

Has European integration gone too far? An analysis of party families' stances on European integration

Bachelor thesis
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Abstract

The following paper deals with the topic of European integration and Euroscepticism. Both, of which are inevitably linked and therefore highly debatable. The European Parliament's election in May 2014 revealed that Eurosceptic parties received a significant number of votes from citizens in the twenty-eight member states. It is therefore important to explore what member states' parties' stances are on European integration. *How* can we explain these positions and *why* is the assembly of different party groups in the European Parliament an important factor to do so? In order to answer these questions, the cleavage theory as famously developed by Lipset and Rokkan in 1967 is used in order to explain Western European parties' political traditions and how they developed. It will be argued that the resemblance of parties across Europe enables one to assign them into different party families. The different party groups in the European Parliament are therefore of special interest because they resemble the party families described in the academic literature. For the reader it may thereupon be interesting to think about if European integration has gone too far or is this assumption merely the offspring of Eurosceptic debates?

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1. Introduction

This Bachelor thesis analyzes European parties with regard to their positions on European integration. Moreover, it answers the question if parties' position on that topic can be explained by their ideological tradition developed in different cleavages. Furthermore, it is argued that parties across Western European party systems share similar positions on policy issues such as European economic integration and European political integration and can therefore be grouped into their corresponding party families.

In order to follow this research goal, the thesis makes use of data which was acquired in an iterative expert survey in April 2014 in the context of the initiation of the voting advice application EUvox. The European Parliament is especially interesting in the context of the meaning of party families. This is because "[...] party family is far stronger than country location in determining positioning of national political parties on European integration" (Marks et al., 2002 p. 591). This Bachelor thesis presents that the party groups in the European Parliament consists of parties which share similar positions on political issues and thus overcome national boundaries.

On the basis of the research goal described, the following research question can be drawn:

What are member states' parties' stances on European integration in the European Parliament's election in May 2014 and how can these positions be explained?

There are many existing theories to grasp the process of European integration. Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism are two theories, which can be used to describe the beginning of the European integration process. Both theories encapsulate the early beginnings of the process of European integration, which began in the 1950s (Cini & Borragan, 2010a). Neofunctionalism is based on the assumption that European integration is an "automatic process" as explained by Haas (1958) (Jensen, 2010, p.72) meaning that "cooperation in one field [of European integration] necessitates cooperation in another" as further outlined by Hooghe & Marks (2007) (cf. Jensen, 2010, p. 73) and Hooghe & Marks (2008, p. 3).

In contrast to this theory stands Intergovernmentalism, which has its roots in the assumption that European integration is mainly driven by member states' governments (Cini, 2010b, p. 90). In recent years, another theory was established to explain the process of European integration. Multi-level governance appears to encapsulate the meaning of European integration the best as it is used to explain how the system of the EU functions these days. As explained by Hooghe, Marks & Wilson (2002) many scholars, including them, agree on the fact that multi-level governance has limited the extent to which member states have an influence on the shape of the EU system. Instead, all levels of governance, from the regional to the EU level are therefore involved in shaping the EU. This, as pointed out by Hooghe et al. (2002), is the main driving point for some parties to not only criticize the EU but oppose the European integration process. Hooghe et al. explain that from the point of view of such parties, the multi-governance structure of the EU would weaken the nation state (2002, p.

977). Parties opposing the European integration process can equally be identified at the extreme-right and the extreme-left political spectrum. The goal of this thesis is to explain this opposition further on the basis of party families and theories concerning Euroscepticism.

In order to derive at parties' positions, this thesis makes use of data from an iterative expert survey which was conducted for the EUvox 2014 project (EUvox 2014, 2014). Experts were assigned to code twenty-eight question constituting policy issues (Gemenis et al., 2014b) in order to estimate European parties' position on different policy areas. In some cases, additional country-specific questions were included as well, which are however not part of the analysis in this thesis. Two questions from the iterative expert survey are specially used to measure parties' position on European integration. Marks & Wilson (2000) and Marks, Wilson & Ray (2002) have explained in their studies that European integration constitutes two dimensions, namely economic integration and political integration. Thus, in order to measure parties' stances on European integration, the data analysis chapter (chapter 4) contains the results from the survey concerning questions that measure both dimensions. In addition, the question addressing European parties' general opinion on European integration is included as well. From this, it can be said that the Bachelor thesis is based on a descriptive study using the cleavage theory (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) (cf. Marks et al., 2002) in order to explain how European parties developed into party families and how these ideological traditions are reflected in the European Parliament's party groups.

2. Theoretical framework

As outlined above, the research aim of this Bachelor thesis is to explain European parties' stances on European integration on the basis of their ideological traditions. This chapter starts with a definition of European integration thereby explaining the topicality of Euroscepticism. Following this, is a section elaborating on the cleavage theory explaining how parties' ideological tradition developed. The last part outlines how party families serve as the means for elaborating variations in parties' position on European integration.

2.1 European integration and Euroscepticism

The following abstract deals with the concept of European integration as it is defined and used in this Bachelor thesis on the basis of two studies by Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002). The authors of both articles identify political and economic integration as the two dimensions which are part of their definition of European integration. The conceptualization of European integration in this thesis follows this example because parties' stances on European integration are measured on a political and an economic dimension. The parties' stances on the two dimensions are revealed by an iterative expert survey and hence are used in order to present an overall position of parties' position on European integration.

There exist many studies concerning European integration and more over, most of them discuss the process of European integration in order to show how the European Union works

with all its institutions and treaties and party families; in short how it functions. This thesis approaches European integration from the angle of parties because they are considered to be important in shaping the process as well. Ray highlights the importance of parties as he considers them to be “[...] important actors in the process of European integration” (1999, p. 283). Similar to Ray (1999), Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002) go one step further by explaining that although the drivers of European integration are political parties, the explanation of their positions are provided in their membership¹ in a party family. Opposed to this approach is the one chosen by Hooghe et al. (2002) who based their analysis of parties’ position on European integration on a left-right policy scale. In order to do so they used a data base containing results from conducted expert survey results. The “Chapel Hill Expert Survey Series” is a database containing surveys from 1999 until 2010 on European parties’ position on policy issues and also European integration². However, in contrast to the iterative expert survey method applied in the context of this thesis, Hooghe et al. (2002) were mainly interested in parties’ stances on the left-right political spectrum.

The policy areas that were coded by the experts in the iterative expert survey can be used to follow the approach by Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002), who identified economic integration and political integration to constitute European integration. The authors in both studies argue that the two dimensions present how political parties stand on the issue of European integration. They present the argument that parties developed from tensions within the cleavage structure, which were marked by groups of opposing positions. The cleavage theory was originally developed by Lipset and Rokkan in 1967. The development of parties from cleavages is dealt with in detail in a later abstract (cf. Chapter 2.2).

Along the literature on European integration, there exists scholarly work on the issue of Euroscepticism. In the context of European integration it is important to explain this kind of opposition of parties towards the EU. This is because the European Parliament’s election in 2014 showed that Eurosceptic parties like the Front National in France, the (Alternative für Deutschland) AfD in Germany or the (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) FPÖ in Austria won a large share of votes (European Parliament, 2014). Taggart defines Euroscepticism in general as “[...] the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (1998, p. 366). In this Bachelor thesis a more specific understanding of Euroscepticism is provided on the basis of measuring European integration on an economic and political dimension. Chapter 2.3 contains a detailed description of party families that are Eurosceptic and the reasons why scholars define them as such.

In the next two sections, the basis for the main argument of the Bachelor thesis is presented, namely that ideological traditions of parties are reflected in party families, which is due to the cleavage structure of Western European party systems.

¹ Throughout the thesis, the term ‘membership’ points to the fact that parties can be assigned to the respective family. It shall not imply that parties are official members of a party family.

² 2 Data on party positions and expert survey results are available here:
http://www.unc.edu/~gwmrks/data_pp.php

2. 2 The impact of cleavages on the development of party families

Cleavages in Western Europe

This thesis focuses on the cleavage theory as developed by Lipset and Rokkan in 1967 and used by several authors (Marks et al., 2000; Marks et al., 2002, Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2006, Bartolini & Mair 2007) in the ongoing years. The cleavage theory serves as the theoretical backdrop of this Bachelor thesis because it can be used to explain how parties developed and what impact historical and political circumstances had on them and therefore also on political systems in Western Europe. In addition, it is argued that parties' position on European integration can be explained by their membership in a party family. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how and why parties' ideological traditions developed from societal and political cleavages.

Cleavages developed on the basis of sociopolitical divisions that resulted from tensions within societies (Marks et al., 2002) in Western Europe. Bartolini & Mair explain that conflicts between groups were an important factor in the democratic "institutionalization process" of European countries (2007, p. 12). It can therefore be argued that through tensions and discourse within society, the development of political culture within Europe developed. According to Lipset and Rokkan these tensions were the results of efforts of modern state-building leading back to the beginning of the 19th century (Hague & Harrop, 2007, p. 240). Different conditions within society therefore lead to the development of different cleavages and hence, parties. This was not only the case in the past but the development of new cleavages occurs nowadays, too. However, Gallagher et al. (2006) explain that according to Lipset and Rokkan, for cleavages to develop there needs to be more than only conflictual situations within society. Firstly, different groups of people need to differ in feature such as "[...] occupation, state, religion or ethnicity" (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 264). Secondly, people need to be aware of their distinct features that separate them from others. This consciousness enables the group to develop a political basis from which finally a political party develops (Gallagher et al., 2006, pp. 264-265). The development into a political party is also the last feature that constitutes a cleavage as Gallagher et al. (2006) point out. This means that people in each cleavage organize themselves in order to communicate their interests (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 265). Alternatives to parties can also be trade unions or churches (2006, p. 265).

These three features lead Lipset and Rokkan to propose four major cleavages, which are the *center-periphery* cleavage, the *church-state* cleavage, the *rural-urban* cleavage and the *class* cleavage (Gallagher et al., 2006, pp. 265-269). These dimensions are embodied in the party families which are elaborated more in another section.

