

The traditional spatial theory of elections has recently been challenged by alternative conceptualizations, which either dispute the role of euclidean distance in voting (directional theory) or argue that voter preferences are endogenous to the political process (mobilizational theory). In contrast to spatial theory, these alternative models predict that political parties will systematically adopt policy positions that are more extreme than those prevalent within their constituencies. Based on evidence from seven European countries and 37 political parties, this study lends support to the alternative hypotheses. Voters are attracted to parties presenting relatively "intense" policy positions, and some party elites appear to be actively engaged in public opinion formation. However, the study also shows that the centrifugal forces that pull parties away from their voters are checked by centripetal forces that can only be analyzed with the aid of spatial concepts.

THE LOGICS OF ELECTORAL POLITICS

Spatial, Directional, and Mobilizational Effects

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A real political sociology calls for a simultaneous exploration of how parties are conditioned by the society *and* the society is conditioned by the party system.

Giovanni Sartori (1969, p. 93)

The spatial theory of elections has dominated political science for more than three decades. Recently, however, the theory has come under attack for

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misrepresenting the psychology of voting (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989) and for lacking an adequate theory of voter preference formation (Przeworski & Sprague, 1986). Critics also point to evidence that parties, contrary to the prediction of the spatial model, systematically adopt more extreme policy positions than those of the majority of voters.

The Rabinowitz-Macdonald (1989) theory of directional voting holds that voters have only vaguely defined preferences over the set of salient political issues, and that voting behavior is determined by which side of issues voters are on, how passionately they feel about these issues, and which party offers the most intense policy alternative in the same direction. In contrast to traditional spatial theory, the model predicts that parties that adopt moderately extreme issue positions will generate more electoral support than centrist parties. The Przeworski-Sprague (1986) theory of party competition abandons the assumption in spatial theory that voter preferences are exogenous to the political process, and argues that politicians are often willing to forgo short-term vote maximization to influence prevailing political identities and values in the electorate. The theory hypothesizes that parties seeking political change will engage in efforts at public opinion formation that distance party elites from their more centrist constituencies.

Both directional and mobilizational theory thus point to centrifugal tendencies in electoral competition that may help to explain noncongruent elite-voter attitudes. Yet, an alternative thesis, which is consistent with spatial assumptions, explains such attitude disparities as the result of extreme party activists exercising control over intraparty policy formation. Which model provides a more accurate description of reality is crucial for how we understand voting behavior, party competition, and political representation. The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate the competing arguments and to bring comparative evidence to bear on the alternative hypotheses.

The first two sections of the article are devoted to a critical discussion of the theoretical issues, whereas the rest of the article presents comparative evidence from seven European countries and for 37 political parties. The empirical analysis shows that parties do not generally behave in conformity with traditional spatial theory and that party activists are not the cause of this lack of conformity. Instead, the data lend support to both directional and mobilizational theory. At the same time, however, it is argued that for both empirical and theoretical reasons, spatial distance enters into the determination of electoral behavior in ways that have important implications for our understanding of competitive party politics. More precisely, the centrifugal forces of directional voting and opinion formation is checked by the need for rational parties to appear representative to their voters.

THE SPATIAL PARADIGM

The Downsian (1957) spatial theory of elections is familiar and can be summarized in a few axioms and propositions. First, the model assumes that the policy preferences of voters across different issue dimensions are both clearly perceived and exogenous to the political process itself. Second, voters are expected to vote for the candidate or party closest to their own position. Third, parties are assumed to adopt issue positions that maximize their electoral support. Based on these assumptions, Downs showed that, in a two-party system with voters uniformly distributed around the center of a left-right political continuum, the vote maximizing strategy for either party would be at the location of the median voter.

The simplicity and axiomatic nature of Downs's (1957) argument have proven highly amenable to formal representations and extensions (e.g., Davis, Hinich, & Ordeshook, 1970; Enelow & Hinich, 1984). With modifications, the model for two-party systems can be generalized to several dimensions (Davis et al., 1970; McKelvey, 1986), although it has proven more difficult to yield clear predictions about party strategies for multiparty systems (Austen-Smith & Banks, 1988; Rabinowitz, Macdonald, & Listhaug, 1991; Shepsle & Cohen, 1990). Even in the case of multiparty systems, however, the theory is explicit about the central role that the distribution of voters plays for party strategies: Vote-maximizing parties are attracted to those policy positions favored by large groups of voters. Conversely, because voters are attracted to parties that represent issue positions close to their own, it is implied that the issue positions favored by party supporters will tend to mirror those of the party for which they vote.

