

Priority congruence between European voters and political groups of the European Parliament on policy-related valence issues at the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections

Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

The topic of this research is priority congruence between European voters and political groups of the European Parliament on policy-related valence issues at the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections. The main research question that is answered is: To what extent was there priority congruence on policy-related valence issues between the European electorate and the different Europarty groups at the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections? For this purpose, data on public opinion in the European Union and data gathered from election manifestos of Europarty groups was compared. The analysis includes the identification of the issue priorities of seven different Europarty groups, the assignment of European voters to the seven Europarty groups in order to identify the issue priorities of these voters and compare them to the issue priorities of the respective party group afterwards, and finally the calculation of indicators of priority congruence for the seven Europarty groups and their voters. The results show that the level of priority congruence between European voters and Europarty groups is low and that the existing level of priority congruence is to be primarily attributed to a high congruence on a single issue area (the 'Economy' issue area) while there is, with a few exemptions, little congruence on other issue areas.

Keywords

Priority congruence, political representation, political groups of the European Parliament, valence issues

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1. Introduction

“Problems cannot be solved without attending to them” (Jones & Baumgartner, 2004, p. 1). This short statement, which appears rather unspectacular and also sounds quite logical, has nevertheless a profound meaning for the study of political representation. That is due to the fact that it summarizes the essential idea behind the concept of priority congruence, a conceptualization of congruence that has largely been neglected by the literature. Following the “classic idea that the ultimate aim of democracy is to establish government policy that reflects the preferences of its citizens” (Rosema, Aarts, & Deters, 2011, p. 11), many scholars have conceptualized congruence in terms of policy congruence, while only a few scholars have dedicated their work to the concept of priority congruence. Priority congruence, as indicated by the short introductory statement, is based on the idea that in order to achieve congruence between voters’ preferences and policy positions of their representatives it is first of all necessary that representatives pay attention to the same issues that voters consider important (Reher, 2015). As Jones and Baumgartner (2004) observe, policy congruence and priority congruence are complementary elements in the political representation process. This implies that policy congruence and priority congruence are equally important concepts for the study of political representation and that the literature about political representation is incomplete if it neglects the concept of priority congruence.

1.1. Background

To locate the aforementioned gap concerning priority congruence in the literature, one has to understand the spatial model developed by Downs (1957) and elaborated upon by Enelow and Hinich (1984) first. According to this model, policy preferences of voters and political parties are located within a policy space in form of policy positions. Voters vote for the party whose position on certain issues is closest to their own position on these issues. The dimension within the policy space on which policy positions of voters and political parties compared is usually the ideological left-right dimension. Therefore this type of congruence has been termed policy or ideological congruence. Several studies have since then measured political representation by comparing ideological or policy positions of voters and their representatives (e.g. political parties, party candidates, the parliament, the government) to compare proportional and majoritarian electoral systems (Huber & Powell, 1994), to learn about policy congruence in proportional systems (Budge & McDonald, 2007) or to draw conclusion on how public policy responds to changes in public opinion (Stimson, Mackuen, & Erikson, 1995) just to name a few examples.

The spatial or proximity model has some flaws. This was early explained by Stokes (1963) in his critique of the model. Extending the model eliminated some of these flaws but others

continued to exist. One of these shortcomings that could not be eliminated was the assumption that voters were clearly distinguishing between the different positions in the policy space. Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) argue that voters perceive issues rather diffusely and do not locate their own position and the parties' position as exactly in the policy space as the spatial model assumes. Therefore they introduced the directional model of issue voting (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989). The directional model assumes that voters react to issues in terms of direction and intensity. That means the voter is in favor or against an issue (direction) and that his opinion has a certain emotional strength (intensity), which determines how strong he is in favor or against an issue. Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) indeed find evidence that the directional model is more suitable to predict vote choice than the spatial model, given the fact that most voters base their vote choice on low levels of information (a point that is also relevant when talking about priority congruence as will be explained later on). The directional model still builds upon issue positions and neglects issue priorities.

Another approach that seeks to explain vote choice is issue ownership theory developed by Budge and Farlie (1983) and Petrocik (1996). According to issue ownership theory, political parties have certain issues that they own. That means the party has a good reputation on these issues and is believed to be competent in dealing with them by voters. In the election political parties then try to raise the salience of the issues they own and voters base their vote choice on how salient an issue is and how competent the given party is in handling that issue in their opinion. Based on issue ownership, research emerged that shows how voters are influenced by issue emphasis and competence of political parties (Belanger & Meguid, 2008; Green & Hobolt, 2008; van der Brug, 2004). In this literature, for the first time, the salience of issues does not play a secondary role behind policy congruence. The problem is that although this literature deals with priority congruence, i.e. it takes into account the salience of issues for political parties and voters, it does not add up neatly with the existing literature on political representation that is based on policy or ideological congruence (hence the gap in the literature regarding priority congruence still exists). As Reher (2015) notes, this is because in this case policy congruency and priority congruence are not complementary, instead priority congruence replaces policy congruence as an indicator of political representation because preferences are based on different priorities and not on different positions.

There are scholars that view policy congruence and priority congruence as complementary approaches of political representation (Jones & Baumgartner, 2004) and who have studied party responsiveness to issue priorities of voters (Spoon & Kluver, 2014), the effect of priority congruence on political representation (Reher, 2014) or the relationship between priority congruence and satisfaction with democracy (Reher, 2015). Research that answers the

question how this interaction of policy congruence and priority congruence occurs is still missing, as well as research about priority congruence regarding party size, party family, governing vs. opposition status and generalization about findings across countries. Taking this into account the main reason for the importance of priority congruence is that good political representation requires both policy congruence and priority congruence. As Reher (2014) observes, issue priorities are more ideologically neutral and as a result issue attention can shift more quickly without implicating changes in issue positions (which also supports the argument that policy congruence and priority congruence are complementary). Therefore research that deals with issue priorities of voters and their representatives is strongly needed.

1.2. Research question

Following the argument outlined above, this paper contributes to the description of the level of priority congruence between the European electorate and political groups of the European Parliament (Europarty groups)¹ within the European Union. Put more precisely, priority congruence on policy-related valence issues. Those policy-related valence issues that are considered salient by a large percentage of European voters are compared to those policy-related valence issues that are considered salient by the different Europarty groups in order to determine the level of congruence between European voters and the different Europarty groups on these issues.

For this purpose data on public opinion in the European Union and data gathered from election manifestos of Europarty groups were analyzed. Since there was no coded Euromanifesto data for the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections available when this paper was written, the focus lies on the 2009 EP elections for which there were coded data available on both public opinion and Europarty group manifestos. Within the European Union there were 7 Europarty groups at the time of the 2009 EP elections. These were (1) the Group of Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA), (2) the Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), (3) the Party of European Socialists (PES), (4) the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), (5) the

¹ On European level, national political parties are organized in federations that are called European political parties or Europarties. These Europarties are structured according to political families into four main groups: Socialists, Christian Democrats/Conservatives, Liberals, and Greens (Gabel & Hix, 2002). "Like their constituent national parties, the Europarties have their own administrative organization, budget, and secretariat" (Gabel & Hix, 2002, p. 936). Before the elections of the European Parliament, Europarties (or Europarty groups) state their policy positions publicly by issuing election manifestos (Gabel & Hix, 2002).

European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED), (6) the Union for Europe of the Nations Group (UEN), and (7) the Independence/Democracy Group (IND/DEM).

The reason why this paper deals with Europarty groups and their voters² and not national political parties and their voters although voters usually vote for candidates that were put forward by national parties in European elections, is that on the one hand there is already research about priority congruence on national political parties and on the other hand that many national political parties are organized in European political parties (Europarties). Europarties are in turn organized in political groups in the European Parliament and these Europarty groups are hence involved in the political representation of European citizens to some extent. Furthermore good political representation requires also priority congruence, which means that priority congruence between Europarty groups and European voters is also essential. Therefore the main research question that is to be investigated is:

To what extent was there priority congruence on policy-related valence issues between the European electorate and the different Europarty groups at the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections?

In order to comprehensively answer this question, three sub-questions were specified. These are:

- (1) What were the policy-related valence issues that were considered most salient by the Europarty groups in their election manifestos before the 2009 EP elections?*
- (2) What were the policy-related valence issues that were considered most salient by the largest percentage of European voters at the time of the 2009 EP elections?*
- (3) What were the different levels of priority congruence among Europarty groups at the time of the 2009 EP elections?*

Indicated by the work of Spoon and Kluver (2014), who found, in line with second order election theory (Reif & Schmitt, 1980), that issue responsiveness, i.e. political parties responding to issue priorities of voters, in European elections is low, it was expected that

² Please note that although this paper continuously talks about Europarty groups and their voters, there is no direct link between European voters and Europarty groups. Because voters are not allowed to vote for Europarty groups in European elections, voters were indirectly assigned to the different Europarty groups by the author to make a comparison possible (the exact procedure and reasons for doing so are explained later in the paper). Hence, every time Europarty groups and their voters are mentioned in this paper, the indirect voters of the respective Europarty group are meant.

priority congruence between European voters and Europarty groups will be also low. The results indeed show that this is the case and that the different Europarty groups vary with regard to the respective levels of priority congruence.

1.3. Structure of the paper

After this first introductory section, the second section of the paper explains the relevant theories and concepts like issue-ownership theory, priority congruence and other conceptualization of congruence in more detail. The third section is a methodological section, explaining the operationalization and measurement of the different variables and the method that was used to analyze the data. The fourth section contains the analysis part in which the research question and the associated sub-questions are answered. The fifth section will conclude the paper. The conclusion includes final remarks, explaining the social and scientific relevance of the findings, providing recommendations for further research and pointing out limitations of the conducted research.

2. Theoretical framework

The aim of this paper is to analyze the level of priority congruence between Europarty groups and their voters within the European Union. Since many scholars have studied policy congruence and also policy congruence between Europarties and their voters has been subject to scientific research recently (Lefkofridi & Katsanidou, 2014), the focus of this paper lies on issue priorities instead of issue positions. In this respect issue ownership theory with its focus on valence issues plays a central role as well as Golder and Stramski's (2010) conceptualization of many-to-many congruence. To understand why these theories and concepts are essential for comparing Europarty groups and their voters with regard to issue priorities, it is important to keep in mind that priority congruence means that voters and political parties consider the same set of issues as important/salient. For both, voters and parties, these issues have priority. Furthermore, the issues on which a comparison of their salience is meaningful are those issues on which there is no disagreement on ideological positions. These issues are called valence issues.

2.1. Valence issues

Stokes (1963) distinguishes between two types of issues, namely position issues and valence issues. Position issues on the one hand are issues on which voters adopt a certain position from a set of alternatives (Stokes, 1963). For example, they can be in favor or against abortion. Valence issues on the other hand are issues on which there is consensus among voters because they have the same ideal point on these issues (Enelow & Hinich, 1982). Such an issue would be education. All voters will agree that education is a good thing. The issues that this research seeks to compare are valence issues. Precisely because there is no conflict concerning the goals to be achieved, the focus lies on the differences in priority of these issues (van der Brug, 2004). The priorities of issues, or issue salience, is the "relative importance of issues for voters" (van der Brug, 2004, p. 212). Hence Valence issues are comparable because voters and political parties have the same ideal point on these issues and only differ with regard to the salience they attach to these issues. If voters and political parties attach the same amount of salience to an issue they are priority congruent. In the course of this paper all issues will be treated as valence issues in order to make a comparison that is based on the salience of these issues possible. The focus on the salience of valence issues, or saliency theory is a feature of issue ownership theory.

2.2. Issue ownership theory and saliency theory

Although this paper does not aim at explaining why voters choose to cast their vote for a particular party (or candidate), issue ownership theory, as a theory about vote choice nevertheless forms the basis for this research because it deals with issue priorities based on valence issues. As explained in the introduction, the three most relevant theories about issue

voting are the spatial or proximity model (Downs, 1957), the directional model (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989) and issue ownership theory (Budge & Farlie, 1983). While the proximity model and the directional model focus on position issues, issue ownership theory relies on valence issues. Therefore, this paper only draws from issue ownership theory and leaves aside the proximity and the directional model.

As mentioned before, according to Issue ownership theory, political parties have a set of policy-related issues that they own and on which the party has a good reputation. Usually these issues are valence issues, which means that all parties have the same ideal point on these issues. Therefore parties are not able to attract voters by taking up a specific position on these issues. As a consequence, to increase electoral support, parties increase the salience of these issues by putting special emphasis on them in their election campaigns (van der Brug, 2004). In the election, voters then choose a party on the basis of how much emphasis this party puts on certain issues and on the basis of how voters evaluate the party's competence in dealing with these issues (Belanger & Meguid, 2008). Supporting this characteristic of issue ownership theory, Green and Hobolt (2008, p. 461) find that "competence evaluations of parties matter more to vote choices when an issue is salient to voters". That means voters only evaluate the competence of a party on a given issue if they perceive the issue in question as important.