The *center-periphery* cleavage is marked by conflicts during the nation-building of states in Europe in which the *center* refers to that group which was in favor of equalizing parts of the state such as the market or the legal system (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 265). This contrasts to stances taken by people demanding less centralization of political power, in order to guarantee their autonomy in the periphery (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 266). The second cleavage divides on the church-side further into Catholic and Protestant societies. This is an important

difference, as each group reveals a different opinion towards the function of the state. Protestants are found to be “agents of the state” by Lipset and Rokkan (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 266), whereas Catholics were more critical of the state and as such demanded prerogatives in some policy areas (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 266). The historical circumstances affecting the third cleavage can be explained location-wise and in the context of the circumstances that impacted workers’ lives during the industrialization in the 19th century (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 267). This cleavage constitutes of the conflict between the demands of people working in the city and those working as farmers. The last cleavage can as well be considered a typical feature of the industrial phase in Europe. Conflicts in this cleavage involved owners of the factories and workers to the extent that the latter “[...] sought to improve their conditions of work and enhance their life chances” (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 268) in the context of their working environment in factories.

Although the cleavage theory encapsulates the idea that societies in Europe and the party system underwent similar developments there are of course country-specific differences (Gallagher et al., 2006). These differences are useful in the data analysis part (chapter 4) in order to explain differences between parties that belong to the same party family.

As such, this section showed that societal divisions lead to cleavages which formed the historical development of political parties’ ideologies in Western European party systems. According to Lipset and Rokkan Western European party systems were relatively stable from 1920-1960 (Gallagher et al., 2006, pp. 272-273) meaning that the cleavage structures that were developed remained in the four types described earlier. This was also confirmed by Bartolini et al. (2007, p.100) who claim that during that period “cleavage volatility” was low (2007, p.100). In the 1970s however this changed as according to Inglehart & Flanagan postwar societies underwent a “value-change” (1987, p. 1295) favoring environmental, women’s issues and the like with the will of maintaining their material welfare (Inglehart et al., 1987, p. 1297). This development away from materialist issues marks the cornerstone of the “new politics cleavage” with the development of new parties such as the Green parties (Inglehart et al., 1987).

The next section deals with the development of party families in order to later explain party families’ stances on European integration on the basis of the article by Marks et al. (2002).

Party families

In this section we show that the cleavage theory can be operationalized in terms of the party family concept as it embodies the cleavage dimension explained above.

As the cleavage theory implies, Western European party systems were shaped by conflicts between different groups of people creating cleavages. These developments allow to group parties across Europe into party families because they share cross-national ideologies developed in cleavages (cf. Gallagher et al., 2006, ch.8; Marks et al., 2000, Marks et al., 2002). Therefore, it can be assumed that parties can be grouped into party families although “[...] no two parties are quite the same [...]” (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 230). According to Mair and Mudde (1998) (in Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 230) there are three features that

constitute a party family. The “*genetic approach*” refers to cases in which parties’ membership in a party family can be explained by parties sharing similar interest and goals. The second feature refers to “*behavior*” of parties which seek to establish “*transnational federations*” (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 230). Such is the case in European Parliament. The different political groups in the EP resemble the idea of party families best and this is the reason why the structure in the European Parliament was chosen as the basis for the analysis of party families. On the basis of these three criteria, party families can be classified, which Gallagher et al. present in a list of nine party families (2006, pp. 231-254).

The nine party families presented by Gallagher et al. (2006) are comparable to the ten party families described by Marks et al. (2002) (cf. Table 2), except in three cases. Firstly, in contrast to Gallagher et al. (2006), Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002) do not consider The Christian democratic party family to be only one party family. They explain that Catholic parties constitute the Christian Democratic party family whereas protestant parties form a spate party family. Gallagher et al. do point out that within the Christian Democratic party family there exists “[...] a number of distinct strands” (2007, p. 241), however they do not consider the different party groups to constitute separate party families. Still, the difference between the Christian democratic party family and the Protestant party family is that in the former case, Catholic parties are rather in favor of European integration whereas in the latter case, Protestant parties are more skeptical of European integration (Marks et al. 2000, p. 452; Marks et al. 2002, p. 589). An explanation for the two distinct strands within the Christian Democratic party family is the interaction between different cleavages in Scandinavia (Marks et al., 2000, p. 452). Gallagher et al. have also pointed out that the interaction of cleavages can happen and that this has an impact on parties and their development (2006, pp. 271-272). According to Marks et al. , the protestant parties in Scandinavia are influenced by the urban-rural, the centre-periphery and the religious cleavage³ (2000, p. 452).

The second case in which there is a difference between the categorization of party families as described by Marks et al. (2002) and Gallagher et al. (2006) concerns the “New left” political party family described only by the latter authors. This party family represents positions from the Green party family as well as from the Communist party family. Thus, the New left party family reflects positions concerning the protection of the environment and opposes the idea of a free market economy (Gallagher et al., 2006, pp. 238-239).

Lastly, in contrast to Gallagher et al. (2006), Marks et al. (2002) include the Regionalist party family in their analysis as well. Gallagher et al. (2006) do not explicitly include them in their party family list because regional parties would only be apparent in a minor amount of countries in Europe. In addition, they say that these parties would vary immensely in their other policy position (2006, p. 254). Nevertheless, all authors, including Mark et al. (2002) agree that these parties represent the ethnic minority of a country (Gallagher, 2006; Marks et al., 2002).

³ Throughout this thesis, the religious cleavage is on the basis of the article by marks et al. (2002) referred to as the church/state cleavage.

The differences in the party family list of Gallagher et al. (2006), Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002) are only of minor importance and therefore have no impact on this thesis. In addition, the similarities clearly predominate the dissimilarities. In addition, all authors' descriptions of party families reflect the cleavages described above. Table 2 taken from Marks et al. (2002) serves as an overview of how cleavages are linked to party families. Table 1 provides the ten party families together with the corresponding cleavages as well as the party groups in the European Parliament based on this year's election.

Table 1: Overview of party families and the corresponding party groups in the European Parliament

Cleavage	Party family	Party group in the EP	Party group ideology
Church/state cleavage	Christian democratic	EPP	Center right
Church/state cleavage	Protestant		
Class	Conservative	ECR	Center right, anti-federal
Class	Social democratic	S&D	Center left
Urban/rural	Liberal	ALDE	Liberal centrist
New Politics	Green	Greens/EFA	Environmentalists, regionalist
Center/periphery	Regionalist		
Center/periphery	Agrarian	GUE/NGL Others EFDD	Left wing Eurosceptic
Class cleavage	Extreme left/ Communist		
New Politics	Extreme right		

Source: based on Staab (2011, p. 67)

The first two columns in Table 2 depict the party families and the respective cleavages used throughout the thesis. Next to the party family column is the one including the party groups as found in the European Parliament of 2014. The last column contains information about the party ideology of the respective party group in the European Parliament. The corresponding European Parliament' party groups' ideologies are based on the analysis of Andreas Staab (2011).

The European Peoples' Party (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) form the two largest groups in the European Parliament. The former has a center right party ideology. The EPP can be linked to the Christian democratic and the Protestant party family. The S&D party group encapsulates a center left ideology and can be linked to the Social democratic party family. The Greens-European Free Alliance party group (Greens/EFA) have a party ideology that is environmentalist and regionalist and can therefore

be linked to the Green and Regionalist party family. The liberal centrist party group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) corresponds to the Liberal party family as described by Marks et al (2000) and Marks et al. (2002).

The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group has a center- right and anti-federal ideology of which the latter characteristic clearly responds to the Conservative party family. As depicted by Marks et al. (2002) in Table 2, the Conservative party family is opposed of a 'supranational authority'. The anti-federalist ideology of the ECR corresponds to this stance. Similar Eurosceptic views are reflected in party groups such as the European United Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)⁴ party group, the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) party group. In addition, parties having a similar party stance but do not officially belong to a party group are labeled 'Others'. The GUE/NGL has a rather left wing ideology that corresponds to the Agrarian party family (Gallagher et al., 2006), which means that both, the group as well as the party family are i.e. in favor of a more regulated economy (GUE/NGL, 2014; Marks et al. 2002). However, Gallagher et al. also point out that nowadays the Agrarian party family has slightly moved to the right (2006, p. 251). This ambivalent stance of the Agrarian party family is also explained by Batory & Sitter (2004) who claim that Agrarian parties tend to move to the right and even to the Eurosceptic side of the debate if they see their interest threatened by the European integration process.

In contrast to the GUE/NG, the EFDD is clearly Eurosceptic. The theory behind Euroscepticism is explained in the next chapter. The EFDD can therefore be linked to the Extreme-right party family. With regard to parties that are not attached to any party group and are therefore grouped in the 'Others' party group, it can be expected that these parties are rather Eurosceptic as well. This is because parties like the DUP (Democratic Unionist) from Northern Ireland or the NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland) from Germany are not attached to any party group in the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2014). The fact that these parties do not belong to any official party group does not decrease the effects of their election. For example, the nationalistic extreme-right National democratic party (NPD) from Germany won one seat in the latest European Parliament's election (European Parliament, 2014). Its election is the result of a democratic vote; nevertheless it is striking that this party's ideology is now represented in a Parliament representing European values like equality, freedom and democracy.

Having described the party families with the corresponding party groups in the European Parliament, the following chapter deals with the possible reasons for European parties' position on European integration.

⁴ If the GUE/NGL is really Eurosceptic is discussable. However, the party group does also include a clearly Eurosceptic party which is the European United for Democracy (EUD). The fact that the party groups in the EP consist of many parties is almost always the case. This makes a clear categorization difficult. Nevertheless, it is possible to explain an ideological tendency for the each party group.

2.3 Explaining variations in parties' opinion on European integration

Table 2 developed by Marks et al (2002) provides an overview of nine party families, their cleavage location, their position on the two dimensions that constitute European integration and their overall position on European integration, especially with regard to the issue of Euroscepticism.