Although the spatial theory represents an elegant and convincing account of some salient attributes of democratic politics—especially the need for successful political parties to be sensitive to public opinion—it has been marred by a persistent empirical anomaly. Thus it has been frequently observed that political parties and candidates tend to take more extreme issue positions than their own electorates. For example, Dalton (1985) reports that, on the important economic left-right dimension, candidates for the first election to the European parliament were more extreme than their own voters. Inglehart (1984, p. 51) reaches the same conclusion, and Holmberg (1989) also finds a polarized pattern in the case of Sweden. Similarly, Rabinowitz et al. (1991), and Listhaug, Macdonald, & Rabinowitz (1990) have provided evidence from Norway and the United States suggesting that parties and presidential candidates take more extreme positions than predicted by traditional spatial theory.

This disconfirming evidence has caused scholars to search for reformulations of the spatial theory that would account for "deviant" behavior while preserving the basic tenets of the model. The most promising approach introduces a third type of actor, party activists, into the model and argues that such activists tend to be more extreme in their substantive political attitudes than either rank-and-file voters or party leaders.¹ Through intraparty democratic processes, these attitudes are then hypothesized to "push" the strategic positioning of parties in a direction away from their voters. What has become known as the *law of curvilinear disparity* (May, 1973) is most eloquently reconstructed as a case of Hirschman's (1970) general theory of organizations. The argument proceeds in two steps. First, via a Downsian logic, attitudinal congruence is hypothesized to exist between elected party leaders and their electorates. In Hirschman's terminology, this conclusion follows from the possibility of voter "exit" whenever the party becomes unrepresentative. Yet, because the logic of exit tends to result in policy convergence around the median voter, the ideologically extreme voters can exert little political power through the exit option. Instead, these voters become "captive" and, according to Hirschman, "will be maximally motivated to bring all sorts of potential influence into play so as to keep . . . the party from doing things that are highly obnoxious to [them]" (p. 70). This provides the second link in the model because the extremist voter will try to exert influence over party policies through intraparty activism or what Hirschman calls "voice."

If organizational structures and processes permit activists to influence parties' policy formulation,² the law of curvilinear disparity then follows logically: dissatisfied party activists are extremists compared to both rank-and-file voters (who exert influence over policies through the exit mechanism) and to elected party leaders (who cannot stay in office if they deviate radically from the position of the median voter).

1. Because this implies a trade-off between intraparty democracy and external representation, it has obvious normative implications for democratic theory. Thus, in conservative and populist political thought, it has been used to legitimize a distaste for democratic party processes, and more generally, for participatory democracy (McKenzie, 1982). For discussions and contrasting views on this topic, see Wright (1971), Epstein (1967), Wilson (1962), Schlesinger (1966, 1984), Dalton (1985), and Panitch (1986). Kitschelt (1989a) provides an excellent critical review of the literature.

2. Some models deduce the influence of extreme party activists over party policy positions without reference to organizational processes. These models suggest that the result follows from an exchange of campaign support for political influence in a market of activists that are more polarized than the market for voters (Aldrich, 1983; Robertson, 1976).

A CRITIQUE WITH ALTERNATIVES

The extreme activist thesis is now widely endorsed in the predominantly American rational choice literature on elections and party strategy (e.g., Aldrich 1983; Robertson, 1976, chap. 2; Tsebelis, 1990). Empirically, however, very little systematic evidence exists that supports the idea of a curvilinear disparity in attitudes. May (1973) cites numerous anecdotal passages in the writings of such respected political scientists as David Butler, V. O. Key, and Maurice Duverger, but the few actual measurements of policy positions that have been reported across organizational levels suggest otherwise. Thus Holmberg (1989) finds a *polarized* pattern where Swedish MPs tend to be more extreme than both activists and voters. Specifically, socialist MPs are to the left of their supporters, bourgeois members to the right, whereas the MPs of the small Center Party are "on target."

The lack of empirical corroboration of the curvilinear disparity thesis is critical because the realism of the spatial model's underpinning assumptions is in dispute. First, the exogeneity assumption about voter preferences has been argued to provide too "thin" a conception of rationality (Elster, 1983), leaving no room for the possibility that preferences are significantly affected by party strategies. Thus it is possible that parties may offer (relatively extreme) political programs that are less than optimal in the short run but could generate higher levels of support in the medium and long run.