2.3. Policy-related issues

Those valence issues that are covered by issue ownership theory are policy related issues (Clark, 2009). As explained above, on policy-related valence issues, voters evaluate parties based on their competence to handle a particular issue. Nonpolicy-related factors on the other hand are "nonpolicy-related party or candidate characteristics such as honesty, trustworthiness, unity, competence, etc." (Clark, 2009, p. 111). For example, these include political scandals, disagreements among party members that are apparent to the public, and perceived incompetence of parties or candidates. Since this paper seeks to compare voters and political parties based on the salience of a set of policy-related valence issues, nonpolicy-related factors will be disregarded.

2.4. Many-to-many congruence

A large body of scientific literature, agreeing that good political representation is indicated by ideological congruence, aims at conceptualizing and measuring this ideological congruence (Andeweg, 2011). Although this paper does not compare policy positions, previous conceptualizations of ideological congruence provided nevertheless a helpful starting point to develop a conceptualization of congruence that is suitable for this research. That means a conceptualization of priority congruence that is based on the comparison of policy-related valence issues. Golder and Stramski (2010) describe three ways to conceptualize (ideological)

congruence. These ways depend on how many citizens and how many political representatives one wants to compare. That means, should the comparison include one citizen or many citizens, and should it include one representative or many representatives. The case in which there is one citizen and one representative is called a one-to-one relationship (Golder & Stramski, 2010). If there are many citizens and one representative, the relationship is called a many-to-one relationship (Golder & Stramski, 2010). The relationship that is characterized by many citizens and many representatives is consequently called a many-to-many relationship (Golder & Stramski, 2010). Since the focus of this paper lies on Europarty groups and their voters, many citizens will be compared with many representatives. That means this paper builds upon a many-to-many relationship. Therefore the one-to-one relationship and the many-to-one relationship were disregarded. When Europarty groups and European voters are compared with regard to those policy-related valence issues that are considered salient, the results show how congruent the different Europarty groups are with their voters in terms of issue priorities. That implies that it becomes apparent which Europarty group is most congruent with its voters in terms of issue priorities.

2.5. The low salience context of European elections

As stated in the introduction, this paper builds upon the idea that good political representation requires both policy congruence and priority congruence, i.e. congruence between voters' preferences and policy positions of their representatives in addition to representatives paying attention to the same issues voters consider important. Reif and Schmitt (1980) however find that European elections are additional national second-order elections because they are determined more by the domestic political situation than by the political situation on European Union level. Following this second order election theory, Spoon and Kluver (2014) observe that on the one hand "Voters have little knowledge and interest in European issues and hardly pay any attention to European Parliament elections" (p. 50) and that on the other hand European elections provide little incentive for political parties because they do not lead to the allocation of new executive posts (Spoon & Kluver, 2014). Both these findings indicate that priority congruence between Europarty groups and voters is relatively low because both voters and party groups seem to have other priorities than European elections.

3. Methodological framework

The conducted research relies on data gathered by the European Election Studies (EES) project in form of the 2009 Voter Study and the 2009 Euromanifesto Study. The 2009 Voter Study was carried out from 05.06.2009 to 09.07.2009 right after the EP elections and was done via phone interview with identical questionnaires in the various EU member states. The intended sample size of the study was 1000 successful interviews in each of the 27 EU member states at that time (Van Egmond, Sapir, van der Brug, Hobolt, & Franklin, 2010). The dataset, the country questionnaires and other documentation are available online at the database of the GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften³ (EES, 2009b). The 2009 Euromanifesto Study was conducted to measure issue emphasis and policy positions of political parties across the EU by quantitative content analysis of election manifestos (Braun, Mikhaylov, & Schmitt, 2010). The aim of the study was to collect all Euromanifestos issued by political parties ahead of the 2009 EP elections in 27 EU member states. The manifestos are seen as indicators of the parties' issue emphases and policy positions at a certain point in time. The dataset and other documentation are again available online at the database of the GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften⁴ (EES, 2009a).

The fact that the data were nearly six years old when the paper was written not too much of a problem since Europarty groups were not expected to have changed their behavior, strategies and the way they are functioning significantly within this period of time. The dynamics behind the European Parliament elections and the role of the party groups was not expected to have changed too a large extent. Therefore the level of congruence should not vary significantly from 2009 until now. Of course these assumptions are somewhat speculative but since the 2009 data were the most up-to-date, using them was the best solution at hand. The reason why this paper does not contain a longitudinal study, i.e. a study of priority congruence in all European elections, is that a longitudinal study would have been too time consuming. This would have exceeded the scope of this bachelor project while at the same time the additional findings would not have justified the extended workload. Besides that the data were not equally available and comparable for all European elections, which means only some European elections could have been selected. That would have again weakened the results of a longitudinal study.

³ EES (2009) Voter Study online at GESIS database:

<https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=5055&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.10202>

⁴ EES (2009) Euromanifesto Study online at GESIS database:

<https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=5057&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.10204>

3.1. Operationalization of the variables

The first variable is the Europarty group's attention to an issue in the 2009 European Parliament elections. Information about the attention that party groups pay to different policy-related valence issues were obtained from the election manifestos that the different Europarty groups had published before the 2009 EP elections. In their election manifestos, these party groups highlight certain issues. An issue that is considered important is emphasized in the manifesto by utilizing a great deal of space/sentences/words. Issues that are considered less important utilize only a little amount of space or are ignored. The focus hence lies on the "proportion of the manifesto dedicated to each issue" (Gabel & Hix, 2002, p. 939). Following the approach by Spoon and Kluver (2014)⁵, items from policy categories from the coded data of the manifestos were combined into different issue areas (see appendix table A1+A2 for issues and issue areas). This was necessary because these items reflect policy positions, i.e. a positive or a negative opinion about an issue. Since positions did not matter for the purpose of this research (if there was attention paid to an issue it did not matter if the issue was mentioned positively or negatively), positive and negative categories were summed up into issue areas.

It was chosen to measure the salience a Europarty group attaches to an issue by using coded data from content analysis of election manifestos because on the one hand "political texts [such as election manifestos] are the concrete by-product of strategic political activity and have a widely recognized potential to reveal important information about the policy positions of their authors" (Laver, Benoit, & Garry, 2003, p. 311) and on the other hand these election manifestos are always accessible in the same way, which means that the data do not change over time and can be analyzed and reanalyzed as many times as desired (Laver et al., 2003). Besides that, and this was the most convincing reason to use election manifesto data and not expert or elite survey data is that election manifestos are central statements that are usually ratified in party conventions and therefore represent the whole party and not just individuals or groups within the party (Braun et al., 2010). Hence it was more reasonable to deduce the issue priorities of the whole party groups from coded data of election manifestos than from the responses of individual MEPs or candidates for example. In line with this Hix (2002)

⁵ Spoon and Kluver (2014) analyze the emphasis political parties put on issues in their election manifestos as a response to issue priorities of voters. They use data from coded election manifestos to measure their dependent variable, which is party issue attention, and data from the most important issue/problem (MIP) questions in public opinion surveys to measure their explanatory variable, which is the issue priority of voters. They find that political parties listen to their voters when selecting the issues they are going to emphasize in their election manifestos but that this issue responsiveness is predominantly the case in national elections while in elections to the European Parliament issue priorities of voters are largely ignored.

finds that Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are more likely to represent the interests of their national political parties instead of the interests of their Europarty group because the national parties control the candidate selection and therefore MEPs, as office seeking actors, are more likely to behave in conformity with the national party's interests. To avoid this possible pitfall (i.e. measuring MEP or national political party priorities instead of Europarty group priorities) it was decided to rely on coded manifesto data and not on expert or elite survey data to analyze the issue priorities of Europarty groups. Apart from that it should nevertheless be kept in mind that election programs lack objectivity because they are policy promises, used by the party groups to present themselves to the electorate. That means the actual extent to which a party focuses on a certain issue may be different from the extent to which the party focuses on that issue in its election program (Golder & Stramski, 2010). There is therefore no guarantee that the party group behaves like the manifesto suggests.

The second variable is salience attached to policy-related valence issues by voters. In order to measure this variable the 2009 Voter Study of the European Elections Study (EES) conducted by the PIREDEU project was used. The voter study asked respondents in an open-ended question what they think are the most, second most, and third most important problems their nation is facing at the moment⁶. The dataset allowed ranking the responses for all three MIP question but it did not render assistance in how to weigh the responses. (For example one could assume that most important problems count three times as much and second most important problems twice as much as third most important problems). But since it cannot be stated that the salience of an issue that is listed as the first MIP question response is twice as high as the salience of an issue that is listed as the second MIP question response (The same goes for the differences in salience between first MIP question responses and third MIP question responses and for the differences in salience between second MIP question responses and third MIP question responses) it was decided to weigh all three MIP question responses equally (the exact procedure is explained later in the paper).

Although this measure is the most suitable it has to be kept in mind that there are other problems. One problem is that questions that ask about the 'most important problem' confuse "at least two different characteristics of salience: The importance of issues and the degree to which issues are a problem" (Wlezien, 2005, p. 555). To avoid this problem to some extent one could use questions that ask about the most important issue (like it is done in the Eurobarometer survey by the European Commission). The 2009 EES Voter Study however is

⁶ Questions of the 2009 EES Voter Study used to measure voter salience:

Q1 What do you think is the most important problem facing (Britain) today?

Q2 And what do you think is the second most important problem facing (Britain) today

Q3 And what do you think is the third most important problem facing (Britain) today?

the only existing study that asked people in all EU member states not only about the most important problem/issue but also about their vote choice in the 2009 European Parliament elections⁷. By using that information it was possible to connect the voters with the different Europarty groups. Since it was necessary to assign voters to the respective Europarty group in order to compare voters and Europarty groups, the best solution was to use the 2009 EES Voter Study.

Another problem that is connected to the usage of the 2009 EES voter study is that the MIP question of this study only asks respondents about the most important problems their nation is facing at the moment. Thereby the problems of the nation are focused. It would have been beneficial for this study to have data about individual problems or issues the respondent is facing or the most important problems Europe or the European Union is confronted with (i.e. a reduction of the possible impact of the possible ‘national focus influence’ of the responses). However, since the 2009 EES voter study is the only study that allows to assign voters to the different Europarty groups and due to the fact that it is not certain that the aforementioned effects exist (and if they exist how big they are) it was decided to stick to the data from the EES study and use the responses to the questions that ask respondents about the most important problems their nation is facing at the moment.

3.2. Data analysis

European voters and Europarty groups were compared with regard to priority congruence on policy-related valence issues. Therefore, as a first step, issues of the coded Euromanifesto data were divided into issue areas. After that the issue areas were ranked according to their salience/importance for each Europarty to answer the first sub-question about what the policy-related valence issues were, that were considered most salient by the Europarty groups in their election manifestos before the 2009 EP elections. As a next step, respondents of the voter study were assigned to the different party groups according to their vote choice in the 2009 EP elections. After that the responses to the MIP questions (Q1-Q3) from the respondents of the voter study were also put into issue areas and then ranked according to their salience in order to answer the second sub-question about what the policy-related valence issues were, that were considered most salient by the largest percentage of European voters at the time of the 2009 EP elections. As a last step, to answer the third sub-question about what the different levels of priority congruence among Europarty groups were at the time of the 2009 EP elections, the ranks of the issue areas of the Euromanifesto data and the ranks of the issue areas of the MIP questions responses were compared. This was done in two ways. First, by using only the top issues and their respective salience percentages (neglecting

⁷ Q25 Which party did you vote for?

the other issue areas) and second by comparing all issue areas but assuming that the salience of an issue area depends only on the frequency it was given as a response to an MIP question by the voters itself and not making a distinction if the issue area was given as a response to MIP question one, two, or three (weighing all three MIP question responses equally).

4. Analysis

4.1. The salience of issue areas among Europarty groups

The first part of the analysis was to divide items from the coded data of the Euromanifestos into different issue areas. As mentioned above the issue areas that were specified by Spoon and Kluver (2014) were used to provide orientation in order to do this (See Appendix, Table A1). For example items like ‘Environmental Protection’ and ‘Anti-Growth Economy’ were put in the ‘Environment’ issue area and items like ‘Multiculturalism’ and ‘National Way of Life’ were put in the ‘Multiculturalism’ issue area (hence there is as well a ‘Multiculturalism’ item and a ‘Multiculturalism’ issue area). After doing this, fifteen (15) different issue areas had been identified for the coded Euromanifesto data. These issue areas were (A) International politics, (B) European Union, (C) Civil Rights, (D) Institutional and Administrative Reform, (E) Economy, (F) Technology and Infrastructure, (G) Environment, (H) Culture, (I) Social Welfare, (J) Education, (K) Multiculturalism, (L) Law and Order, (M) Immigration, (N) Cyprus Issue and (O) Agriculture. See Table A2 in the appendix for a complete list of all items and the respective issue areas⁸.