Table 2: Cleavage location and Position on European Integration (Marks et al., 2002)

Party Family	Cleavage Location: Programmatic Commitments	Position on European Economic Integration	Position on European Political Integration	Overall Position
Extreme left/ Communist	<i>Class cleavage</i> : extreme left position on state regulation of markets, welfare, social justice, democratic decision making. In some countries, these parties take an extreme stand on the <i>new politics</i> cleavage.	strongly opposed: integration increases economic inequality and diminishes the capacity of national governments to regulate markets.	moderately opposed: supranational institutions are undemocratic and controlled by corporate interests.	<i>strongly opposed</i>
Green	<i>New politics cleavage</i> : environmental protection, life style choice, women's and minority rights.	moderately opposed: integration increases economic growth at the expense of human concerns, including the environment.	mixed: supranational institutions may enforce environmental/social standards, but democratic participation is weakened.	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Social democratic	<i>Class cleavage</i> : moderate left position on state regulation of markets, welfare, economic equality.	moderately in favor: integration increases economic growth, but welfare and other government regulation is constrained by regime competition.	strongly in favor: supranational institutions enhance capacity for European-wide regulation, though they are insufficiently democratic.	<i>moderately to strongly in favor</i>
Liberal	<i>Urban/rural cleavage</i> (UK, Germany); <i>church/state cleavage</i> (Low Countries, France, Italy, Spain): opposition to ascription, clericalism, and aristocracy, and support for economic and political freedoms.	strongly in favor: market competition and economic freedoms are enhanced.	strongly in favor: Supranationalism moderates nationalism; political freedom from borders increased; however, democracy is weakened.	<i>strongly in favor</i>
Agrarian	<i>Center/periphery cleavage</i> (Scandinavia, Switzerland): defense of farmers and the periphery.	moderately opposed: economic integration includes some agricultural subsidies, but is driven mainly by industrial and commercial interests.	moderately opposed: supranational institutions may aid farmers and weaker regions but they weaken local control	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Christian democratic	<i>Church/state cleavage</i> : support for social market economy, supranational Catholic church, conservative values.	strongly in favor: integration increases economic growth and limits division within Europe.	strongly in favor: supranational institutions provide a capacity for positive regulation while constraining nationalism.	<i>strongly in favor</i>
Protestant	<i>Church/state cleavage</i> (Scandinavia, Switzerland, Netherlands): fundamentalist Lutheran opposition to liberalism, permissiveness, and central state elites.	moderately in favor: integration weakens the role of the state in the economy.	strongly opposed: integration shifts authority further away from national control to a more alien cultural milieu.	<i>moderately opposed</i>
Conservative	<i>Class cleavage</i> : support for free markets, minimal state intervention, and defense of national community.	strongly in favor: integration extends free markets and pressures competing national governments to reduce market regulation.	strongly opposed: supranational authority undermines national sovereignty, national culture, and democracy.	<i>moderately in favor</i>
Extreme right	<i>New politics cleavage</i> : defense of the nation, national culture, and national sovereignty.	moderately opposed: integration produces losers and undermines national economic control.	strongly opposed: supranational authority undermines national sovereignty	<i>strongly opposed</i>
Regionalist	<i>Center-periphery cleavage</i> : defense of the ethno-territorial minority against the center and demand for political autonomy.	strongly in favor: integration provides a economic framework favorable for regional political autonomy.	moderately in favor: supranational authority weakens national control and creates a plural Europe	<i>moderately to strongly in favor</i>

Source: Marks et al., (2002, p. 587)

As explained above, the Green party family developed from the ‘new politics cleavage’ and incorporates issues in their programs on i.e. women’s rights and environmental issues that are typically postmaterialist (Inglehart et al., 1987). On the extreme end next to Green party family are the Extreme-left/Communist parties. Their position on the top of the table is in line with a left-right spectrum which is expressed in the party families’ position in the left column of the table (see Table 2). However, Marks et al (2002) emphasize that party family is still more accurate in explaining parties and that is, party families’ position on European integration rather than the left-right spectrum (Marks et al. 2002, p. 592).

The Extreme-left/Communist party family has an extreme position on the issues of the Green party family (Marks et al., 2002). This is also in line with the analysis by Gallagher et al. who state that the Communist party family is more “[...] critical about the benefits of European integration” (2006, p. 237). This may be because Communist parties are hold to be more opposed to a free market economy (Gallagher, 2006) which however is encapsulated in the idea of the European Single market.

The opposite of both of these party families, the Green and the Extreme-left/Communist, is the Extreme-right party family at the end of the table. The Extreme-right party family stands for the opposite of the issues adhered to by the left party families, because it strongly puts an emphasis on the nation state and especially on the sovereignty of the nation. This is in line with Vasilopoulou’s findings, who explains that extreme-right parties put an emphasis on “national self-determination” thereby rejecting the typical multilateral decision-making structure that is valid for the EU (2009, p.10). This description of extreme-right parties is i.e. reflected in the ideology of the German NPD as explained earlier.

De Vries and Edwards (2009) present in addition that Euroscepticism is apparent in both, extreme-right and extreme-left parties. Whereas the former can be considered to be Eurosceptic because of nationalistic reasons the latter alarms that European integration would lead to more uncertainty in terms of the economy (De Vries et al., 2009, p. 6). It can be assumed that the analysis will reveal that both cases are true, namely that extreme-right and extreme-left party families are Eurosceptic. This hypothesis is however addressed in chapter 2.4.

The fact that extreme positions on European integration are more apparent in the Extreme-left and Extreme-right party families than in i.e. mainstream parties has been identified by several authors (Conti & Memoli, 2012; De Vries et al. 2009; Gallagher et al. 2007; Hooghe et al., 2002). This is also depicted in Table 2 as the Social democratic, Liberal, Christian democratic and Conservative party family are respectively either ‘moderately to strongly in favor’, ‘strongly in favor’ or ‘moderately in favor’. Hooghe et al. do also refer to these party families as mainstream party families because they are in the center of the left-right political spectrum (2002, p. 985). However, Conti et al. also assign the Regionalist party family to the mainstream party families (2012, p. 107).

Having described the party families of the ‘new politics cleavage’, the analysis further includes the other seven party families. In the ‘class cleavage’ there is the Social democratic party family and the conservative party family. Both, again representing political positions from opposite ends of the left-right spectrum. Marks et al. (2002) explain that the Social democratic party family is in favor of regulating the economic market whereas the conservative party family is not. An explanation for the typical Social democrats position on economic topics is that in the 19th century they not only represented working class citizens, but their ideology concerning the economy was rather Marxist (Gallagher, 2006, p. 233). These positions changed throughout the years, although this party family can still be considered to represent the working or middle class of today’s society since Social democrats are typically promote the welfare state (Gallagher, 2006).

This rejection of the Conservative family on state regulation can also be found in the Christian democratic party family representing another cleavage, namely the church/state cleavage (Marks et al., 2002). Still, catholic parties within the ‘church/state cleavage’ are more in favor of Supranationalism than protestant parties which oppose that kind of governmental system. In the context of European integration this means they oppose the structure of the political system of the EU. This is because Supranationalism means that powers from a lower level of governance are assigned to higher levels of governance, such as the EU (Jensen, 2010, p. 75). One could have the impression, that the Conservative party family as well as the Christian democratic party family have a lot in common. Both adhere to policy stances that are the opposite of Social democratic parties therefore “[...] represent the major alternative to the appeal of social democracy” (Gallagher et al., p. 245). In fact, Gallagher et al. point out that in countries “[w]here secular conservatism is strong, Christian democracy tends to be weak or nonexistent” (2006, p. 245) and vice versa.

The sixth cleavage is the ‘center-periphery cleavage’ and includes the Agrarian and the Regionalist party family. The former family opposes any kind of central authority (Marks et al., 2000, p. 449) whereas the latter does not object to this to the extent agrarian parties do. Nevertheless, it can be said that both party families share the fact that they can both be considered “special-interest parties” (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 251). Although Gallagher et al. use this description only in the context of the Agrarian party family, which developed because it represented the interest of the agricultural sector (2006, p. 251), this label can also be used for the Regional party family. Similar to the Agrarian party family, the Regional party family does also only represent parts of society like the Flemish or Walloon citizens in Belgium (2006, p. 254).

The last party family described here is the Liberal party family and belongs among others, namely the Social democratic, the Christian democratic and the Conservative family to the most noteworthy ones because of the following reasons. All four of these party families are not homogeneous groups of parties adhering to the same kinds of positions on European integration (Marks et al., 2002). There is variation on European integration within each of these four party families and therefore this is important to take into account in the data analysis, which might reveal this variation within party families.

In addition, except for the Liberal party family, the rest of the party families developed from only one cleavage. In case of the Social democratic party family and the conservative the respective cleavage is ‘class’. In case of the Christian democratic party family it is the ‘church/state cleavage’. The Liberal party family on the other hand is more complex. According to Marks et al. (2002) the Liberal party family developed from the ‘urban/rural cleavage’, the ‘state/church cleavage’ and the ‘centre/periphery cleavage’. As only the first two of the cleavages are depicted in the table (see Table 2), the emphasis is put on them.

The aim of this abstract is to show that Western European party systems developed out of tensions within society that divided it into groups which resulted in ‘cleavages’ that shaped those groups and later also parties. For example, the class cleavage was marked by tensions between workers and owners during the 19th century. Hence, the two party families that developed were the conservative party family and the Social democratic family, each encapsulating both opinions in this worker-owner conflict (Marks et al., 2000, p. 442).

With regard to analyzing the association between *party family* and *position on European integration*, this example shows that party families developed stances on political issues through their “Weltanschauungen” according to the cleavage they developed from (Marks et al., 2002, p. 586). This does however not mean that political parties do not change their positions (Marks et al., 2002, p. 586) as it has been shown by the example of the new politics cleavage.