Przeworski and Sprague (1986) have argued this position most systematically. According to these authors, the patterns of voting are the result of political parties "creating images of society . . . forging collective identities, [and] mobilizing commitments to particular projects for the future" (p. 9). Hence farsighted party leaders may adopt relatively extreme policy positions as an electoral investment in the future (see also Cox, McCubbins, & Sullivan, 1984). In a more radical formulation, Eulau (1987) proposes "a model in which . . . legislative party elites are the dominant formulators and proponents of public policies and are quite immune to popular preferences. . . . Indeed, it would seem that the party elites 'manufacture' popular preferences and then compete for their endorsement in elections, so that the people's voices are but echoes of the elites' 'instructions' to them" (p. 211).

The latter formulation almost certainly exaggerates the ease by which the electorate can be swayed by politicians, and it neglects the trade-off that will likely exist between short-term "electoralist" strategies and long-term mobilization of support. Indeed, such a trade-off constitutes the fundamental dilemma for socialist parties according to Przeworski & Sprague (1986):

When socialists seek to be effective in electoral competition they erode exactly that ideology which is the source of their strength among voters. To be effective they must organize the masses, and yet as they assume a supraclass posture they dilute their capacity to organize workers as a class. (p. 55)

Hence, from this perspective we may expect a pattern where some party elites engage in short-term vote-maximizing behavior (catch-all parties), whereas others pursue long-term strategies of social mobilization (ideological parties).³ Consequently, the attitude disparities between voters, militants, and leaders would, for some parties, exhibit a polarized pattern and for others a Downsian or curvilinear, but center-oriented pattern. Because one would expect that parties' willingness to engage in opinion formation is dependent on their ideological dispositions, the argument can be tightened to produce the relatively simple hypothesis that "parties interested in preserving the status quo [will tend] to exhibit higher degrees of congruence [with voters] than parties who try to change society more or less radically" (Holmberg, 1989, p. 12).

The Przeworski and Sprague (1986) argument is a welcome corrective to the static conceptualization of politics implied by the traditional spatial model. It reminds us that politics is about molding and remolding the institutions of society, and often implies a relation to time that is distinct from more myopic types of optimization. Although it is true that the winning of electoral support and government power is crucial for realizing political programs, public opinion is itself an object of and not merely a constraint on political contestation. On the other hand, of course, democratic politics is not solely, or even primarily, driven by long-term considerations, but also by a pragmatic search for immediate popular support. Although Przeworski and Sprague identify reasons why (short-term) nonmaximizing electoral strategies can be consistent with political rationality, they offer no new insights about the dynamics of this game of "ordinary" electoral competition. Along with the traditional spatial model, it is assumed that vote maximization requires that policy positions be proximated to those prevalent among the largest groups of voters.

The directional theory presented by Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) challenges this view. Although they do not question either the exogeneity of preferences or the goal of vote maximization, they offer reasons why spatial

3. Przeworski and Sprague (1986) emphasize the constraints imposed on socialist electoral strategies by both party activists and affiliated unions and by the concern for nurturing future electoral support. Thus they conclude that the Scandinavian socialist parties were constrained in pursuing vote-maximizing electoral strategies by the unions and radical party activists, whereas the German and French parties were mostly constrained by the long-term consequences of short-term electoral strategies (see especially pp. 113-126).

proximity may not be important for the way people vote. Whereas the spatial paradigm assumes that people can place themselves and candidates unambiguously in a euclidean space, Rabinowitz (1978) and Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) argue that people only have a diffuse sense of the side they take on issues and how strongly they feel about these issues. Instead of voting for candidates close to their own position, people are attracted to candidates who are on the same side of an issue as they are and who present clear and intense political alternatives.

The implication of the Rabinowitz-Macdonald (1989) theory for vote-maximizing candidate strategies is that electoral support is increased when parties adopt positions that are more extreme than those represented by the neutral center, even if there are only two parties and the electorate is distributed in a symmetric fashion around the median voter as the Downsian model assumes. If correct, this would produce a pattern where the center of an issue space is dense with voters, but vacated by candidates. The Rabinowitz-Macdonald model also implicitly challenges Hirschman's (1970) predictions about party activists. Because party representatives in the directional theory will rationally adopt polarized political positions, voters will not become captive on the extremes as Hirschman suspected. Consequently, dissatisfaction with unresponsive center-oriented party elites cannot be the reason for becoming politically active. Instead, motivations are likely to be expressive in orientation and fueled by a passionate support for the political ideas propagated by party elites. There is thus no reason in this model to expect party activists to be more extreme than their leaders.