The approach by Spoon and Kluver (2014) was followed for two reasons. First, the different items in the dataset of the coded Euromanifestos are similar to those that were used by the above-mentioned authors in their study, and second, the study yielded reliable results. In contrast to the approach by Spoon and Kluver (2014) however, the present paper includes 15 issue areas for the coded Euromanifesto data instead of 13. The ‘Immigration’ issue area and the ‘Cyprus Issue’ issue area were added and the ‘European Integration’ issue area was included in the new ‘European Union’ issue area. Especially the ‘European Union’ issue area comprises many items that were not part of the analysis by Spoon and Kluver (2014). The ‘Immigration’ issue area and the ‘Cyprus Issue’ issue area were added because the items included in these two issue areas could not be included in one of the existing issue areas.

As a next step it was calculated how much space the different issue areas take up in the different Euromanifestos by adding up the percentages of the different issues for each issue area. That means in order to receive a percentage for the ‘Environment’ issue area for each Europarty group, the percentages of the ‘Environmental Protection’ and ‘Anti-Growth Economy’ issues were added up. After the percentages were calculated for the different issue

⁸ Two items that did not fit in one of these issue areas were excluded from the analysis. The ‘Peace-Negative’ item (=‘War’), which would not add up to the salience of the ‘Peace-positive’ issue because ‘War’ would be a totally different issue. The same goes for the ‘Anti-Imperialism-Negative’ item, which would mean ‘Imperialism’. Both, the ‘Peace-Negative’ and ‘Anti-Imperialism-Negative’ items do not fit into the ‘International Politics’ issue area and therefore were excluded from the analysis.

areas for each of the seven Euromanifestos, the issue areas were ranked according to their importance/salience for the different party groups. This was done by ordering the issue areas according to the percentages of space they take up in the manifesto from highest to lowest for each Europarty group. The issue area that occupies the highest amount of space in the manifesto was ranked 1, the issue area that occupies the second highest amount of space was ranked 2, and so forth with the issue area occupying the least amount of space consequently receiving the rank 15⁹.

Table 1: Europarty groups, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

Rank	Greens/EFA		GUE/NGL		PES		ALDE	
	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Environment	29.9	European Union	21.8	Economy	21.0	Economy	24.7
2	European Union	23.0	Civil Rights	21.8	Civil Rights	15.8	Civil Rights	16.5
3	Economy	13.5	Economy	21.2	European Union	14.9	European Union	15.3
4	Social Welfare	10.3	Environment	9.6	Inst. & Adm. Reform	11.8	Inst. & Adm. Reform	14.1
5	Agriculture	6.2	Inst. & Adm. Reform	8.3	Social Welfare	11.8	Techn. & Infrastr.	5.9
6	Civil Rights	4.9	Social Welfare	4.8	Environment	9.1	Law and Order	5.9
7	Inst. & Adm. Reform	4.9	Agriculture	4.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	5.9	Intern. Politics	5.9
8	Intern. Politics	2.5	Intern. Politics	2.9	Law and Order	4.3	Agriculture	5.9
9	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.1	Education	2.2	Intern. Politics	1.4	Environment	4.7
10	Law and Order	2.1	Culture	1.0	Education	1.3	Social Welfare	1.2
11	Education	0.4	Law and Order	0.6	Multiculturalism	0.9	Education	0.0
12	Multiculturalism	0.4	Multiculturalism	0.6	Agriculture	0.4	Multiculturalism	0.0
13	Culture	0.0	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.3	Culture	0.4	Culture	0.0
14	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0

Rank	EPP-ED		UEN		IND/DEM		Ø All	
	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Economy	20.8	European Union	28.6	Inst. & Adm. Reform	40.0	European Union	20.7
2	Environment	14.6	Economy	16.3	European Union	33.3	Economy	16.8
3	Civil Rights	12.9	Civil Rights	12.2	Multiculturalism	6.7	Inst. & Adm. Reform	12.7
4	Law and Order	10.4	Law and Order	12.2	Intern. Politics	6.7	Civil Rights	12.0
5	Techn. & Infrastr.	9.2	Social Welfare	6.1	Social Welfare	3.3	Environment	10.3
6	European Union	7.7	Environment	4.1	Economy	0.0	Social Welfare	6.3
7	Social Welfare	6.9	Inst. & Adm. Reform	4.1	Civil Rights	0.0	Law and Order	5.1
8	Inst. & Adm. Reform	5.4	Agriculture	4.1	Law and Order	0.0	Techn. & Infrastr.	3.6
9	Agriculture	4.3	Multiculturalism	4.1	Environment	0.0	Agriculture	3.6
10	Intern. Politics	3.2	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.0	Agriculture	0.0	Intern. Politics	3.2
11	Education	1.2	Education	2.0	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.0	Multiculturalism	1.9
12	Multiculturalism	0.4	Intern. Politics	0.0	Education	0.0	Education	1.2
13	Culture	0.1	Culture	0.0	Culture	0.0	Culture	0.2
14	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0	Immigration	0.0
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Cyprus Issue	0.0

As can be seen in Table 1, for the Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA) the ‘Environment’ issue area is the most salient one with 29.9% of space occupied in the manifesto. This may not be too surprising since green parties usually tend to pay a lot of attention to environmental topics, but it is still remarkable that this issue area

⁹ Please note that ranks must not be confused with salience percentages because although an issue area may rank 3rd for one party group with an attached salience of let’s say 10%, the same issue area can have at the same time a lower rank than 3 but a higher salience percentage than 10% for another party group. Therefore ranks and salience percentages are only meaningful when looked upon in combination.

indeed takes up nearly one third of the space in the manifesto. The fact that the 'European Union' issue area, which ranks second, occupies relatively much space in the manifesto (23%) is a trend that can also be noted for the other Europarty groups. The 'Economy' issue area and the 'Social Welfare' issue area rank third and fourth with still relatively high percentages of 13.5% and 10.3% respectively. It becomes clear that compared to most of the other Europarty groups, the 'Economy' issue area is rather unimportant for the GREENS/EFA. Issue areas like 'Agriculture', 'Civil Rights' and 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' occupy around 4-6% of the manifesto space, while issues areas like 'Law and Order', 'Technology and Infrastructure' and 'International Politics' occupy around 2-2.5%. The 'Multiculturalism' and 'Education' issue areas each only occupy 0.4% of the space in the manifesto while the 'Culture', 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present in the manifesto at all.

For the Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) the 'European Union', 'Civil Rights' and 'Economy' issue areas rank highest with 21.8%, 21.8% and 21.2% of occupied space in the manifesto. This is rather unsurprising since several Europarty groups consider these three issue areas very salient or even most salient. The 'Environment' issue area and the 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' issue area rank fourth and fifth with still relatively high percentages of 9.6% and 8.3% respectively. Issue areas like 'Culture', 'Education', 'Agriculture', 'Social Welfare' and 'International Politics' each occupy about 1-5% of space in the manifesto and issue areas like 'Law and Order', 'Technology and Infrastructure' and 'Multiculturalism' each occupy around 0.5% of the manifesto space. The 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present at all.

For the Party of European Socialists (PES) the 'Economy' issue area is the most salient one with 21% of space occupied in the manifesto. The 'Civil Rights' issue area and the 'European Union' issue area rank second and third with percentages of 15.8% and 14.9% respectively and also the 'Environment', 'Institutional and Administrative Reform', and 'Social Welfare' issue areas still occupy relatively much space in the manifesto with percentages around 9-12%. The 'Technology and Infrastructure' issue area and the 'Law and Order' issue area occupy 5.9% and 4.3% while the 'Multiculturalism', 'Education', and 'International Politics' issue areas occupy about 0.9-1.4%. The 'Agriculture' and 'Culture' issue areas occupy less than 0.5% of space and the 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present in the manifesto at all. In contrast to the GUE/NGL, which also considers the 'Economy', 'European Union', and 'Civil Rights' issue areas as most salient, the also ideologically left/socialist PES still dedicates about 12% of manifesto space to the 'Social Welfare' issue area while the GUE/NGL only attaches 4.8% to that issue area. Another party group that considers this issue area relatively salient are the Greens/EFA (10.3% manifesto space).

For the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) the 'Economy' issue area is the most salient one with 24.7% of space occupied in the manifesto. Also the 'Civil Rights', 'European Union', 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' issue areas, which rank second, third, and fourth, occupy with 16.5%, 15.3% and 14.1% relatively much space of the manifesto. This is again not unsuspected because the 'Economy', 'Civil Rights', 'European Union' issue areas are oftentimes the top three most salient issue areas and hence seem to be of high importance for every Europarty group that wants to enforce its political beliefs. The 'International Politics', 'Law and Order', 'Agriculture', and 'Technology and Infrastructure' issue areas all occupy about 6% of space while the 'Environment' issue area and the 'Social Welfare' issue area still occupy 4.7% and 1.2% respectively. The 'Multiculturalism', 'Education', 'Culture', 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present at all.

For the European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED) the 'Economy' issue area ranks highest with 20.8% of space occupied in the manifesto. Also the 'Environment' issue area and the 'Civil Rights' issue area occupy relatively much space in the manifesto with percentages of 14.6% and 12.9%. The 'Law and Order' issue area ranks fourth with 10.4% and the 'Technology and Infrastructure' issue area ranks fifth with 9.2%. The 'Education', 'International Politics', 'Agriculture', 'Institutional and Administrative Reform', 'Social Welfare', and 'European Union' issue areas occupy between 1% and 8% of manifesto space each. The 'Multiculturalism' and 'Culture' issue areas both occupy below 0.5% while the 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present in the manifesto at all. It appears striking that the 'Environment' issue area ranks second (14.6% manifesto space, while the 'European Union' issue area, which many of the other Europarty groups consider quite salient, only occupies 7.7% of manifesto space (rank 6).

For the Union for Europe of the Nations Group (UEN) the 'European Union' issue area is the most salient one with 28.6% of space occupied in the image document. The 'Economy' issue area ranks second with 16.3%. Also the 'Civil Rights' and 'Law and Order' issue areas both occupy relatively much space in the image document with 12.2%. The 'Social Welfare' issue area ranks fifth with 6.1% of occupied document space. The 'Institutional and Administrative Reform', 'Multiculturalism', 'Environment', and 'Agriculture' issue areas all occupy about 4% of document space while the 'Technology and Infrastructure' and 'Education' issue areas both occupy about 2%. The 'International Politics', 'Culture', 'Immigration', and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present in the image document at all. Hence, as many other Europarty groups the UEN also considers the 'European Union', 'Economy'; and 'Civil Rights' issue areas among the most salient ones. What is striking is that the 'European Union' issue area is by far the most salient with over 10% more occupied space than the issue area that ranks second ('Economy').

For the Independence/Democracy Group (IND/DEM) only five issue areas are present in the image document. The most salient issue area is the 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' issue area which occupies 40% of the space in the image document. Also the 'European Union' issue area occupies with 33.3% a great deal of space. The 'Multiculturalism' and 'International Politics' issue areas both occupy 6.7% and the 'Social Welfare' issue area still occupies 3.3%. The 'Economy', 'Civil Rights', 'Law and Order', 'Environment', 'Agriculture', 'Technology and Infrastructure', 'Education', 'Culture', 'Immigration', and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not present in the image document at all. It appears striking that the 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' issue area and the 'European Union' issue area together account for more than 73% of the space in the image document, leaving only 27% for other issue areas of which only 3 others are mentioned. This indicates a clear and narrow focus of the IND/DEM group, excluding also issue areas like 'Economy' and 'Civil Rights', which are usually considered quite salient by other party groups (In fact, the IND/DEM group is the only Europarty group that does not list 'Economy' as one of the three most important issue areas).

All in all, as can be also seen in Figure 1 and Table 2 the issue areas that are considered most salient for most of the Europarties are the 'European Union', 'Economy', and 'Civil Rights' issue areas. Also the 'Environment' issue area and the 'Institutional and Administrative Reform' issue area rank pretty high. The issue areas that are considered least salient are 'Education', 'Multiculturalism', 'Culture', 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue'. Especially the 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are not mentioned in any of the seven Euromanifestos¹⁰. The salience of issues areas like 'International Politics', 'Technology and Infrastructure', 'Social Welfare', 'Law and Order', and 'Agriculture' is relatively moderate for most of the Europarty groups which is why these issue areas can be mostly found mid-table.