2.4 Hypotheses on party families’ positions on European integration

The following part outlines the hypotheses which are based on the theoretical framework outlined in the previous sections. Table 2 taken from Marks et al. (2002) included in this study was not only used to depict the party families and political cleavages that form the basis of this study. The categories used by Marks et al. (2002) do also resemble the scale that was applied in the iterative expert survey. In both cases, they are used to measure the degree of parties’ respectively party families’ opposition and agreement on European integration. The only difference is that Marks et al. (2002) simply tried to depict the different positions on European integration in categories not based on empirical measurement whereas the scale by Gemenis et al. (2014b) was applied in the context of an iterative expert survey to measure parties’ positions on political topics. In order to clarify the following hypotheses, a table was constructed that shows the resemblance of the two methods (see Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison of scales as applied by Marks et al. (2002) and in the expert survey by Gemenis et al. (2014b)

Scale as applied by Marks et al. (2002) concerning party families’ position on European integration	Scale as applied in the iterative expert survey (Gemenis et al., 2014b) to estimate parties’ position
- Strongly in favor	- Completely agree
- Moderately in favor	- Agree
- Moderately to strongly in favor	- Neither agree, nor disagree
- Moderately opposed	- Disagree
- Strongly opposed	- Completely disagree

Source: Gemenis et al. (2014b, p. 7) and Marks et al. (2002, p. 587)

The following hypotheses are based on the approach of Marks et al. (2002) and encapsulate what the data analysis is going to reveal in terms of party families' position on European integration.

H1: *Communist/Extreme-left party families are “strongly opposed” of European integration.*

H2: *The Extreme-right party family is “strongly opposed” of European integration.*

By the same token, party families' position pointing towards their consent of European integration can be expected as well:

H3: *The Liberal party family is “strongly in favor” to European Integration.*

The same is expected for the Christian democratic party family namely:

H4: *The Christian democratic party family is “strongly in favor” to European Integration.*

In addition, party families that form an ambivalent position on European integration are encapsulated in the following hypotheses:

H5: *The Green party family is “moderately opposed” of European integration.*

H6: *The Agrarian party family is “moderately opposed” of European integration.*

H7: *The Protestant party family is “moderately opposed” of European integration.*

The next party family is an exception to the former party families addressed in the hypotheses:

H8: *The Conservative party family is “moderately in favor” of European integration.*

Party families, which have an ambivalent opinion on European integration are captured by the following hypotheses:

H9: *The Social democratic party family is “moderately to strongly in favor” of European integration. And so is the following party family:*

H10: *The Regionalist party family is “moderately to strongly in favor” of European integration.*

⁵ 'No opinion' is the sixth option provided in the scale in the iterative expert survey meaning 'missing value' and is therefore important in the chapter that includes the data analysis. In this chapter it will be disregarded because on the position 'no opinion' it is not possible to infer a parties' position on European integration. Hence, no hypothesis can be drawn.

In the forth chapter, the hypotheses will be empirically tested and explained on the basis of the theoretical framework (chapter 2).

3. Methodology

The chapter outlines at first which research design was chosen in order to answer the research question. This is followed by a description of the iterative expert survey technique that was used to acquire the data on parties' position on different policy areas. Other methods are also explained and evaluated by comparing them to the iterative expert survey method. In section 3.2, the data collection method is explained followed by the section containing information on the case selection and the sample. The last section (3.4.1) elaborates how European integration is operationalized.

3.1 Research Design

This study has a qualitative approach since the information used to estimate parties' positions were conducted on the basis of a survey. Furthermore, the units of analysis are *parties* from the EU member states which competed in the European Parliament's election in May 2014. This means that the study is also based on observations at one point in time rather than over a longer period.

As the goal of this study is to explain how parties' position on European integration can be measured, an iterative expert survey was used which is based on the "Delphi method" (Gemenis et al., 2014b, p.2). The survey was conducted for the project EUvox 2014 which is a voting advice application initiated for the European Parliament's election.

There are several methods that can be used to estimate parties' position on political issues. In general, the estimation of parties' positions are of special interests right before elections. In these cases, voting advice applications are provided for voters who are still unsure about their vote. This was also the goal of the EUvox 2014 voting advice application initiated for the European Parliament's election in May 2014. In the context of this thesis, the data from the survey is used to aggregate parties' position on European integration into party families that adhere to the party groups in the European Parliament.

3.2 Methods of measuring parties' position on European integration

3.2.1 Party manifestos

There are a number of sources to use in order to estimate parties' positions on political issues. One of the methods to estimate party positions is based on parties' manifestos. This is the case in the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP)⁶ whose experts coded party manifestos only. However, Marks, Hooghe, Steenbergen & Bakker (2007) point out that although both, expert survey data as well as manifesto data reveal weaknesses, the weaknesses in the latter case are more dominant than those in the former case. This is because in general, party manifestos can be considered as documents which do

⁶ Data on party positions from different countries are available here: <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>

not provide sufficient information on the party's position nor on the different positions that may exist within the party (Marks et al., 2007, p. 27). In addition, Marks et al. (2007) point out that the content of manifestos varies depending on events such as forthcoming elections. This has especially an impact on what parties present as their position in manifestos especially concerning "time-sensitive issues" like European integration (Marks et al., 2007, p. 27). This means that parties could take a slightly different stance on European integration because they think they have to adjust their position in order to be elected. Nevertheless, this shall not imply that manifestos should be disregarded when analyzing party stances. Especially, because, as stated by Laver and Garry (2000) manifestos would help to be able to replicate measurement of party positions in other studies (in Marks et al., 2007, p. 27).

Another advantage of manifestos as explained by Marks et al. is that parties can be analyzed over a long period of time because manifestos are published continually (2007, p. 27). Nevertheless, Marks et al. (2007) as well as Gemenis & van Ham (2014c) and (Gemenis, 2014a) point out that expert surveys are most suitable for estimating parties' positions. As the following paragraph shows, there are different ways of conducting expert surveys. Of special interest are however the strengths and weaknesses of the iterative expert survey because this methodology was used to generate data for this thesis.

3.2.2 A comparison between the iterative expert survey and the Kieskompas method

The iterative expert survey was conducted in April 2014 and is a unique method to estimate parties' position in general. In addition, it combines aspects that are specifically suitable in the context of measuring European integration (Marks et al., 2007, p. 24). Marks et al. (2007) give three reasons of why expert surveys provide in general "most valid data" (2007, 34). Firstly, according to Steenbergen and Marks (2006), expert surveys provide "direct quantification" of their party position estimates (in Marks et al., 2007, p. 26). This is also the case in the iterative expert survey used in this thesis. Experts were asked to indicate on a six point scale in how far they agree or disagree with the respective policy area in question ranging from "completely agree" (1), "agree" (2), "neither agree nor disagree" (3) to "disagree" (4), "completely disagree" (5) or "no opinion" (6) (Gemenis et al., 2014b, p.7).

Secondly, the iterative expert survey applies to the validity criterion described by Marks et al. (2007, p. 26) in that experts were asked to use a variety of documents to help estimating parties' positions on a certain policy area. Lastly, the "flexibility" criterion (Marks et al., 2007, p. 26) is also given since there was a diverse groups of experts and the experts in the iterative expert survey did not only rely on party manifestos but also on other sources that could possibly contain the information on the policy area in question (Gemenis et al., 2014b). Unlike the approach applied by Marks et al. (2007) to measure parties' stances on European integration, the measuring method applied in this thesis is different. This is because the intention of the iterative expert survey was not to code parties on their opinion on European integration only. Instead, out of the twenty-eight "odd political issues (questions)" (Gemenis et al., 2014b, p. 2), five were selected because they address the European economic

integration dimension, the European political integration and parties' general opinion on European integration. According to Marks et al., (2000) and (Marks et al., 2002) the two dimensions constitute European integration.

As the name of the survey method applied in this thesis already implies, it is iterative which is not a unique feature as such but in comparison to other methods that use repetitions, it reveals several advantages. The "Kieskompas method" (Gemenis et al., 2014c) is based on a mix between "[...] party self-placement and party placement by a small team of experts" (p. 4). If need be, iteration helps to ask either the experts or parties themselves to repeat their judgments. The combination of experts and parties seems to balance objective and subjective judgments of parties' positions on policy areas. However, Gemenis et al. point out that some parties are not willing to answer survey questions (2014c, p. 4). This makes the method not reliable in terms of providing consistent results for the estimation of parties.

Another issue that applies to both, the Kieskompas method as well as the iterative expert survey is that researchers encounter problems regarding "inter-coder disagreements" (Gemenis et al., 2014c, p. 5). Gemenis (2014a) claims that normally in political science, the different judgments of experts could be aggregated in order to derive a general judgment. However, in the case of expert surveys, aggregation does "cancel out errors" (Gemenis, 2014a, p. 9). This was also neglected by Gemenis et al. (2014c). In order to solve this problem when facing multiple expert judgments, "structured behavioral aggregation" (Van ham p. 5; (Gemenis, 2014a, p. 10) can be used. This approach is used in the Delphi method (Gemenis et al., 2014c) which is also used in the iterative expert survey of the EUvox 2014 project.

Moderators were each in charge of up to five coders in order to lead the coding process and give feedback on each coder's answer (Gemenis, 2014a). Each expert coder was asked to justify his or her estimation of a party's position by providing the source in the coding platform called *PreferenceMatcher*. In addition, they had to indicate on a three point scale their level of confidence with regard to the coding of the question (Gemenis et al, 2014b). The iteration of coding rounds provides experts with the opportunity to rethink their judgments. Because anonymity is provided among the coders and between the coder and the moderator, the results are valid. The question remains if it is advisable to provide experts with the opportunity to revise their initial answer. Gemenis (2014a) provides a psychological point of view. The "theory of errors" (Gemenis, 2014a, p. 12) says according to Parenté and Anderson-Parenté (1987) that knowledgeable panelists will stick to their original estimates, whereas those with little information will revise their estimates towards the group average (in Gemenis, 2014a, p. 12). Hence, this theory highlights that revision can lead to more precise results in the coding process.

Overall, the research design of the iterative expert survey serves as the means of exploring parties' position on European integration and thus can be used to answer the research question. In addition, the iterative expert survey serves the topicality of the issue of European integration as it was conducted right before the European Parliament's elections.

3.3 Case selection and sampling

The sample consists of 235 parties from the 28 EU member states that competed in the European Parliament's election in May 2014. The reason to choose this sample is based on the interest to test if European parties can be assigned to party families. In addition, the sample consists of all members of the EU because the respective national parties participated on the European Parliament's election. This is an important fact because the aggregation of the different parties into party families is based on the parties' membership in the party groups of the European Parliament.

