the conceptual map of the European public.

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