¹⁰ This may be the reason why Spoon and Kluver (2014) did not include these categories in their analysis of issue responsiveness of political parties. It could be that the 'Immigration' and 'Cyprus Issue' issue areas are included in other issue areas of the coded manifesto data (e.g. 'Multiculturalism', 'European Union', or 'International Politics').

Figure 1: Saliency (%) of issue areas among Europarty groups

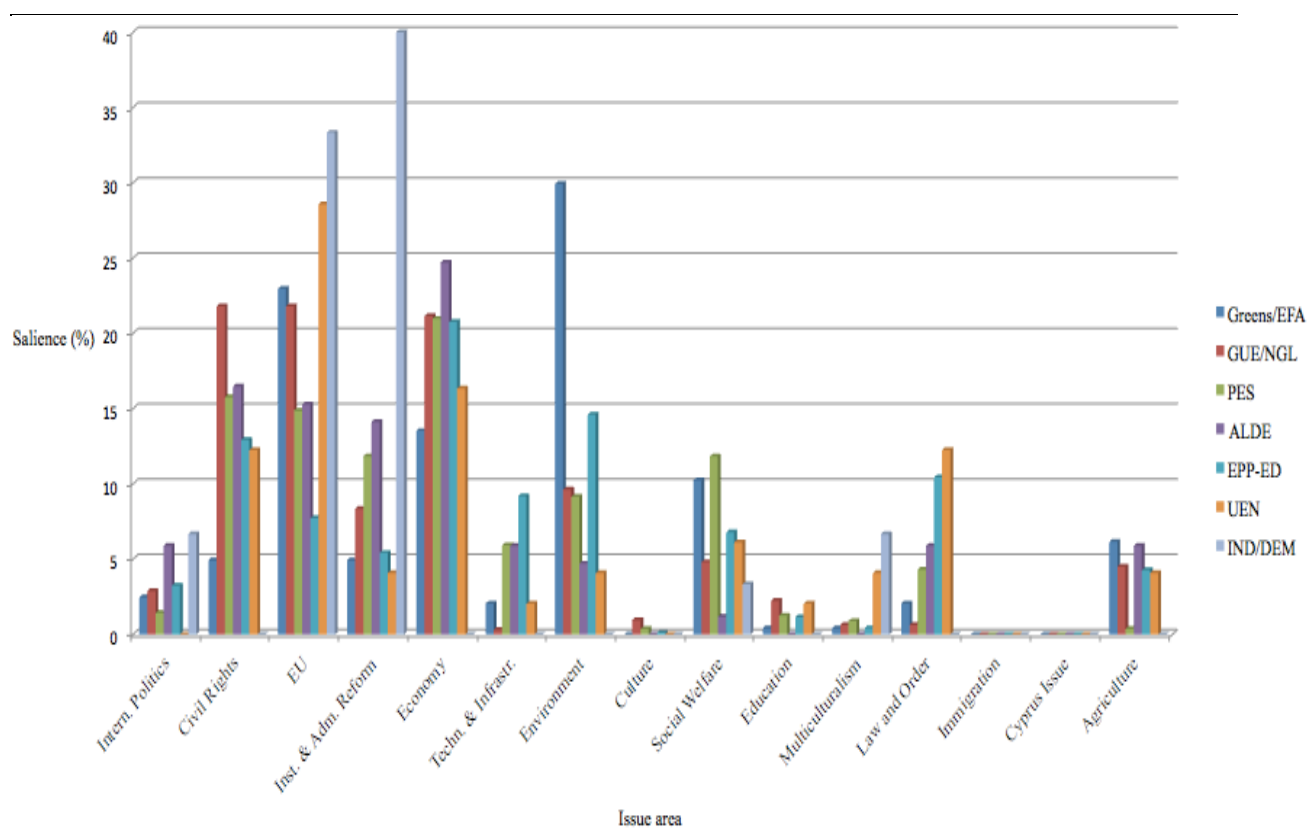


Table 2: Ranks and saliency (%) among issue areas

	Economy		European Union		Civil Rights		Inst. & Adm. Ref.		Environment	
	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)
Greens/EFA	3	13.5	2	23.0	6	4.9	7	4.9	1	29.9
GUE/NGL	3	21.2	1	21.8	2	21.8	5	8.3	4	9.6
PES	1	21.0	3	14.9	2	15.8	4	11.8	6	9.1
ALDE	1	24.7	3	15.3	2	16.5	4	14.1	9	4.7
EPP-ED	1	20.8	6	7.7	3	12.9	8	5.4	2	14.6
UEN	2	16.3	1	28.6	3	12.2	7	4.1	6	4.1
IND/DEM	6	0.0	2	33.3	7	0.0	1	40.0	9	0.0
Ø All	2.4	16.8	2.6	20.7	3.6	12.0	5.1	12.7	5.3	10.3

	Social Welfare		Law and Order		Intern. Politics		Agriculture		Techn. & Infrastr.	
	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)
Greens/EFA	4	10.3	10	2.1	8	2.5	5	6.2	9	2.1
GUE/NGL	6	4.8	11	0.6	8	2.9	7	4.5	13	0.3
PES	5	11.8	8	4.3	9	1.4	12	0.4	7	5.9
ALDE	10	1.2	6	5.9	7	5.9	8	5.9	5	5.9
EPP-ED	7	6.8	4	10.4	10	3.2	9	4.3	5	9.2
UEN	5	6.1	4	12.2	12	0.0	8	4.1	10	2.0
IND/DEM	5	3.3	8	0.0	4	6.7	10	0.0	11	0.0
Ø All	6	6.3	7.3	5.1	8.3	3.2	8.4	3.6	8.6	3.6

	Multiculturalism		Education		Culture		Immigration		Cyprus Issue	
	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)	Rank	Saliency (%)
Greens/EFA	12	0.4	11	0.4	13	0.0	14	0.0	15	0.0
GUE/NGL	12	0.6	9	2.2	10	0.1	14	0.0	15	0.0
PES	11	0.9	10	1.3	13	0.4	14	0.0	15	0.0
ALDE	12	0.0	11	1.2	13	0.0	14	0.0	15	0.0
EPP-ED	12	0.4	11	1.2	13	0.1	14	0.0	15	0.0
UEN	9	4.1	11	2.0	13	0.0	14	0.0	15	0.0
IND/DEM	3	6.7	12	0.0	13	0.0	14	0.0	15	0.0
Ø All	10.1	1.9	10.7	1.2	12.6	0.2	14	0.0	15	0.0

4.2. The salience of issue areas among European voters

In order to determine which issues were considered salient by the voters of each of the seven Europarty groups (and since voters do not directly vote for Europarty groups but for national political parties and the candidates they put forward), it was necessary to assign voters to the different party groups before it was possible to analyze the issue priorities of the voters of each Europarty group. This was done indirectly by analyzing which national parties were affiliated with one of the Europarty groups and if they were affiliated, with which one exactly. The assignment was done using Internet sources such as the national party websites or the websites of the Europarty groups. Some of the national parties were not assigned to Europarty groups because they changed their group affiliation in 2009 and it is not completely clear if they did so before, during, or after the elections. These parties could therefore not unequivocally be assigned to one of the Europarty groups. The national parties this applied to are Fianna Fail (Ireland), North League (Italy), and the Conservatives (Great Britain). This rule was followed also in general. If there were doubts in assigning a party, the party was usually rather excluded than included in the analysis.

Table 3: Number of respondents and national parties per Europarty group

Europarty group	Number of national parties	Number of respondents
Greens/EFA	26	1323
GUE/NGL	17	651
PES	27	3389
ALDE	29	1650
EPP-ED	45	5206
UEN	8	296
IND/DEM	2	78
Assigned	154	12593
Total	211	27069

In total, of the 27069 respondents of the original dataset, 12593 voters could be assigned to one of the seven Europarty groups. That means a percentage of 46.5% of the respondents could be used for this study. The reasons why not even half of the voters could be assigned to a Europarty group are that not all of the listed national political parties were affiliated with a Europarty group in 2009 and that Europarty groups and their composition changed considerably in the last six years. Some Europarty groups and national political parties that were present in 2009 for example do not exist anymore or merged with other parties. It was also not always possible to find sufficient information about the party group affiliation of national political parties to assign them to a Europarty group.

Since the party groups vary in size to quite some extent (number of national parties affiliated, size of these parties) some groups got assigned a large number of respondents/voters while others got assigned only relatively few respondents. Especially the Independence/Democracy

Group (IND/DEM) got assigned only 2 parties and 78 voters while other Europarty groups like the Party of European Socialists (PES) (27 nat. parties, 3389 voters) or the European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED) (45 nat. parties, 5206 voters) got assigned a much larger amount of voters. It becomes apparent that the EPP-ED is by far the largest Europarty group, followed by the PES. The Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA) (26 nat. parties, 1323 voters) and the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) (29 nat. parties, 1650 voters) are of moderate size while the Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), the Union for Europe of the Nations Group (UEN), and the Independence/Democracy Group (IND/DEM) are clearly the smaller Europarty groups, at least when looking at the number of voters. Furthermore the Greens/EFA comprises with 26 national parties only one party less than the PES but only about one third of its voters. Also the GUE/NGL comprises 17 national political parties after all but the size of these parties, when measured as the number of voters, is pretty small (651 voters).

Since only two small national political parties could be assigned to the Independence/Democracy Group (IND/DEM) it was questionable if the results for the voters of these two national parties would have been representative for the views of the possible other voters of the IND/DEM group. Therefore it was decided to exclude this particular Europarty group from the analysis. (A complete list of the national political parties that were assigned (or not assigned) to the different Europarty groups can be found in the Appendix, Table A3.)

The next step of the analysis was to divide issues from the responses to the MIP questions from the data of the voter study into different issue areas in order to be able to compare issue areas of Euromanifestos and voters later on. The issue areas specified by Spoon and Kluver (2014) again served as a basis for doing this. In contrast to the Euromanifesto data (15 issue areas), for the voter data 17 issue areas were identified. The two additional issue areas are the 'Globalization' issue area and the '(European)Elections' issue area. These issue areas were specified because both issue areas comprise issues that could not be connected to one of the other fifteen issue areas and at least the '(European)Elections' issue area comprises a large amount of issues. As mentioned earlier, for the Euromanifestos the 'Peace-Negative' and 'Anti-Imperialism-Negative' items were excluded from the analysis because they could not be categorized in one of the issue areas but since 'Peace-Positive' and 'Anti-Imperialism-Positive' items were included in the analysis it was decided not to set up extra issue areas for two small items. For the voter data there were also some issues that were excluded from the analysis. These issues were 'Imperialism' (as for the Euromanifesto data) and other small issues like 'Abortion' and issues that were non-policy related like 'Accidents', 'Crime story',

‘Human interest’, ‘(Natural) Disasters’, ‘Religion’, ‘Sports’, and ‘Weather report/forecast’ (As mentioned in the theoretical framework, non-policy related issues were disregarded). A detailed list of MIP question responses and issue areas can be found in the appendix, table A4. One important point that has to be noted is that there are a lot more different MIP question responses on the voter side than there are different issues on the Euromanifesto side. That means that for example the ‘Economy’ issue area comprises a lot more different MIP question responses than it comprises different Euromanifesto issues. The MIP question responses and issues were divided into issue areas in that way in order to keep the number of different issue areas as small as possible and hence make the comparison as neat as possible. Besides that many of the MIP question responses were indeed similar to the issues of the Euromanifesto data. It was made sure that MIP question responses and issues always fit in the respective issue areas. Otherwise other issue areas had to be created or in certain cases, as described above, the MIP question responses and issues were excluded from the analysis. The results for the voters can be found in the tables below.