As the cleavage theory used by Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002) is based on Western European party systems (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967 in Marks et al., 2002, p. 585) it was reasonable to choose this kind of sample. However, the results of this study are only scientifically relevant in the context of the EU member states, in particular Western European party systems. Thus external validity to other political systems outside Europe may not be the case, since the cleavages and therefore party families developed due to societal tensions identified in European societies and not somewhere else. Gallagher et al. (2007) underline i.e. that post communist countries lack the institutionalization process that is part of the cleavage theory. Although some former communist countries are part of this thesis the differences is not expected to impact the research of the Bachelor thesis.

The next table (Table 4) summarizes what has been explained so far namely the following. There are ten hypotheses to be tested, each addressing one party family. It is assumed that each party families' position corresponds to the positions of the respective party groups in the European Parliament. The party groups that can be linked to the respective party family were listed in chapter 2.3 in Table 1. The level of agreement or disagreement on each dimension was given by Marks et al. (2002). They resemble the scale used in the iterative expert survey (Table 3) and are thus used in Table 4 as well.

In Table 4, the overall support for European integration is based on the categorization of Marks et al. (2002) which depends on the combination of different levels of support and opposition on each of the two dimensions. For example, in case of the first hypothesis, the Communist/Extreme-left party family's overall support for European integration is categorized as 'strongly opposed'. This is because the respective level of support in each of the two dimensions is rather negative in that the party family is 'strongly opposed' and 'moderately opposed' to European economic and European political integration respectively.

In chapter 4.1.1, the application of table 4 is going to be used in order to interpret the hypotheses, which were explained in chapter 2.4. There we are going to see, if the level of support of Western European party families on European economic integration, European political integration and the general opinion on European integration resembles the results from the iterative expert survey. This can be done because the data from the iterative expert survey was aggregated into party groups from the European Parliament, which are comparable to Western European party families.

Table 4: Overview of hypotheses

Hypothesis	Economic dimension	Political dimension	Overall position on European integration
H1: Communist/Extreme-left party families is “strongly opposed” of European integration	Strongly opposed	Moderately opposed	Strongly opposed
H2: <i>The Extreme-right party family is “strongly opposed” to European integration.</i>	Moderately opposed	Strongly opposed	
H3: The Liberal party family is “strongly in favor” of European Integration	Strongly in favor	Strongly in favor	Strongly in favor
H4: The Christian democratic party family is “strongly in favor” of European Integration.	Strongly in favor	Strongly in favor	

Continued

H5: The Green party family is <u>“moderately opposed”</u> of European integration.	Moderately opposed	Mixed	Moderately opposed
H6: The Agrarian party family is <u>“moderately opposed”</u> of European integration.	Moderately opposed	Moderately opposed	
H7: The Protestant party family is <u>“moderately opposed”</u> of European integration.	Moderately in favor	Strongly opposed	
H8: The Conservative party family is <u>“moderately in favor”</u> of European integration.	Strongly in favor	Strongly opposed	Moderately in favor
H9: The Social democratic party family is <u>“moderately to strongly in favor”</u> of European integration	Moderately in favor	Strongly in favor	Moderately to strongly in favor
H10: The Regionalist party family is <u>“moderately to strongly in favor”</u> of European integration.	Strongly in favor	Moderately in favor	

Source: based on Marks et al. (2002, p.587)

3.4.1 Data collection method and operationalization

This section elaborates on the method used for the data collection and explains *what* is operationalized and *how*.

The iterative expert survey data was used in order to measure parties' stances on the two dimensions, European economic integration and European political integration as well as on parties' overall position on European integration. The results of the data are displayed in five box plot figures (cf. chapter 4). Member states' parties were aggregated into the corresponding party groups, which exist in the European Parliament. The distribution in each box plot shows, how party groups in the European Parliament are spread on the iterative expert scale. One needs to keep in mind that although parties have been aggregated into the respective party groups in the European Parliament, it does not mean that each party group represents these positions one to one. Still, so far, the thesis includes a number of arguments why this can be assumed (cf. chapter 2) and therefore the data analysis is conducted the way as follows.

Two questions from the iterative expert survey were chosen for each dimension because they constitute the European economic dimension and the European political dimension. In addition, one question was selected because it asks for parties' overall opinion on European integration.

The results of the data analysis enable the researcher to test each hypothesis and in the end the results provide an answer to the research question. The data analysis reveals what member states' parties' positions are on the economic dimension of European integration and on the political dimension of European integration. According to Marks et al. (2000) and Marks et al. (2002) both constitute European integration. In addition, the question addressing parties' general opinion on European integration provides data as well.

a) Operationalization of the dimension European economic integration

Out of the twenty-eight general questions in the iterative expert survey, two questions were chosen to capture the European economic dimension: (1) *[country] should never adopt the Euro* and (2) *To address financial crises, the EU should be able to borrow money just like states can.*

b) Operationalization of the dimension European political integration

The European political dimension is captured by the following questions: (3) *A single member state should be able to block a treaty change, even if all the other members states agree to it* and (5) *There should be a common EU foreign policy even if this limits the capacity of [country] to act independently.*

c) Operationalization of the general position on European integration

Lastly, question (28) asks for the general opinion of parties on European integration: (28) *European integration has gone too far.*

Every question was coded by the experts in the iterative expert survey on the basis of the six-point scale, whereas the sixth option is not relevant for the data. The scale ranges from completely agree (1), agree (2), neither agree, nor disagree (3) to disagree (4) to completely disagree (5).

4. Analysis

4.1 Results of data collection

Box plots

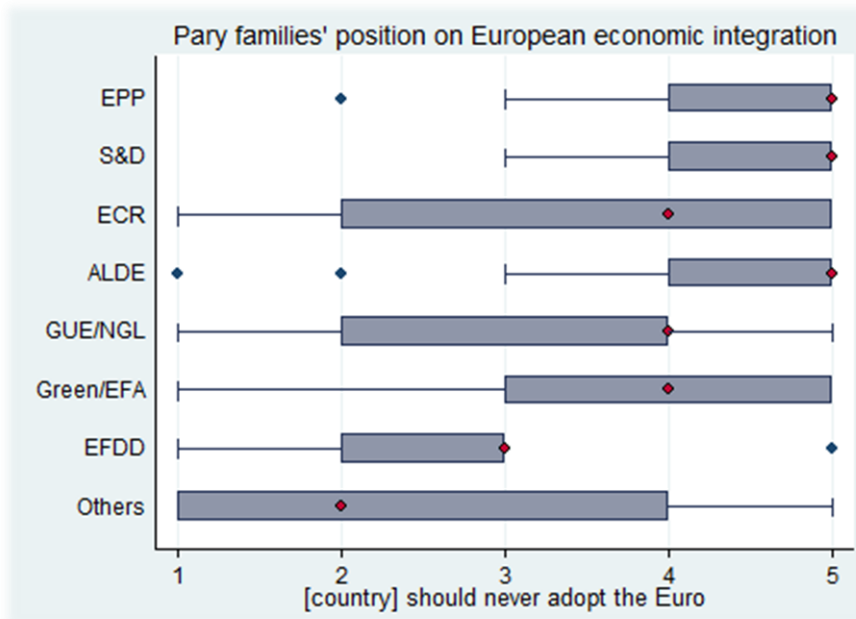
Each of the subsequent box plots is constructed the same way. The party groups are listed on the y-axis and the scale as applied in the iterative expert survey is included on the x-axis. The respective question from the iterative expert survey is in each figure included under the x-axis.

In general it is to say that box plots display the distribution of data in three quartiles. The median represents the middle of observations based on a rank-order (Babbie, 2010, p. 429). In all five figures, the median has a diamond shape. Ideally, if the data is symmetric, the median is in the middle of the box plot (Veaux, Velleman, & Bock, 2007, p. 81). The first quartile represents 25% of the data and is to the left of the median. The third quartile represents 75% of the data and is to the right of median. The width of the box plot is thereby defined by the “interquartile range” (IQR) which results from subtracting the third quartile (Q3) from the first quartile (1) (Cox, 2009, p. 479). The lines outside the box are called “whiskers” and represent the extreme values 1.5 IQRs away from the lower and the upper quartile (Veaux, Velleman, & Bock, 2007, p. 81). Lastly, the dots in the figures are ‘outliers’ from the data and represent extreme cases, which deserve special attention.

For the means of this bachelor thesis, it is satisfactory to see where the medians are located. Especially in the context of comparing groups, box plots are a good statistical advice, to describe and compare the data (Veaux et al., 2007) Therefore, it is important to see the median, in order to interpret the data results.

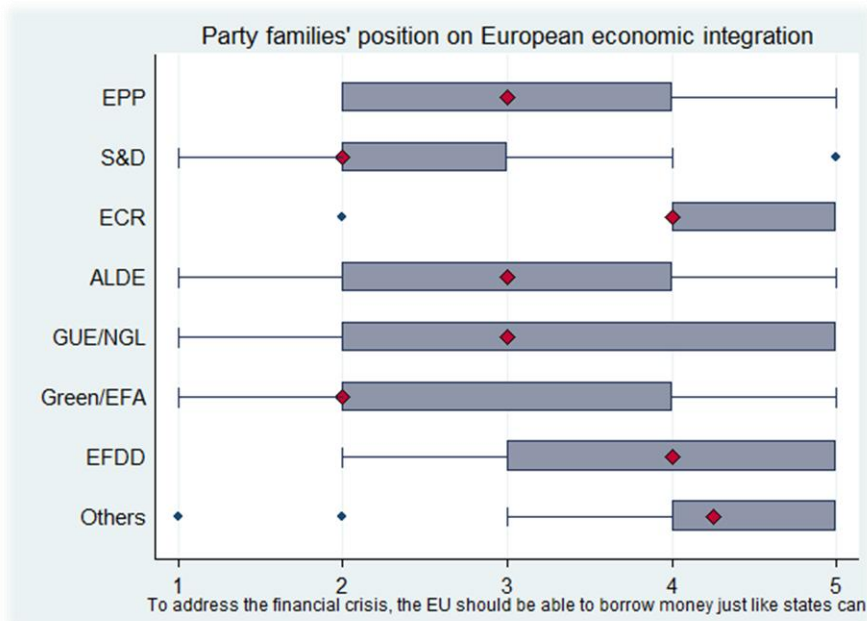
The analysis starts with the first two questions, question (1) and (2) of the European economic integration dimension. The results are captured by the following box plots (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1: Party families' position on question (1)



Source: based on own elaboration

Figure 2: Party families' position on question (2)



Source: based on own elaboration

With regard to Figure 1 and 2, one can see that the results of each party group are different for each question. Question (1) in figure 1 asks for something different than question (2) in figure 2. The latter question indicates that i.e. Eurobonds could be allowed in order to combat the financial crisis. The former question asks for a general opinion, namely if the currency of the Euro should have never been adopted.