Table 4.1: Greens/EFA, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

Greens/EFA			Voters Greens/EFA					
			MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
Rank	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Environment	29.9	Economy	52.2	Economy	32.5	Economy	16.2
2	European Union	23.0	Environment	13.6	Environment	13.5	Social Welfare	8.3
3	Economy	13.5	Social Welfare	5.3	Social Welfare	8.5	Environment	7.1
4	Social Welfare	10.3	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.0	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.4	Education	5.8
5	Agriculture	6.2	Civil Rights	2.8	Education	3.8	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	3.6
6	Civil Rights	4.9	Multiculturalism	2.5	Civil Rights	3.0	Civil Rights	3.3
7	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	4.9	Immigration	2.3	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.0	Immigration	3.2
8	Intern. Politics	2.5	Education	1.4	Immigration	1.9	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.3
9	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.1	(European)Elections	1.1	Law and Order	1.9	Law and Order	2.1
10	Law and Order	2.1	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.0	Multiculturalism	1.9	Multiculturalism	1.4
11	Education	0.4	Cyprus Issue	0.8	(European)Elections	0.6	(European)Elections	0.5
12	Multiculturalism	0.4	Law and Order	0.8	Globalization	0.4	European Union	0.4
13	Culture	0.0	European Union	0.6	Agriculture	0.3	Agriculture	0.3
14	Immigration	0.0	Agriculture	0.4	Culture	0.3	Globalization	0.3
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Globalization	0.3	European Union	0.3	Intern. Politics	0.2
16			Intern. Politics	0.1	Intern. Politics	0.3	Culture	0.1

As can be seen in Table 4.1 the voters of the Greens/EFA consider the ‘Economy’ issue area by far as the most important one while the ‘Environment’ issue area (still salient) ranks only second. This stands in contrast to the Euromanifesto of the Greens/EFA where the ‘Environment’ issue area is the most important one and ‘Economy’ ranks only third. The ‘European Union’ issue area is nearly not present in the issue priorities of the voters of the Greens/EFA, while ‘Social Welfare’ is considered relatively salient, which reflects the results

from the analysis of the coded Euromanifesto data. The salience of the ‘Civil Rights’ issue area is relatively low from the voters’ point of view, which again reflects the results from the previous section. The same goes for the ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ issue area. It becomes clear that the ‘Immigration’ and ‘Cyprus issue’ issue areas are primarily issue areas that are considered salient by the voters (Tables 4.1-4.6) of the different Europarty groups to some extent while the party groups themselves do not consider these issue areas salient at all. Issue areas like ‘International Politics’, ‘Globalization’, ‘Agriculture’, ‘Culture’, and so forth, are considered quite unimportant by the voters of the Greens/EFA.

Table 4.2: GUE/NGL, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

GUE/NGL			Voters GUE/NGL					
			MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
Rank	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	European Union	21.8	Economy	45.5	Economy	37.3	Economy	16.7
2	Civil Rights	21.8	Cyprus Issue	25.3	Social Welfare	8.4	Social Welfare	6.6
3	Economy	21.2	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	8.0	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	6.0	Education	5.5
4	Environment	9.6	Social Welfare	3.2	Cyprus Issue	4.0	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	3.8
5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	8.3	Environment	2.3	Education	3.5	Immigration	3.1
6	Social Welfare	4.8	Civil Rights	1.7	Environment	3.5	Civil Rights	2.9
7	Agriculture	4.5	Education	1.4	Civil Rights	3.4	Environment	2.6
8	Intern. Politics	2.9	Immigration	1.4	Immigration	2.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.2
9	Education	2.2	Multiculturalism	1.2	Multiculturalism	1.5	Cyprus Issue	2.2
10	Culture	1.0	Law and Order	0.9	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.1	Law and Order	1.7
11	Law and Order	0.6	(European)Elections	0.8	(European)Elections	0.8	Multiculturalism	1.5
12	Multiculturalism	0.6	Culture	0.5	Law and Order	0.8	Culture	0.5
13	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.3	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.5	Agriculture	0.2	European Union	0.5
14	Immigration	0.0	Globalization	0.3	European Union	0.2	Agriculture	0.3
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Intern. Politics	0.2				

Table 4.2 shows that for the voters of the GUE/NGL again ‘Economy’ is the most salient issue area, followed by ‘Social Welfare’, ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and the ‘Cyprus Issue’ issue area in case of the MIP1 responses. This stands in contrast to the findings from section 4.1. where it becomes clear that in the manifesto of the GUE/NGL the three most important issue areas are ‘European Union’, ‘Civil Rights’ and ‘Economy’ (without ‘Economy’ standing out as for the voters). The considered salience of the ‘Environment’ issue area by the GUE/NGL party group is much higher than for its voters. The ‘(European)Elections’ issue area is not considered very salient at all, a pattern that can be noticed among the voters of most of the other Europarty groups as well (although this issue area is still present most of the time, in contrast to other issue areas like ‘International Politics’ for example).

Table 4.3: PES, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

PES			Voters PES					
			MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
Rank	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Economy	21.0	Economy	64.8	Economy	37.4	Economy	17.3
2	Civil Rights	15.8	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	6.5	Social Welfare	9.3	Social Welfare	10.1
3	European Union	14.9	Social Welfare	5.1	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	6.1	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.2
4	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	11.8	Immigration	3.1	Immigration	3.8	Education	3.1
5	Social Welfare	11.8	Environment	2.8	Environment	3.6	Environment	2.9
6	Environment	9.1	Civil Rights	2.2	Law and Order	2.9	Civil Rights	2.7
7	Techn. & Infrastr.	5.9	Law and Order	1.6	Education	2.8	Immigration	2.4
8	Law and Order	4.3	Cyprus Issue	1.5	Civil Rights	2.7	Law and Order	1.9
9	Intern. Politics	1.4	Education	1.1	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.2	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.8
10	Education	1.3	Multiculturalism	1.1	Multiculturalism	1.0	Multiculturalism	1.2
11	Multiculturalism	0.9	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.7	Agriculture	0.6	Agriculture	0.6
12	Agriculture	0.4	(European)Elections	0.5	(European)Elections	0.5	(European)Elections	0.5
13	Culture	0.4	Agriculture	0.3	Cyprus Issue	0.2	European Union	0.4
14	Immigration	0.0	European Union	0.3	European Union	0.2	Culture	0.1
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Culture	0.1	Culture	0.1	Globalization	0.1
16			Globalization	0.1	Globalization	0.1	Intern. Politics	0.0
17			Intern. Politics	0.0				

For the voters of the PES again the ‘Economy’ issue area is the most salient one. This is in line with the findings from the coded Euromanifesto data about the issue priorities of the party group itself. While the voters of the PES consider ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ as second and third most important issues, in the manifesto the ‘Civil Rights’ and ‘European Union’ issue areas rank second and third, whereas ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ rank fourth and fifth (with still relatively high percentages though). The voters do however not consider the ‘European Union’ issue area very salient. A trend that can also be observed for most of the other Europarty groups is that the ‘Social Welfare’ issue area ranks in general higher for the MIP question responses of the voters than for the coded Euromanifesto data of the party groups themselves.

Table 4.4: ALDE, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

ALDE			Voters ALDE					
Rank	Issue area	%	MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
			Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Economy	24.7	Economy	60.4	Economy	33.4	Economy	16.3
2	Civil Rights	16.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	7.1	Social Welfare	8.5	Social Welfare	8.1
3	European Union	15.3	Environment	4.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.9	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.0
4	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	14.1	Social Welfare	4.0	Environment	5.5	Environment	4.7
5	Techn. & Infrastr.	5.9	Immigration	2.6	Civil Rights	4.8	Civil Rights	3.9
6	Law and Order	5.9	Civil Rights	2.5	Immigration	3.2	Education	3.3
7	Intern. Politics	5.9	Multiculturalism	2.0	Education	3.0	Law and Order	2.5
8	Agriculture	5.9	Cyprus Issue	1.7	Law and Order	2.6	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.9
9	Environment	4.7	Law and Order	1.5	Multiculturalism	2.4	Immigration	1.8
10	Social Welfare	1.2	Agriculture	1.0	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.3	Multiculturalism	1.5
11	Education	0.0	Education	0.9	Agriculture	0.8	Agriculture	0.7
12	Multiculturalism	0.0	(European)Elections	0.5	(European)Elections	0.6	(European)Elections	0.4
13	Culture	0.0	European Union	0.5	European Union	0.5	European Union	0.4
14	Immigration	0.0	Globalization	0.4	Globalization	0.4	Globalization	0.2
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.4	Culture	0.1	Culture	0.1
16			Culture	0.2	Cyprus Issue	0.1	Cyprus Issue	0.1
17			Intern. Politics	0.1	Intern. Politics	0.1		

As can be seen in Table 4.4 also the voters of the ALDE group consider ‘Economy’ the most salient issue area, followed by ‘Institutional and Administrative reform’, ‘Social Welfare’, and ‘Environment’. The party group itself considers the ‘Civil Rights’ and ‘European Union’ issue areas as second and third most salient issue areas. While the voters of the ALDE on the other hand still attach a moderate salience to the ‘Civil Rights’ issue area, the ‘European Union’ issue area is only of low salience to them. The ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ issue area however is considered quite salient by both, the ALDE group and its voters. When also looking at the tables for the other Europarty groups, it becomes apparent that the ‘European Union’ issue area is of low salience not only to the voters of ALDE group.

Table 4.5: EPP-ED, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

EPP-ED			Voters EPP-ED					
			MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
Rank	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	Economy	20.8	Economy	61.9	Economy	37.3	Economy	17.2
2	Environment	14.6	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	9.1	Social Welfare	8.7	Social Welfare	8.8
3	Civil Rights	12.9	Social Welfare	4.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	8.0	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.4
4	Law and Order	10.4	Cyprus Issue	3.5	Immigration	3.3	Civil Rights	3.1
5	Techn. & Infrastr.	9.2	Immigration	3.2	Environment	3.1	Education	3.1
6	European Union	7.7	Civil Rights	1.6	Law and Order	3.0	Environment	2.7
7	Social Welfare	6.9	Law and Order	1.3	Education	2.4	Law and Order	2.5
8	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5.4	Environment	1.2	Civil Rights	2.3	Immigration	2.2
9	Agriculture	4.3	Multiculturalism	1.2	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.3	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.6
10	Intern. Politics	3.2	Education	1.0	Multiculturalism	1.1	Multiculturalism	1.2
11	Education	1.2	Agriculture	0.7	European Union	0.6	Agriculture	0.9
12	Multiculturalism	0.4	Techn. & Infrastr.	0.7	Agriculture	0.5	European Union	0.4
13	Culture	0.1	(European)Elections	0.4	(European)Elections	0.5	Culture	0.2
14	Immigration	0.0	European Union	0.4	Cyprus Issue	0.4	(European)Elections	0.2
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0	Globalization	0.1	Culture	0.2	Cyprus Issue	0.1
16			Intern. Politics	0.1	Globalization	0.1	Intern. Politics	0.1
17			Culture	0.0	Intern. Politics	0.0	Globalization	0.0

Both, the EPP-ED and its voters consider ‘Economy’ the most salient issue area but while for the voters of the EPP-ED, like for voters of other Europarty groups like the ALDE and the PES, ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ rank second and third, for the EPP-ED group itself the ‘Environment’ and ‘Civil Rights’ issue areas are the second and third most salient ones. The ‘Social Welfare’ and ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ issue areas in turn rank only 7 and 8 for the EPP-ED group itself. In general it becomes clear that for nearly all voters, irrespective of the different Europarty groups they vote for, the ‘Economy’, ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ issue areas are the most salient ones. Sometimes the ‘Environment’ issue area is also quite salient (especially for the Greens/EFA where party group and voters seem pretty congruent on that issue area). The Europarty groups themselves however, are only in so far congruent with their voters that they also consider ‘Economy’ among the most salient issue areas or oftentimes the most salient issue area. The other issue areas that rank among the top three most salient issue areas for the Europarty groups are apart from that rather ‘European Union’ and ‘Civil Rights’ and not ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ as for the voters.

Table 4.6: UEN, their voters, issue area ranks, and issue area salience (%)

UEN			Voters UEN					
			MIP1		MIP2		MIP3	
Rank	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%	Issue area	%
1	European Union	28.6	Economy	61.8	Economy	40.9	Economy	21.6
2	Economy	16.3	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	13.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	11.8	Social Welfare	15.9
3	Civil Rights	12.2	Social Welfare	6.4	Social Welfare	9.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	9.1
4	Law and Order	12.2	Immigration	3.4	Immigration	2.7	Education	5.1
5	Social Welfare	6.1	Civil Rights	1.0	Multiculturalism	1.7	Civil Rights	2.4
6	Environment	4.1	Education	1.0	Civil Rights	1.4	Multiculturalism	2.0
7	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	4.1	Multiculturalism	1.0	Education	1.4	Law and Order	1.7
8	Agriculture	4.1	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.0	Environment	1.4	Immigration	1.4
9	Multiculturalism	4.1	(European)Elections	0.7	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.4	Techn. & Infrastr.	1.0
10	Techn. & Infrastr.	2.0	Law and Order	0.7	Law and Order	1.0	Agriculture	0.7
11	Education	2.0	Agriculture	0.3	Agriculture	0.7	Culture	0.3
12	Intern. Politics	0.0			European Union	0.3	Environment	0.3
13	Culture	0.0					(European)Elections	0.3
14	Immigration	0.0						
15	Cyprus Issue	0.0						

The same pattern can be observed for the UEN. The ‘Economy’, ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ issue areas are always among the three most salient issue area for the voters while for the party group itself only ‘Economy’ is present in the top three most salient issues. It is striking however, that the ‘European Union’ issue area, which ranks first, occupies with about 30% nearly twice as much space in the manifesto/image document as the ‘Economy’ issue area which ranks second.