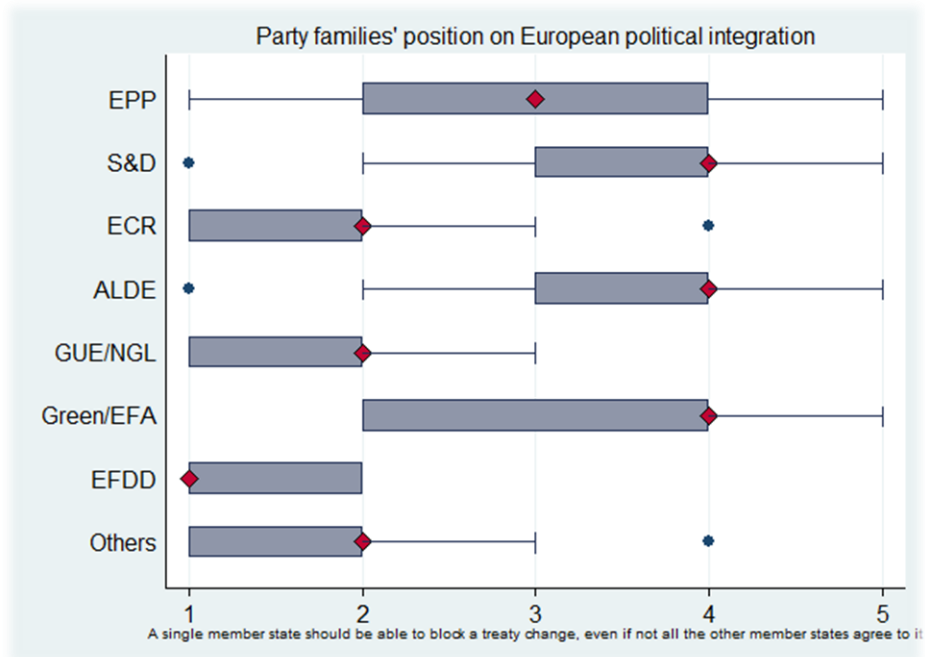
In figure 1, only the EPP, S&D and ALDE are in favor of the Euro as all three parties 'completely disagree' with the question. In addition, these three party groups are skewed left and the median is on the 'completely agree'-position of the response scale. The ECR, GUE/NGL and Green/EFA are also in favor of the Euro because they 'disagree'. However, the data for the GUE/NGL is also skewed left. The EFDD party group has an ambivalent stance on this question because it 'neither agrees nor disagrees' and is also skewed left. The 'Others' party group is the only one which 'agrees' that the adoption of the Euro should have never been done.

Figure 2 shows a different distribution of the party groups on the response scale. In figure 1, almost all party groups are distributed along the median. In this case, three party groups take a 'neither agree, nor disagree' position on the question. These are, the EPP, ALDE and GUE/NGL. The values for the EFDD are distributed at the median of the 'disagree'- position. However, the rest of the party groups show skewness. The data for S&D and Green/EFA is skewed right. This means that the median is in the lower quartile representing 25% of the data distribution. The ECR and Others also take a position on 'disagree'. Yet, the data for ECR is skewed right but the data for the Others party group is only slightly skewed right.

With regard to whiskers, there have been so far some cases, in which there are missing whiskers or no whiskers at all. This indicates that the data tied (Cox, 2009, p. 480), which means that for a lot of parties, the value from the response scale is the same. This does however not affect the data results as such. Outliers on the other hand need to be explained in more detail when interpreting the hypotheses (Chapter 4.1.1).

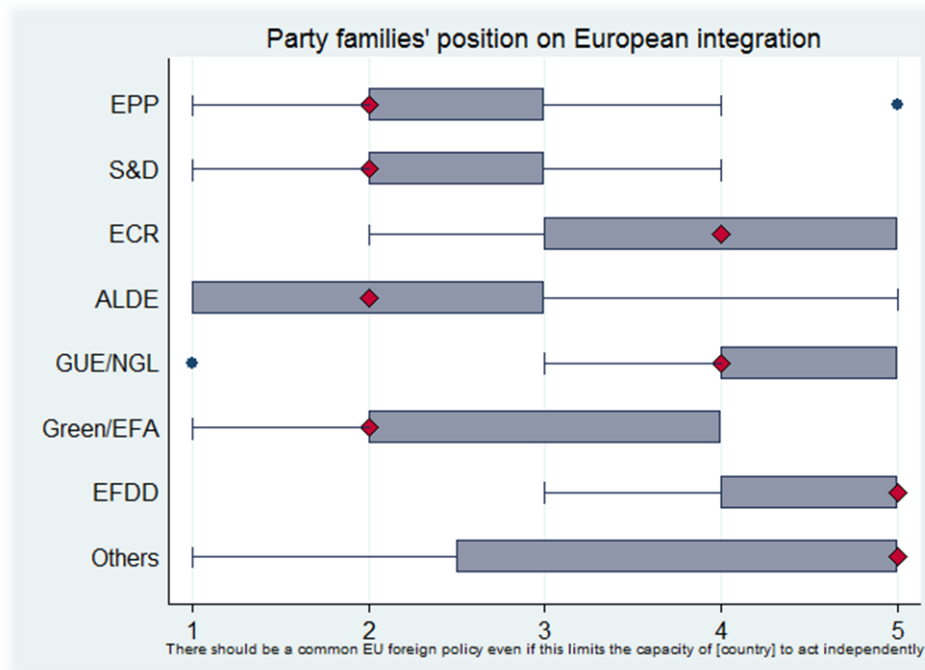
Next, the results for the two questions constituting the European political integration dimension are analyzed. Figure 3 shows the results for question (3) and figure 4 displays the results for question (5).

Figure 3: Party families' position on question (3)



Source: based on own elaboration

Figure 4: Party families' position on question (5)



Source: based on own elaboration

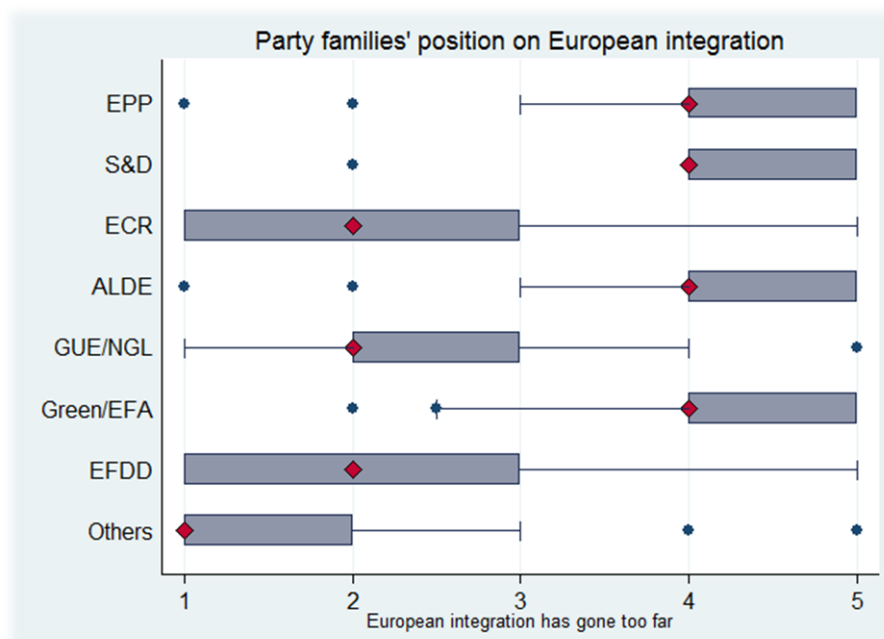
Figure 3, shows that the majority of party groups agrees that a single member state should be able to block a treaty change. The ECR, GUE/NGL and Others party group' positions are clearly skewed left on the response scale. Although the EFDD is the only one that is positioned on 'completely agree' on the response scale, the data is skewed to the right.

In contrast to these party families are the S&D, the ALDE and the Green/EFA, which disagree on the question. In all three cases, the results are skewed right to the upper quartile on the response scale. The only exceptional case is the EPP party group, which is clearly positioned on the ‘neither agree, nor disagree’-option on the response scale.

The fourth figure (Figure 4), shows what party groups’ positions are on the idea of a common EU foreign policy. The EPP, the S&D, the ALDE and the Green/EFA party groups are positioned on the ‘agree’-response option. Yet, the ALDE is the only one not skewed but having the median in the middle of the box. The median being in the middle of the box is also the case of the ECR party group. Lastly, the EFDD and Others party groups are clearly skewed left at the ‘completely disagree’- option on the response scale.

The last figure (Figure 5) depicts the results from question (28), which asks for parties’ general opinion on European integration.

Figure 5: Party families’ position on question (28)



Source: based on own elaboration

With regard to figure 5, it is noticeable that there are more outliers than in the other four figures. In addition, the majority of data is also skewed right. This is the case for the EPP, the S&D, the ALDE, the GUE/NGL and the Others party group. The EPP, S&D, ALDE and the Green/EFA are the party groups, which take a ‘disagree’-position whereas the GUE/NGL is on the ‘agree’-option. Only the ECR and the EFDD party group is clearly positioned on the ‘agree’-option of the response scale.