4.3. Differences in priority congruence among Europarty groups

Two different methods were employed to measure the differences in priority congruence among Europarty groups. The first method takes into account both the ranks of the issue areas and the salience percentages. Since it is not possible to weigh the salience percentages of the three most important problem (MIP) question responses this method only uses the first three ranks of the issue priorities of the respective party groups and compares them with the three first ranks of the three MIP question responses of the voters of this particular party group. The outcome of this method is a percentage that states the level of priority congruence (for the three top issues).

The second method weighs all three MIP question responses equally. This makes it possible to calculate mean ranks for the different issue areas and compare them. The outcome of this method is a value that describes the added up differences in rank for the fifteen issue areas that are present for both Europarty groups and their voters.

4.3.1. Different levels of priority congruence

To determine the different levels of priority congruence among Europarty groups the first three ranks of the issue priorities of the party groups were compared with the first ranks of the MIP1, MIP2, and MIP3 question responses of the voters. That means, if a party group has the issue area ranks (1) ‘Economy’, (2) ‘Civil Rights’, and (3) ‘European Union’, it was analyzed how many of its voters consider ‘Economy’ the most salient (rank 1) of the MIP1 question responses, how many of its voters consider ‘Civil Rights’ the most salient (rank 1) of the MIP2 question responses, and consequently, how many of its voters consider ‘European Union’ the most salient (rank 1) of the MIP3 question responses. The percentages of voters for all three issues were then added up and divided by the number of MIP question responses (3) in order to calculate a total percentage of priority congruence for each Europarty group. The results are shown in the table below. A higher percentage indicates a higher level of priority congruence.

Table 5: Levels of priority congruence among Europarty groups

	Total %	Issue area1/MIP1	%	Issue area2/MIP2	%	Issue area3/MIP3	%
Greens/EFA	10.0	Environment	13.6	European Union	0.3	Economy	16.2
GUE/NGL	6.7	European Union	0.0	Civil Rights	3.4	Economy	16.7
PES	22.6	Economy	64.8	Civil Rights	2.7	European Union	0.4
ALDE	21.9	Economy	60.4	Civil Rights	4.8	European Union	0.4
EPP-ED	22.7	Economy	61.9	Environment	3.1	Civil Rights	3.1
UEN	14.4	European Union	0.0	Economy	40.9	Civil Rights	2.4

When looking at the total percentages it becomes clear that, as expected, the levels of priority congruence between the different Europarty groups and their voters are in general relatively low. This highest level of priority congruence is 22.7% (EPP-ED), all other levels are below this percentage, sometimes even far below (GUE/NGL 6.7%). Comparing the Europarty groups among themselves, it also becomes apparent that the three most priority congruent Europarty groups are the PES (22.6%), the ALDE (21.9%), and the EPP-ED (22.7%). The levels of priority congruence among these party groups are quite similar. Taking the different issue areas/MIPs into account one can see that this is primarily because of the high congruence on the first issue area/MIP (‘Economy’, 60-65% congruent). In general it can be noticed that the ‘Economy’ issue area is the number one reason for priority congruence among all Europarty groups (UEN 40% on issue area2/MIP2, GUE/NGL 16.7% on issue area3/MIP3, and Greens/EFA 16.2% on issue area3/MIP3). The Greens/EFA is the only Europarty group where the total level of priority congruence (10%) is determined by two relatively similar percentages on two of the three issue areas/MIPs (‘Environment’ 13.6% and ‘Economy’ 16.2%). Confirming the results from sub-question 2 (‘Economy’, ‘Civil Rights’

and ‘European Union’ as most salient for party groups in contrast to ‘Economy’, ‘Institutional and Administrative Reform’ and ‘Social Welfare’ as most salient for voters) the levels of priority congruence on issue areas like ‘Civil Rights’ and ‘European Union’ are also quite low in the present table (Table 5).

4.3.2. Differences in rank

To determine the differences in the ranks of issue areas among Europarty groups and their voters several steps were taken. First the mean ranks of the issue areas were calculated for both Europarty groups and their voters. The values from Table 4.1-4.6 served as a starting point. For the party groups the calculation was simple. Most of the ranks could be taken over. Only if several issue areas had the same salience percentage a mean rank was calculated.

For the voters the calculation was more complex because the mean ranks from three different MIP question responses had to be taken into account to calculate the mean rank of an issue area. After the mean ranks of the issue areas of both Europarty groups and voters had been calculated, the differences in the mean ranks between the party group and their voters were determined for the different issue areas. This was done by subtracting the party group mean rank of an issue area from the voter mean rank of an issue area¹¹.

As a next step the individual differences were squared and summed up. It was necessary to square the differences before summing them up because positive and negative differences would have cancelled each other out if they had not been squared beforehand. To receive the actual sum of the differences in rank the square roots of the previously calculated values were extracted. The results are shown in Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8 below. This time a higher difference in ranks indicates a lower level of priority congruence. A difference of zero would mean perfect priority congruence.

¹¹ Please note that for the ‘Globalization’ and ‘(European)Elections’ issue areas no rank differences could be calculated because these two issue areas are only present on the voter side. The two issue areas were nevertheless taken into consideration when determining the mean ranks of the issue areas on the voter side to not falsify the mean ranks of the other fifteen issue areas.

Table 6: Square roots of the sums of the squared differences in ranks

Greens/EFA			VotersGreens/EFA			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference VotersGreens/EFA-Greens/EFA				
1	Environment	1	Economy	European Union	10.5	110.25	536	23.2
2	European Union	2	Environment	Economy	-2	4		
3	Economy	3	Social Welfare	Civil Rights	-1	1		
4	Social Welfare	4	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Law and Order	0.5	0.25		
5	Agriculture	5.5	Civil Rights	Social Welfare	-1	1		
6.5	Civil Rights	5.5	Education	Environment	1	1		
6.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	7	Immigration	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-2.5	6.25		
8	Intern. Politics	8.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	Agriculture	7.5	56.25		
9.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	8.5	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism	-3	9		
9.5	Law and Order	10	Law and Order	Techn. & Infrastr.	-1	1		
11.5	Education	11	(European)Elections	Education	-6	36		
11.5	Multiculturalism	12.5	European Union	Intern. Politics	-8	64		
14	Culture	12.5	Agriculture	Culture	-14	196		
14	Immigration	14	Globalization	Immigration	-7	49		
14	Cyprus Issue	15	Cyprus Issue	Cyprus Issue	1	1		
		16.5	Intern. Politics					
		16.5	Culture					

GUE/NGL			VotersGUE/NGL			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference VotersGUE/NGL-GUE/NGL				
1.5	European Union	1	Economy	European Union	12.5	156.25	535.5	23.1
1.5	Civil Rights	2	Social Welfare	Economy	-2	4		
3	Economy	3	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Civil Rights	5.5	30.25		
4	Environment	4	Cyprus Issue	Law and Order	-0.5	0.25		
5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	5	Education	Social Welfare	-4	16		
6	Social Welfare	6	Environment	Environment	2	4		
7	Agriculture	7	Civil Rights	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-2	4		
8	Intern. Politics	8	Immigration	Agriculture	8	64		
9	Education	9	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism	-2.5	6.25		
10	Culture	10	Techn. & Infrastr.	Techn. & Infrastr.	-3	9		
11.5	Law and Order	11	Law and Order	Education	-4	16		
11.5	Multiculturalism	12	(European)Elections	Intern. Politics	-8	64		
13	Techn. & Infrastr.	13	Culture	Culture	3	9		
14.5	Immigration	14	European Union	Immigration	-6.5	42.25		
14.5	Cyprus Issue	15	Agriculture	Cyprus Issue	-10.5	110.25		
		16	Globalization					
		17	Intern. Politics					

PES			VotersPES			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference VotersPES-PES				
1	Economy	1	Economy	European Union	11	121	356.25	18.9
2	Civil Rights	2	Social Welfare	Economy	0	0		
3	European Union	3	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Civil Rights	4	16		
4.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	4.5	Immigration	Law and Order	0	0		
4.5	Social Welfare	4.5	Environment	Social Welfare	-2.5	6.25		
6	Environment	6	Civil Rights	Environment	-1.5	2.25		
7	Techn. & Infrastr.	7	Education	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-1.5	2.25		
8	Law and Order	8	Law and Order	Agriculture	-1.5	2.25		
9	Intern. Politics	9	Techn. & Infrastr.	Multiculturalism	-1	1		
10	Education	10	Multiculturalism	Techn. & Infrastr.	2	4		
11	Multiculturalism	11	Agriculture	Education	-3	9		
12.5	Agriculture	12	(European)Elections	Intern. Politics	-9	81		
12.5	Culture	13	Cyprus Issue	Culture	3	9		
14.5	Immigration	14	European Union	Immigration	-10	100		
14.5	Cyprus Issue	15.5	Culture	Cyprus Issue	-1.5	2.25		
		15.5	Globalization					
		17	Intern. Politics					

ALDE			VotersALDE			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference	VotersALDE-			
1	Economy	1	Economy	European Union	10	100	533.5	23.1
2	Civil Rights	2.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Economy	0	0		
3	European Union	2.5	Social Welfare	Civil Rights	3	9		
4	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	4	Environment	Law and Order	1	1		
6.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	5	Civil Rights	Social Welfare	-7.5	56.25		
6.5	Law and Order	6	Immigration	Environment	-5	25		
6.5	Intern. Politics	7.5	Law and Order	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-1.5	2.25		
6.5	Agriculture	7.5	Education	Agriculture	3.5	12.25		
9	Environment	9	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism	-4	16		
10	Social Welfare	10	Agriculture	Techn. & Infrastr.	4.5	20.25		
13	Education	11	Techn. & Infrastr.	Education	-5.5	30.25		
13	Multiculturalism	12	(European)Elections	Intern. Politics	-6.5	42.25		
13	Culture	13	European Union	Culture	-13	169		
13	Immigration	14	Cyprus Issue	Immigration	-7	49		
13	Cyprus Issue	15	Globalization	Cyprus Issue	1	1		
		16	Culture					
		17	Intern. Politics					

EPP-ED			Voters EPP-ED			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference	VotersEPP-ED-			
1	Economy	1	Economy	European Union	7	49	406.5	20.2
2	Environment	2	Social Welfare	Economy	0	0		
3	Civil Rights	3	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Civil Rights	2	4		
4	Law and Order	4	Immigration	Law and Order	3	9		
5	Techn. & Infrastr.	5	Civil Rights	Social Welfare	-5	25		
6	European Union	6	Environment	Environment	4	16		
7	Social Welfare	7	Law and Order	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-5	25		
8	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	8	Education	Agriculture	3	9		
9	Agriculture	9	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism	-3	9		
10	Intern. Politics	10	Techn. & Infrastr.	Techn. & Infrastr.	5	25		
11	Education	11	Cyprus Issue	Education	-3	9		
12	Multiculturalism	12	Agriculture	Intern. Politics	-10	100		
13	Culture	13	European Union	Culture	2	4		
14.5	Immigration	14	(European)Elections	Immigration	-10.5	110.25		
14.5	Cyprus Issue	15	Culture	Cyprus Issue	-3.5	12.25		
		16	Intern. Politics					
		17	Globalization					

UEN			Voters UEN			Squared differences	Sum	Square root
Rank	Issue area	Rank	Issue area	Difference	VotersUEN-			
1	European Union	1	Economy	European Union	13	169	753	27.4
2	Economy	2	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	Economy	-1	1		
3.5	Civil Rights	3	Social Welfare	Civil Rights	3.5	12.25		
3.5	Law and Order	4	Immigration	Law and Order	5.5	30.25		
5	Social Welfare	5	Multiculturalism	Social Welfare	-2	4		
7.5	Environment	6	Education	Environment	3.5	12.25		
7.5	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	7	Civil Rights	Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-5.5	30.25		
7.5	Agriculture	8	Techn. & Infrastr.	Agriculture	2.5	6.25		
7.5	Multiculturalism	9	Law and Order	Multiculturalism	-2.5	6.25		
10.5	Techn. & Infrastr.	10	Agriculture	Techn. & Infrastr.	-2.5	6.25		
10.5	Education	11	Environment	Education	-4.5	20.25		
13.5	Intern. Politics	12	(European)Elections	Intern. Politics	-13.5	182.25		
13.5	Culture	13	Culture	Culture	-0.5	0.25		
13.5	Immigration	14	European Union	Immigration	-9.5	90.25		
13.5	Cyprus Issue	16	Globalization	Cyprus Issue	-13.5	182.25		
		16	Intern. Politics					
		16	Cyprus Issue					

Table 7: Voter-Europarty group differences among issue areas

	Greens/EFA	GUE/NGL	PES	ALDE	EPP-ED	UEN
Economy	-2	-2	0	0	0	-1
Law and Order	0.5	-0.5	0	1	3	5.5
Multiculturalism	-3	-2.5	-1	-4	-3	-2.5
Environment	1	2	-1.5	-5	4	3.5
Inst. & Adm. Ref.	-2.5	-2	-1.5	-1.5	-5	-5.5
Techn. & Infrastr.	-1	-3	2	4.5	5	-2.5
Civil Rights	-1	5.5	4	3	2	3.5
Social Welfare	-1	-4	-2.5	-7.5	-5	-2
Agriculture	7.5	8	-1.5	3.5	3	2.5
Education	-6	-4	-3	-5.5	-3	-4.5
Cyprus Issue	1	-10.5	-1.5	1	-3.5	-13.5
Culture	-14	3	3	-13	2	-0.5
Immigration	-7	-6.5	-10	-7	-10.5	-9.5
Intern. Politics	-8	-8	-9	-6.5	-10	-13.5
European Union	10.5	12.5	11	10	7	13

Table 8: Two measures of priority congruence

Europarty group	Priority congruence (Square root of differences in rank)	Priority congruence (Level in % from Table 5)
Greens/EFA	23.2	10.0
GUE/NGL	23.1	6.7
PES	18.9	22.6
ALDE	23.1	21.9
EPP-ED	20.2	22.7
UEN	27.4	14.4

As can be seen in Table 8 the rank differences for the different Europarty groups vary. The PES is the party group with the lowest rank difference (18.9). The second lowest rank difference has the EPP-ED (20.2). The ALDE, the GUE/NGL and the Greens/EFA have similar rank differences of 23.1 or 23.2. The party group with the highest difference is the UEN (27.4). Compared to the levels of priority congruence from Table 5 it becomes clear that the results are partly confirmed. PES, ALDE, and EPP-ED have low differences and high percentages compared to the other Europarty groups and the UEN has a high difference and a low percentage. For the Greens/EFA and the GUE/NGL the results from Table 5 are not confirmed. The two party groups have a low percentage but the rank difference is also low (and not higher than for the other party groups).