4.1.1 Interpretation of the results

In the following section, the results described in section 4.1 are interpreted on the basis of what has been explained so far on party families that exist in Western Europe. As it is argued that the party groups in the European Parliament resemble the party families described in the thesis, the ten hypotheses can be interpreted the following way. Firstly, each hypothesis needs to be interpreted by the party group's position on each dimension, namely European economic integration and European political integration. Secondly, parties' general opinion on European integration is explained separately.

In the following, there are three cases, in which the results from the party groups described in the previous section apply to more than one party family. The interpretation of the hypotheses is therefore conducted accordingly.

With regard to the **first hypothesis**: *Communist/Extreme-left party families are “strongly opposed” to European integration*, the **second hypothesis**: *The Extreme-right party family is “strongly opposed” to European integration* and the **sixth hypothesis**: *The Agrarian party family is “moderately opposed” to European integration*, the following can be explained.

The Others, the EFDD and the GUE/NGL party group show rather diverging positions on both questions constituting European economic integration. In contrast to what could be expected from the GUE/NGL party group, it does not object the currency of the Euro. This is striking because the Euro can be viewed as being part of the economic integration process, which is opposed by the Communist/Extreme-left party family (Marks et al. (2002). However, this result on both dimensions may also be due to the fact that the GUE/NGL cannot clearly be linked to only one party family. In fact, it can be linked to the Agrarian party family and the Communist/Extreme-left party family. According to Gallagher et al. (2006), the Agrarian party family's ideology used to be left in beginnings of the party. In contrast, the Others party group is not in favor of the Euro and rejects the idea of the Euro and the ability of the EU to borrow money. This applies for the EFDD party group as well. These results for the Others and the EFDD party group, serve the expectations stated in this thesis as, for example the party Lega Nord from Italy or the PVV from the Netherlands can be considered to be Eurosceptic parties. Eurosceptic parties belong to the Extreme-right party family and have an especially objective stance on European integration, as they reject every policy, which decreases national sovereignty concerning the national economy (De Vries et al., 2009).

The Others party group can be considered to be a special group because some parties that are considered to be Eurosceptic belong to this group and are not members of the Eurosceptic group EFDD. This is the case for the Lega Nord, which belongs to the Others party group (European Parliament, 2014). In contrast, the Eurosceptic party UKIP from the United Kingdom is a member of the EFDD party group (European Parliament, 2014). MEPs can still vote on legislation no matter what their national interest are or to which party group they belong (Hix, 2002). This means that a parties' membership in a party group does not necessarily reflect the party group's ideology. However, this bachelor thesis only tries to

explain parties' position on European integration with party families respectively party groups in the European Parliament.

In contrast to the European economic integration dimension, the European political integration dimension is more decisive regarding both questions. This is because all three party groups are in favor of the ability of one member state being able to block a treaty change. These results, as well as the results for question (5) indicate, that all three party groups oppose the possibility of decreasing national sovereignty. Although the emphasis on national sovereignty is not that strong in case of the Communist/Extreme-left party family (Marks et al. 2002), it is a strong factor for the Extreme-right party family and therefore for most of the parties in the Others party group and the EFDD. These parties strongly object any decrease in national sovereignty, which would especially be the case if the EU had a common foreign policy as addressed by question (5).

With regard to the first and second hypothesis, the analysis shows that all three party groups are rather in line with the results given by Marks et al. (2002) on the two dimensions (cf. Table 2). But with regard to our results on the European economic dimension, the GUE/NGL cannot be considered to be 'strongly opposed' to it. In fact, in the European political integration dimension this tendency is rather apparent for the GUE/NGL party group.

With regard to the **sixth hypothesis**, the interpretations resemble almost the ones laid out for the first and second hypothesis. This is because the ideology of the Agrarian party family is argued to be comparable to the stances of the GUE/NGL but more so to the Others party group. This is because as Gallagher et al. (2006) argues, the Agrarian party family used to be more to the left. Batory et al. (2004) describe the Agrarian party family as even more dynamic in terms of their adaptation to policy stances. Its stance on European political integration and the general stance on European integration is therefore not as decisive as the results for the GUE/NGL and Others. Only the results on the European economic integration dimension resemble the 'moderately opposed' categorization of Marks et al. (cf. Table 2).

All in all, the hypotheses can be confirmed in all three cases. This assessment is also in line with the results of question (28) showing that the GUE/NGL party group is positioned on 'agree' and the Others party group on 'completely agree' (Figure 5). Nevertheless, the Communist/Extreme-left and Agrarian party family, can be linked to the GUE/NGL. The Extreme-right can be linked to the Others and the EFDD party group. The party families can therefore be used to explain these party groups' stances on the two dimensions as well as on European integration as such.

The **fourth hypothesis**: *The Christian democratic party family is "strongly in favor" to European Integration* and the **seventh hypothesis**: *The Protestant party family is "moderately opposed" to European integration* need to be interpreted according to the results of the EPP. This is because the EPP can be affiliated with the Christian democratic party family and the Protestant party family.

The following can be said when elaborating on the categorization ‘strongly in favor’ and ‘moderately in favor’ for the Christian democratic party family and the Protestant by Marks et al. (2002). The results in figure 1 and 2 show that the EPP is on the ‘completely disagree’-position regarding question (1). In addition, on question (2) it is positioned on the ‘neither agree, nor disagree’ option. The last result corresponds more to the position of the Protestant party family then to the Christian democratic party family (cf. Table 2) because the Protestant party family is according to Marks et al. (2002) ‘moderately in favor’ of European economic integration (cf. Table 4). However, with regard to the Christian democratic family, Gallagher et al. (2006) explain that this party family is together with the Social democratic party family the one most in favor for European integration. The Christian democratic party family is however more in favor of European economic integration. This position is clearly reflected in the EPP’s ‘completely disagrees’ position on question (1) as they are in favor of the Euro. Nevertheless, in case of the CDU and CSU in Germany, this position on the economic dimension of the EPP would be striking. This is because both parties are known to object parts of the European integration process. On that issue, the latter party is more objective than the former one. This example serves the means to explain outliers, which are found in the figures. In figure 1 there is an outlier for the EPP party group. Parties such as the CDU and CSU in Germany could be an explanation for outliers. With regard to the size of the data set, it is however unlikely that only one or two parties impact the data set in so much as to create outliers.

The results for the European political dimension (Figure 3 and 4) are not undoubtedly in line with the categorization of Marks et al. (2002). This is because the authors describe the Christian democratic party family as being ‘strongly in favor’ of European political integration and the Protestant party family as being ‘strongly opposed’ on European political integration. Both arguments are not reflected in the findings of question (3) and (5) (cf. Figure 3 and 4). With regard to question (3), the EPP takes a neutral ‘neither agree, nor disagree’ position. In figure 3, the party is only in favor of a common EU policy and not strongly in favor or strongly opposed of it.

With regard to question (28), the fact that the EPP is positioned on ‘disagree’ on the response scale does also not reflect the results of Marks et al. (2002) completely (cf. Table 2). Being in general in favor of European integration is only reflected in the Christian democratic party family’s stance (cf. Table 2). But not in the Protestant party family’ stance, as it is ‘moderately opposed’ of European integration. The latter position is more negative than the former, which the result for the EPP on question (28) clearly does not reflect.

Thus, the elaboration on the fourth hypothesis does not lead to an overall rejection of the hypothesis. Still, a ‘strongly in favor’ position could not be identified in either dimension nor on the last question (28). Nevertheless, the analysis showed that the Christian democratic party family is still in favor of European integration. With regard to the seventh hypothesis, it can be said that the analysis of the Protestant party family supports the ‘moderately opposed’ position.

The last two hypotheses, which have to be interpreted together are the **fifth hypothesis**: *The Green party family is “moderately opposed” to European integration* and the **tenth hypothesis**: *The Regionalist party family is “moderately to strongly in favor” to European integration*.

As explained, the Greens/EFA party group in the European Parliament can be affiliated with the Green party family and the Regionalist party family. The results for the Greens/EFA party groups show similar aspects as in the case before. Namely that the categorizations as stated by Marks et al. (2002) regarding both party families (cf. Table 2) can only be partly related to the results of the Greens/EFA party group.

With regard to the European economic dimension the Greens/EFA the results show that the party group can be considered to be in favor of European integration. This is in line with the Regionalist party family’s stance on European economic integration but not the Green party family’s position (cf. Table 4). However, Marks et al. (2002) explain that the Regionalist party family is in favor of European economic integration because they expect it to benefit their “political autonomy” (Marks et al., 2002, p. 587). European economic integration however is clearly about less autonomy of single regions but more about the integration of them. In addition, the argument that the Green party family is ‘moderately opposed’ to European economic integration holds because they fear the consequences for the environment. This issue is however not addressed by question (1) or (2). The questions ask for the deepening of European economic integration. In case of the first question, it might be striking at first that the Greens/EFA disagrees that the Euro should have never been adopted. After all, they “[...] question the value of further European integration” (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 241).

This argument of Gallagher et al. (2006) does however not apply to the European political dimension results (Figure 3 and 4). Here, the Greens/EFA is in favor of more European political integration because they do object the idea that a single member state shall be able to block a treaty change. In addition, they are in favor of a common EU foreign policy. These two clear positions are depicted by Marks et al. (2002) as they argue that the Regionalist party family is only ‘moderately in favor’ of European political integration, whereas the Green party family has a mixed stance on it (cf. Table 2). It is understandable that the Regionalist party family is more objective on this topic as they are more in favor of autonomy. The Green party family’s stance is in contrast to the Greens/EFA ambivalent as they are only in favor of European political integration if it promotes democratic participation (Marks et al. 2002). The issue of democratic participation is addressed in question (3) and here the Greens/EFA take the position that a single member state should not be able to block a treaty change.

The result of the Greens/EFA on the general opinion on European integration asked in question (28) is in line with the Green party family’s overall result on European integration (cf. Table 2). Nevertheless, the result of the Green party family implies that they are overall more or less in favor with European integration.