In contrast to the first method (percentages), the second method (rank differences) may be more accurate to measure priority congruence because it uses more information than the first method. The second method takes into account all ranks for all issue areas and not only the top ranks or issue areas.

5. Conclusion

This research project has analyzed the extent to which there was priority congruence on policy-related valence issues between the European electorate and the different Europarty groups at the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections. To answer the research question, four steps were taken. The first step was to analyze the issue priorities of seven different Europarty groups. The second step was to assign voters to the seven Europarty groups. The third step was to analyze the issue priorities of these voters and compare them to the issue priorities of the respective party group. And finally the fourth step was to calculate indicators of priority congruence for the seven Europarty groups and their voters by comparing the salience ranks of the different issue areas of voters and Europarty groups.

The findings of the first method show that the level of priority congruence between European voters and Europarty groups is relatively low (only about 20%; and a relatively high rank difference of about 20) and that the existing level of priority congruence is to be primarily attributed to a relatively high congruence on a single issue area (the 'Economy' issue area) while there is, with a few exemptions, very little congruence on other issue areas. Economic issues are certainly considered most salient by both European voters and Europarty groups. In contrast to that, other issues like social welfare or environmental topics that are also relatively salient to European voters seem to receive insufficient attention from the political groups in the European Parliament. Furthermore Europarty groups vary with regard to the levels of priority congruence but the variation is not large when looking at the second, more suitable, measure of priority congruence (the rank differences are rather similar among Europarty groups).

This stands in contrast to findings about policy congruence between the European Parliament and European citizens. According to Walczak and van der Brug (2013) the level of policy congruence differs significantly across political parties. They find that "parties with clear ideological profiles (mainly social democratic, Christian democratic, conservative and liberal parties) represent their voters best in these domains" (Walczak & van der Brug, 2013, p. 18).

Previous research on policy congruence has also shown that congruence between the European parliament and European citizens is high on the ideological left/right dimension but low on other dimensions and that economic questions also play the most important role within the ideological dimension (Costello, Thomassen, & Rosema, 2012). This supports the notion that congruence on economic issues is in general the primary source for congruence between European citizens and the European Parliament.

5.1. Social and scientific relevance

The relevance of priority congruence between political groups of the European Parliament and European voters may be doubted because there is no direct link between these groups and European voters. Even Europarties are oftentimes believed to “offer no link between citizens and governmental choice, and they lack sufficient cohesion to behave as a party” (Sigalas & Pollak, 2012, p. 39). In European elections, voters in fact vote for national political parties and the candidates these parties put forward and not for Europarties, not to speak of political groups of the European Parliament. The political distance between European voters and Europarty groups is quite large.

On the other hand the purpose of the European Parliament, especially when viewed as the only democratically elected body within the European Union, is to represent the interests of European citizens. As argued by the literature on political representation, good political representation requires also priority congruence (to some extent at least). Therefore, as a first step in this direction, the contribution of this paper lies in the description of the level of priority congruence between political groups of the European parliament and their voters, while at the same time taking into account existing scientific literature on the concept of priority congruence.

5.2. Limitations and Recommendations for future research

As mentioned above, the analysis of priority congruence between Europarty groups and voters conducted in this paper requires the indirect assignment of voters to Europarty groups on the one hand and the distribution of items and issues of coded Euromanifesto and EES survey data into comparable issue areas for both Europarty groups and voters. This method provides indicators for measuring priority congruence but it also involves at least two possible sources of errors that can distort the obtained results. The first possible source of errors is the assignment process of national political parties to Europarty groups. Parties may have been assigned to the wrong Europarty group or they may have not been assigned to a party group although they were affiliated with one. Furthermore, The second possible source of errors is the distribution of items and issues into issue areas. The original datasets as coded by the conductors of the 2009 EES Euromanifesto study and the 2009 EES Voter study were not directly comparable with regard to priority congruence on policy-related valence issues. The items coded in the Euromanifesto dataset were sometimes different from the issues listed for the MIP question responses in the voter dataset. There were also fewer items on the Euromanifesto side than there were issues on the voter side. That means an issue area on the party group side may contain other items or issues than the same issue area on the voter side. Besides that issues may be classified in other categories by respondents of the voter study than by Europarty groups in their manifestos. For example an issue like ‘Immigration’ that

was listed as 'Immigration' for the responses of the voter study could have been classified as a subcategory of another issue area in the Euromanifesto dataset (e.g. 'Multiculturalism', 'International Politics', or 'European Union'). The same issue would then have been put into different issue areas for voters and party groups and in the analysis this may have resulted in incongruence although there was in fact congruence on that issue. The information provided in the datasets was not detailed enough from that perspective.

Another source for errors is the calculation of indicators of priority congruence because the voter data did not render assistance in how to weigh the responses three MIP questions used to measure salience attached to issues by voters. The made assumption that all three question responses weigh equally may have again falsified the results.

In future research issue areas should be identical for party groups and voters. One way to achieve this could be to use the coded Euromanifesto dataset as a basis. Voters could then be asked to select their favorite Europarty or Europarty group and their prioritized issues from a list that contains the items from the coded Euromanifesto dataset. This would facilitate a comparison by avoiding at least the first two possible sources of errors.

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Appendix

Table A1: Issue Categories and Issue Areas (Spoon & Kluver, 2014)

CMP-emp policy categories	Issue area
703: Farmers	Agriculture
201: Freedom and human rights	Civil Rights
202: Democracy	
603: Traditional morality (positive)	
604: Traditional morality (negative)	
705: Underprivileged minority groups	
706: Non-economic demographic groups	
502: Culture	Culture
401: Free enterprise	Economy
402: Incentives	
403: Market regulation	
404: Economic planning	
408: Economic goals	
409: Keynesian demand management	
410: Productivity	
412: Controlled economy	
413: Nationalization	
414: Economic orthodoxy	
704: Middle class and professional groups	
506: Education expansion	Education
507: Education limitation	
416: Anti-growth economy (positive)	Environment
501: Environmental protection	
108: EC/EU (positive)	European integration
110: EC/EU (negative)	
203: Constitutionalism (positive)	Institutional and administrative reform
204: Constitutionalism (negative)	
301: Decentralization	
302: Centralization	
303: Government and administrative efficiency	
304: Political corruption	
305: Political authority	
101: Foreign and special relations (positive)	International politics
102: Foreign and special relations (negative)	
103: Anti-imperialism (positive)	
104: Military (positive)	
105: Military (negative)	
106: Peace (positive)	
107: Internationalism (positive)	
109: Internationalism (negative)	
406: Protectionism (positive)	
407: Protectionism (negative)	
605: Law and Order	Law and order
601: National way of life (positive)	Multiculturalism
602: National way of life (negative)	
607: Multiculturalism (positive)	
608: Multiculturalism (negative)	
503: Social justice	Social welfare
504: Welfare state expansion	
505: Welfare state limitation	
606: Social harmony	
411: Technology and infrastructure	Technology and infrastructure

Table A2: Issues of coded Euromanifesto data and issue areas

Euromanifesto issue	Issue area
Foreign Special Relationships (FSR): General FSR to Eastern European Countries of the EU FSR to Eastern European Countries not in the EU FSR to Russia FSR to USA Anti-Imperialism Military Peace - Positive Internationalism Protectionism	International politics
Europe, European Community/ Union: General Financing the EC/EU Mentions of the European Central Bank EC/EU Enlargement: General Membership in the EU of East European countries currently not in the EU Membership in the EU of Balkan countries currently not in the EU Membership of the Turkey in the EU Complexity of the EC/EU Political System EU Integration Competences of the European Parliament Competences of the European Commission Competences of the European Council/ Council of Ministers: General Voting Procedures in the (European) Council Competences of the European Court of Justice Competences of Other EC/EU Institutions: General	European Union
Freedom Human Rights Democracy Traditional Morality Underprivileged Minority Groups: General UMG: Handicapped UMG: Homosexuals UMG: Immigrants and Foreigners in the Manifesto Country UMG: Ethnic Minorities/People of the Manifesto Country Living Abroad Non-Economic Demographic Groups: General NEDG: Women NEDG: Old People NEDG: Young People NEDG: Linguistic Groups	Civil Rights
Constitutionalism Decentralization: General Transfer of Power to the EC/EU Executive and Administrative Efficiency Political Corruption Political Authority	Institutional and administrative reform
Free Enterprise: General Property-Restitution Controlled Economy: General Social Ownership Mixed Economy Publicly-Owned Industry Socialist Property Economic Planning: General EC/EU Structural Funds Nationalization: Generalization Privatisation Corporatism Market Regulations Marxist Analysis Incentives Keynesian Demand Management Productivity Economic Orthodoxy Economic Goals: General Creating Jobs Labour Migration: Positive Single Market European Monetary Union/ European Currency Labour Groups	Economy

Middle Class and Professional Groups

Technology and Infrastructure	Technology and Infrastructure
Anti-Growth Economy Environmental Protection	Environment
Culture	Culture
Social Justice Welfare State: General WS: Pensions WS: Health Care and Nursing Service WS: Social Housing WS: Child Care WS: Job Programs Social Harmony	Social welfare
Education	Education
Multiculturalism National Way of Life	Multiculturalism
Law and Order: General Fight against terrorism	Law and order
Immigration	Immigration
Cyprus Issue	Cyprus Issue
Agriculture and Farmers	Agriculture
Peace - Negative	(not included)
Anti-Imperialism - Negative	

Table A3: National parties assigned to Europarty groups

National Party	Europarty group
The Greens (Austria)	Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA)
Green! (Belgium)	
New Flemish Alliance (Belgium)	
Ecolo (Belgium)	
Ecological and Environmental Movement (Cyprus)	
Green Party (Czech Republic)	
Alliance 90/The Greens (Germany)	
Socialist Peoples Party (Denmark)	
Estonian Greens (Estonia)	
Ecologist Greens (Greece)	
Republican Left of Catalonia (Spain)	
Galician Nationalist Bloc (Spain)	
Basque Social Democracy (Spain)	
Green League (Finland)	
The Greens (France)	
Green Party (Ireland)	
The Greens (Luxembourg)	
Union of Greens and Farmers (Latvia)	
For Human Rights in United Latvia (Latvia)	
Democratic Alternative (Malta)	

Green Left (Netherlands)
Green Party (Sweden)
Youth Party (Slovenia)
Scottish National Party (Great Britain)
Plaid Cymru (Great Britain)
Green Party (Great Britain)

Communist Party of Austria (Austria)
Progressive Party of Working People (Cyprus)
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Czech Republic)
The Left (Germany)
Coalition of the Radical Left (Greece)
United Left (Spain)
Left Alliance (Finland)
French Communist Party (France)
Left Party (France)
Sinn Fein (Ireland)
Communist Refoundation Party (Italy)
Left and Freedom (Italy)
The Left (Luxembourg)
Party for Animals (Netherlands)
Left Bloc (Portugal)
Left Party (Sweden)
Communist Party of Slovakia (Slovakia)

Confederal Group of the European
United Left - Nordic Green Left
(GUE/NGL)

Social Democratic Party of Austria (Austria)
Socialist Party Different (Belgium)
Socialist Party (Belgium)
Coalition for Bulgaria (BSP) (Bulgaria)
Movement for Social Democracy (Cyprus)
Czech Social Democratic Party (Czech Republic)
Social Democratic Party (Germany)
Social Democrats (Denmark)
Social Democratic Party (Estonia)
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Greece)
Spanish Socialist Workers Party (Spain)
Social Democratic Party of Finland (Finland)
Socialist Party (France)
Hungarian Socialist Party (Hungary)
Labour Party (Ireland)
Democratic Party (Italy)
Social Democratic Party of Lithuania (Lithuania)
Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party (Luxembourg)
Labour Party (Malta)
Labour Party (Netherlands)
Democratic Left Alliance (Poland)

Party of European Socialists (PES)

Socialist Party (Portugal)
Social Democratic Party (Romania)
Social Democrats (Sweden)
Social Democrats (Slovenia)
Direction-Social Democracy (Slovakia)
Labour (Great Britain)

Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Belgium)
Reformist Movement (Belgium)
National Movement for Stability and Progress (Bulgaria)
Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) (Bulgaria)
European Party (Cyprus)
Free Democratic Party (Germany)
Danish Social Liberal Party (Denmark)
Liberal Party (Denmark)
Estonian Reform Party (Estonia)
Estonian Centre Party (Estonia)
Basque Nationalist Party (Spain)
Centre Party (Finland)
Swedish Peoples Party (Finland)
Democratic Movement (France)
Alliance of Free Democrats (Hungary)
Italy of Values (Italy)
Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (Lithuania)
Labour Party (Lithuania)
Liberal and Centre Union (Lithuania)
Democratic Party (Luxembourg)
Peoples Party for Freedom and Democracy (Netherlands)
Democrats 66 (Netherlands)
Centre Party (Sweden)
Liberal Peoples Party (Sweden)
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (Slovenia)
For Real (Slovenia)
Peoples Party-Movement for Democratic Slovakia (Slovakia)
Free Forum (Slovakia)
Liberal Democrats (Great Britain)

Group of the Alliance of Liberals and
Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

Austrian Peoples Party (Austria)
Christian Democratic and Flemish Party (Belgium)
Humanist Democratic Centre (Belgium)
Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)
Blue Coalition (SDS-DSB) (Bulgaria)
Democratic Rally (Cyprus)
Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (Czech Republic)
Civic Democratic Party (Czech Republic)
Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (Germany)

European People's Party-European
Democrats (EPP-ED)

Conservative Peoples Party (Denmark)
 Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (Estonia)
 New Democracy (Greece)
 Peoples Party (Spain)
 National Coalition Party (Finland)
 Christian Democrats in Finland (Finland)
 Union for a Popular Movement (France)
 Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union (Hungary)
 Christian Democratic Peoples Party (Hungary)
 Fine Gael (Ireland)
 The People of Freedom (Italy)
 Union of Christian and Centre Democrats (Italy)
 Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats (Lithuania)
 Christian Social Peoples Party (Luxembourg)
 Peoples Party (Latvia)
 New Era Party (Latvia)
 Civic Union (Latvia)
 Society for Other Politics (Latvia)
 Nationalist Party (Malta)
 Christian Democratic Appeal (Netherlands)
 Polish Peoples Party (Poland)
 Civic Platform (Poland)
 Democratic and Social Centre-Peoples Party (Portugal)
 Social Democratic Party (Portugal)
 Democratic Liberal Party (Romania)
 National Liberal Party (Romania)
 Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (Romania)
 Christian-Democratic National Peasants Party (Romania)
 Moderate Party (Sweden)
 Christian Democrats (Sweden)
 Slovenian Peoples Party (Slovenia)
 Slovenian Democratic Party (Slovenia)
 New Slovenia-Christian Peoples Party (Slovenia)
 Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (Slovakia)
 SMK (Slovakia)
 Christian Democratic Movement (Slovakia)

Conservative Peoples Party of Estonia (Estonia)
 Popular Orthodox Rally (Greece)
 Order and Justice Party (Lithuania)
 Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union (Lithuania)
 Alternative Democratic Reform Party (Luxembourg)
 For Fatherland and Freedom (Latvia)
 Law and Justice (Poland)
 Slovak National Party (Slovakia)

Union for Europe of the Nations Group
 (UEN)

June Movement (Denmark)

Independence/Democracy Group

Peoples Movement against the EU (Denmark)	(IND/DEM)
Freedom Party of Austria (Austria)	Not Assigned
Alliance for the Future of Austria (Austria)	
Hans-Peter Martins List (Austria)	
Young Liberals (Austria)	
Flemish Interest (Belgium)	
List Dedecker (Belgium)	
Social Liberal Party (Belgium)	
Workers Party of Belgium (Belgium)	
National Front (Belgium)	
National Union Attack (Bulgaria)	
NAPRED (Bulgaria)	
Order, Lawfulness, and Justice (RZS) (Bulgaria)	
Democratic Party (Cyprus)	
Danish Peoples Party (Denmark)	
Liberal Alliance (Denmark)	
Communist Party of Greece (Greece)	
Union, Progress, and Democracy (Spain)	
Convergence and Union (Spain)	
Canarian Coalition (Spain)	
Navarre Yes (Spain)	
Navarrese Peoples Union (Spain)	
True Finns (Finland)	
Extreme Left (France)	
National Front (France)	
Movement for a Better Hungary (Hungary)	
Hungarian Communist Workers Party (Hungary)	
Hungarian Democratic Forum (Hungary)	
Fianna Fail (Ireland)	
Libertas (Ireland)	
An independent candidate (Ireland)	
North League (Italy)	
The Right (Italy)	
National Resurrection Party (Lithuania)	
Election of Lithuanias Poles (Lithuania)	
New Union Social Liberals (Lithuania)	
Communist Party of Luxembourg (Luxembourg)	
Citizens List (Luxembourg)	
Harmony Centre (Latvia)	
Latvias First Party/Latvias Way (Latvia)	
National Action (Malta)	
Christian Union (Netherlands)	
Reformed Political Party (Netherlands)	
Socialist party (Netherlands)	
Party for Freedom (Netherlands)	

Proud of the Netherlands (Netherlands)
 Libertas (Poland)
 Coalition Agreement for the Future (Poland)
 Democratic Union Coalition (Portugal)
 Conservative Party (Romania)
 Greater Romania Party (Romania)
 Sweden Democrats (Sweden)
 Pirate Party (Sweden)
 Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (Slovenia)
 Slovenian National Party (Slovenia)
 Conservatives (Great Britain)
 UK Independence Party (Great Britain)
 British National Party (BNP) (Great Britain)

Table A4: MIP question responses and issue areas

MIP question response	Issue area
Foreign policy in general, relations between states or (international) political organisations	International politics
Foreign policy towards Eastern European countries that are now members of the EU	
Foreign policy towards Eastern European countries that are not members of the EU	
Foreign Policy towards Russia	
Foreign Policy towards United States of America	
Defence and national security of national government	
Military in general (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Military expenditure	
Armed forces (modernization, structure, military strength)	
NATO, Military treaties obligations, Military cooperation	
Peace (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Peace negotiations	
Peace keeping missions/troops	
Protectionism (as opposed to international cooperation, methods to protect national markets, economic growth)	
European Integration	European Union
Financing the EC/EU: National contributions to finance the EC/EU (from member states)	
Competences of the European Commission (Powers of the European Commission)	
Competences of the European Council/Council of Ministers (Powers of the European Council/Council of Ministers)	
Voting procedures in the (European) Council	
Competences of the European Court of Justice (references to the powers of the European Court of Justice)	
Competences of Other EC/EU Institutions (References to the Powers of other EC/EU Institutions)	
European Central Bank	
Membership in the EU of East European countries currently not in the EU	
Membership in the EU of Balkan countries currently not in the EU	

Freedom and Human Rights (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	Civil Rights
Civil rights, Civil liberties, Rights in general	
Equality before Law	
Democracy (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Democracy, sovereignty of the people	
Underprivileged Minority Groups (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Handicapped (policies aimed at, treatment)	
Homosexuals	
Gay marriage	
Ethnic Minorities	
Non-economic Demographic Groups (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Women (policies aimed at, treatment)	
Old People (policies aimed at, treatment)	
Young People (policies aimed at, treatment)	
Linguistic Groups (policies aimed at, treatment)	
National language policies	
Division of power among branches of government	Institutional and administrative reform
Separation of church and state	
Rule of Law	
Democratic role of political parties	
Democratic role of the media	
Constitutionalism (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Discussion about national constitution	
Decentralization (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Federalism, Devolution, Regional Autonomy	
Executive and Administrative Efficiency; Efficient government and administration.	
Political Corruption (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
EU political corruption, fraud, scandals EU-level politicians or institutions, including regulations and anti-corruption	
National Political corruption (political parties, politicians, abuse of national funds, etc., including regulations and	
Political Authority: Strong Government, Government Stability	
Economic Conditions	Economy
Interest Rates	
Economic structure/policies/goals/conditions (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Free enterprise capitalism	
Private property rights	
Government intervention/control over the economy (prices , wages rents)	
Social Ownership	
Publicly-Owned Industry	
Economic Planning (of long-term economic planning, create of such a plan by authorities.)	
EC/EU Structural Fund (EU funds for underdeveloped regions/areas)	
Government Ownership, nationalisation in general (land. Banks, etc)	

Privatisation (of government owned business or industry)	
Corporatism (involvement of collaborations of employees and trade unions in the economic planning)	
National policy on monopolies, Trusts, consumer and small businesses protection	
Incentives (references to tax and wage policies, financial incentives to start enterprises or stimulate investment)	
Productivity (references to economic growth, the need to increase/facilitate production)	
Creating Jobs (specifically)	
Labour Migration	
Single Market/Common market	
Inflation	
Unemployment	
National employment policies	
Stock market and its developments (shares, bonds, AEX, DAX, Dow Jones etc.)	
Business (companies, banks, industry, mergers, manufacturing,)	
Bankruptcy of business, companies, banks (specifically)	
Debt (public debt of a state, a community etc.)	
Taxes	
Trade (international trade), trade deficits	
Wages and Earnings	
Effect of Euro on the Economy	
Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy.	
Labour Groups (references to trade unions, unemployed, employees)	
Technology and Infrastructure (modernization, development of industry, methods of transport, communication, research)	Technology and infrastructure
National energy policy	
National transportation policy	
National media and ICT policy	
Environment	Environment
Climate Change	
Anti-Growth Economy (references to alternative economic planning e.g Green Politics)	
Environmental Protection	
National environmental policy	
Culture (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	Culture
National cultural policy (subsidies for theatre's, movies, music etc.; the export of own culture, language etc.	
Culture (arts, films/movies, theatre, music, media)	
Health Care	Social welfare
Social Justice	
Welfare State (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
Pensions	
Nursing Services	
National health care policy	

Social Housing	
Child Care	
Education (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	Education
National Education Policy	
Multiculturalism (cultural diversity, cultural plurality)	Multiculturalism
National Way of Life (reference to patriotism/nationalism, support/opposition for established national ideas and/or value)	
Law and Order (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	Law and order
Fight against terrorism	
National Crime prevention policy(ies)	
Courts, trials, court decisions	
Immigration	Immigration
National Immigration policy	
Cyprus Issue	Cyprus Issue
Agriculture and Farmers (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	Agriculture
National Agricultural policy	
Globalization	Globalization
European Elections: European Elections in general	(European) Elections
European Elections: profiles of candidates, politicians, parties; their images and strategic positions	
European Elections: Electioneering, campaigning (strategy, style, finance, fundraising, events, media appearances)	
Media coverage of the campaign	
European elections: Voters, public opinion, polls, (anticipated) electoral success	
European Election: Voter turnout (e.g. expectations) (only if EU elections)	
European Elections: list of party positions on issues (a “manifesto story“)	
European Elections: Voting procedures (e.g. electronic voting machines, foreign votes)	
European Elections: Election laws, rules, regulations	
European Elections: (Formal, public) debates (as an event) between parties, politicians	
Political consequences of EP election outcome (e.g. for national-level politicians, parties)	
EU-level politicians’ personality (e.g., candidate MEP’s personal character, background, leadership qualities)	
Vote advice for European Elections	
Other EU election-related topics	
National elections in EU Countries	
National elections in non-EU Countries	
Other topic related to elections	
Imperialism	(not included)
Abortion	
Accidents	

Crime Story

Human interest (soft news: about prominent persons, celebrities, anniversaries, weddings, animals, strange/funny events)

(Natural) disasters (earthquakes, floods)

Religion

Sports

Weather Report/Forecast

Any other topic