Based on this analysis, it can be argued that rejecting both hypotheses would be striking. This is because i.e., the topics addressed by Marks et al. (2002) concerning European economic integration slightly differ from the ones addressed in the questions from the iterative expert survey. With regard to the fifth hypothesis, the analysis rather revealed a ‘moderately opposed’ position. The tenth hypothesis can be confirmed as well.

The **third hypothesis**: *The Liberal party family is “strongly in favor” to European Integration* can be interpreted as follows. The ALDE seems to be rather in favor of European economic integration because of the results from question (1) and (2). Although the ALDE is only positioned on ‘neither agree, nor disagree’ (Figure 2), the party can nevertheless be considered to be in favor of European integration because it ‘completely disagrees’ on the first question (Figure 1). This outweighs the position on question (2) because the Euro can be considered as a major factor of the European economic integration process. Hence, the results from the economic dimension are to this extent in line with categorization of ‘strongly in favor’ by Marks et al. (2002).

With regard to the European political dimension, the ALDE is not ‘strongly in favor’ of this integration part. Nevertheless, the party ‘disagrees’ that a single member state should be allowed to block a treaty change (Figure 3). In addition, for question (5), the party group is positioned on the ‘agrees’- option (Figure 4). These results show that the ALDE reflects to a certain extent the positions of the Liberal party family on the European political integration dimension. Although again, the label ‘strongly in favor’ in the context of this dimension does not apply. Nevertheless, the ALDE can still be considered to be in favor of European political integration.

In line with the analysis so far is the result for question (28). Here, the ALDE party group is positioned on ‘disagrees’ (Figure 5). This means that the party group can be considered to be in general in favor of European integration.

The results confirm the hypothesis in that all three parts show that the ALDE is at least on favor of European integration. This is not surprising as they share similar stances on the issue of European integration with the Christian democratic party family and therefore reflect an ideology more to the center-right. Gallagher et al. (2006) however point out that especially the Liberal party family is compared to other party families vary diverse. This is due to the fact that liberal parties in some countries may be more conservative than in other countries (Gallagher et al., 2006). In fact, this diversity can be argued to strengthen the argument that party families can be affiliated with party groups in the European Parliament. Because all member states participated in the European Parliament’s election in 2014, it can be assumed that the constellation of the ALDE reflects this diversity of the Liberal party family.

With regard to the **ninth hypothesis**: *The Social democratic party family is “moderately to strongly in favor” to European integration*, the following can be elaborated.

The hypothesis clearly confirms what the results of the data analysis show. The S&D party group is positioned on the ‘completely disagrees’- option on question (1) of the European economic dimension (Figure 1). On the second question (2) it is positioned on the ‘agree’- option (Figure 2). Both point to a ‘moderately in favor’- position of the S&D. In the analysis, the combination of these response options is so far unique. This result is in line with the categorization of Marks et al. (2002) (cf. Table 2). According to them, the Social democrats are only ‘moderately in favor’ of European economic integration. This is not surprising because Marks et al. (2002) explain that Social democrats object to much economic integration because it could affect the welfare state (cf. Table 2). This argument is in line with Gallagher et al. (2006).

The results for the European political dimension also show that are in line with the categorization of Marks et al. (2002) (cf. Table 2). This is because Marks et al. (2002) consider that the Social democratic party family is strongly in favor of European political integration. With regard to the results of the European political dimension (Figure 3 and 4) this would however only lead to ‘moderately in favor’. This is because the S&D ‘disagrees’ on the question that a single member state shall be able to block a treaty change (Figure 3) and it ‘agrees’ that there should be a common EU foreign policy (Figure 4).

With regard to the last question (28) it can be said that it ‘disagrees’ that European integration could have gone too far (Figure 5). This result is in line with almost all parties that have been analyzed so far except for the GUE/NGL, the EFDD and the Others party group.

Overall, it can be argued that the hypothesis can be confirmed and that the reasons for it are depicted in the results for the S&D party family.

The **eight and last hypothesis** to be analyzed concerns the eight hypothesis: *The Conservative party family is “moderately in favor” to European integration.*

The ECR party group in the EP can be argued to be affiliated to the Conservative party family. This is also confirmed in the following analysis. With regard to the European economic dimension, the ECR is on the ‘disagrees’ position on the first question (1) (Figure 1) and on the second question (2) as well (Figure 2). With regard to the latter question, the ECR position implies that it does not agree with the EU being able to borrow money. The two results are therefore not in line with the categorization by Marks et al. (2002) (Table 2). This is because the ECR rejects the second question and cannot be considered to be ‘strongly in favor’ but only moderately in favor of European economic integration.

An explanation could be the fact that in the ECR there are parties like the AfD from Germany which have Eurosceptic positions on the EU in general but also on European economic issue. According to Marks et al. (2002), the Conservative party family is considered to be in favor of European economic integration. As explained, this cannot be fully confirmed on the basis of the data analysis.

In contrast, the results for the European political dimension are in line with the argument by Marks et al. (2002). Namely, that the Conservative family is ‘strongly opposed’ of it (cf. Table 2). This is also revealed by question (3) (Figure 3) and question (5) (Figure 4). Just as the GUE/NGL, the EDFF and the Others party group, the ECR is in favor of the idea that a single member state could block a treaty change. In addition, the party groups as well as the ECR objects the idea of a common EU foreign policy. These results underline that the ECR is opposed but not ‘strongly opposed’ to European economic integration as proposed by Marks et al. (2002) (cf. Table 2).

Unlike most of the party groups analyzed, the ECR does also share the same stance on question (28) as the GUR/NGL, the EFDD and the Others, namely that in general, European integration has gone too far (Figure 5).

Overall, the analysis of the last hypothesis revealed that overall it can be confirmed. This means that as the Conservative party family is ‘moderately in favor’ of European integration, the ECR can be considered to be ‘moderately in favor’ as well. Nevertheless, it needs to be pointed out that in case of the ECR party group, there are some parties, which can be considered Eurosceptic. As already explained, the AfD can be considered it be Eurosceptic as well as i.e. the Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei (ADR) from Luxembourg.

Concluding from this section, it can be said that overall, the data analysis revealed that the results are overall in line with the expectations concerning the resemblance between party families and party groups. Nevertheless, in some cases the results did not correspond to the findings of Marks et al. (2002). Still, the interpretation of the hypotheses, show that party families can be used to explain European parties’ position on two dimensions and on their general stance on European integration. This is because overall, party families’ ideologies do reflect the ideologies of the European Parliament’s party groups. In addition, the discussion of the findings by Marks et al. (2002) and Gallagher et al. (2006) helped to show that there may be discrepancies between certain party families and party groups. Nevertheless, the discussion also reveals that these discrepancies were not large and mostly due to the fact that party groups consist of parties from different member states. Therefore, the context of each party, which is a member of a certain party group would have to be interpreted as well. This is however very time-consuming and was not the goal of this thesis.

In the following chapter, the conclusion includes in more detail, how the results of the findings of this section are to be assessed. In addition, the final answer to the research question is provided as well.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this Bachelor thesis was to on the one hand present European parties' stances on European integration and on the other hand show that party families can be used to explain these positions.

In order to approach this goal, data from an iterative expert survey was used in order to be able to aggregate member states' parties into party groups of the European Parliament. The data was acquired right before this year's European Parliament's election and thus can be considered as the latest data base there is on European parties' position on certain policy areas. In total, 235 parties were aggregated into party groups of the European Parliament. The method applied in the iterative expert survey to estimate parties' position on odd policy issues has several advantages as explained earlier (chapter 3.2.2). This especially applies to the problems normally encountered with expert survey in which many coders are involved. Because of moderators and iteration rounds these threats could be avoided. This is important, as the data was used to aggregate parties into party groups of the European Parliament. In general, the data base does not reveal any inaccuracies, except for some extreme cases which are displayed in outliers in the respective box plot figures.

The only disadvantage may be that the costs for the iterative expert survey. However, in the context of this Bachelor thesis, those were not the expenses of the researcher and had therefore no affect on the research process as such.

On the basis of the findings in chapter 4, the research question '*What are member states' parties' stances on European integration in the European Parliament's election in May 2014 and how can these positions be explained?*' can be answered as follows.

The first part of the question, 'What are member states' parties' stances on European integration?', is explained in the following.

It can be said that the findings on the party groups served the expectations of this thesis, namely that certain party groups are more opposed to European integration than other party groups. In fact, the results of question (28) asking for parties' overall opinion on European integration revealed the following. Four out of the eight party groups are opposed of European integration. These parties are the ECR, the GUE/NGL, the EFDD and the Others party group, all of which can be considered to be Eurosceptic.

With regard to the European economic integration dimension, the position of the Eurosceptic parties was not that clear anymore. Still, the two party groups which are most Eurosceptic, namely the EPDD and the Others party group were overall objective to this dimension.

This means that the results of the rest of the party groups displayed that they were more or less in favor of aspects of the European economic dimension.

The results for the European political integration dimension however resemble the ones for the overall opinion on European integration. Here, the Eurosceptic party groups are again less in favor of European political integration than the rest of the party families.

As explained in chapter 4, most of the hypotheses could be confirmed. In order to evaluate the hypotheses, they were analyzed with regard to party families' ideologies and party groups' ideologies. This was done because it was argued that party groups in the European Parliament resemble party families from Western European party systems. Thus, the second part of the research question 'How can these positions be explained?' was answered by the interpretation of the hypotheses as outlined in chapter 4.1. .

The findings are interesting for two reasons. First of all, most of the hypotheses were in line with the findings of Marks et al. (2002) (cf. Table 2). Nevertheless, in some cases, the arguments of these authors on party families differed from the ones provided by Gallagher et al. (2006). Second of all, party families can still be considered to help to explain European parties' stances on European integration. This is because overall, party groups could be linked to party families' ideologies. As explained in chapter 2.2, party families' ideologies developed from different cleavages. The analysis of the hypotheses thus showed that cleavages have an impact on party families and in the end on the party groups of the European Parliament.

As presented, this thesis gave answers to the research question and in addition showed how European parties' stances on European integration can be revealed by an economic and a political dimension. In addition, it showed that party families can be used to explain variations in parties' positions on European integration.

6. References

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