Supporting evidence for the directional model has been provided by Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989), Listhaug et al. (1990), and Rabinowitz et al. (1991). The data they present, however, does not allow for a strategic test against the curvilinear disparity thesis. In addition, since both voter and party positions in the issue space are derived from voter evaluations of these positions (using the mean perceived location as a proxy for actual location), there is no independent measure of party locations. The observed pattern—that the center is dense with voters but devoid of parties—could therefore be the “artificial” result of perceptual adaptation processes where voters perceive the party they vote for as being close to themselves whereas other parties are perceived to be quite distant.⁴ Just like in the case of geographical locales, people may think that parties of which they know little are located far from their own position even if they are not.⁵ Another problem is that

4. See Powell (1989) for a discussion of these issues.

5. Of course, I am not faulting Rabinowitz and Macdonald for having to rely on data based on subjective voter evaluations. I am merely pointing out a potential source of error that makes their conclusions more tenuous.

Rabinowitz and Macdonald use voters' thermometer scores for different parties as the dependent variable, not their actual propensity to vote for particular parties. Using party vote as the dependent variable would have provided a more direct test of the model and yielded more unambiguous implications for vote-maximizing party strategies.

As presented above, the Rabinowitz-Macdonald theory places no constraints on how extreme the policy positions candidates can rationally take. However, the authors introduce such constraints through the concept of the "region of acceptability" (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989, p. 108). The idea is that a vote-maximizing party can only adopt positions that are in some sense considered legitimate or reasonable by the electorate, whereas parties that go beyond the region of acceptability "draw a penalty for being too extreme" (Macdonald, Listhaug, & Rabinowitz 1991, 1112). The implication is that vote-maximizing parties will position themselves at or near the region of acceptability, *irrespective* of party system format or the distribution of voters (Rabinowitz et al., 1991).

Although the concept of a region of acceptability provides clear empirical predictions, its theoretical justification is equivocal. To be sure, it is hard to imagine a political system in which an infinitely extreme issue stance (whatever that may be) would be the electorally winning position. But it is not clear how the constraint on party extremity follows from the assumptions of the directional model (i.e., diffuse preferences, directional voting, and vote maximization). Moreover, the idea has the peculiar, if not absurd, implication that all voters in the policy space agree on the location of the region of acceptability regardless of whether a person is positioned in the center, close to the region, or beyond the region.⁶

Despite its affinity with euclidian distance, Rabinowitz & Macdonald (1989) maintain that the idea of a region of acceptability is an aspect of directional theory, and they insist that the directional and spatial models of voting are competing theories. The problem in contrasting the models in this manner is that the assumptions in the two theories, although seemingly opposed, have a different ontological status, which makes them logically compatible. Thus the axiomatic spatial approach starts from the idea that policy issues can be logically divided into a continuous number of alternative positions, and then assumes without proof that voters have a sufficient amount of information and understanding of these issues to choose a preferred alternative. This assumption is not primarily chosen for its empirical accuracy, but rather for its theoretical utility. In contrast, the assumption in directional theory that people perceive policy issues in a diffuse rather than

6. For a more detailed critique along these lines, see Iversen (1994).

structured manner is chosen for its empirical realism rather than for its theoretical parsimony. Yet the latter assumption clearly does not exclude that policy distance is important for the way people vote, nor that euclidean space should be discarded as a useful theoretical construct.

The Rabinowitz-Macdonald critique of the spatial notion of rationality is very similar to Simon's (1955, 1985) objection to the economic notion of rationality. Correspondingly, it shares many of the attributes of Simon's concept of bounded rationality. Yet the distinctive feature of Simon's behavioral approach is not that it refutes the role of rationality in human decision making, but that the degree to which people optimize is an empirical question that cannot, and should not, be determined a priori. Analogously, although people may prefer candidates who present well-defined and sharply articulated political alternatives, it does not mean that they have *no* sense of what their own position does and does not entail in terms of policies. It therefore makes little sense to insist that all voters have an identical "penalty function" which is independent of their location in the issue space.

The compatibility of the two models of voting is also suggested by an interesting convergence in the way spatial and directional theory reason about politics. Thus Downs (1957) begins from the assumption that voters are fully rational and informed about issues, then deduces the implication that "rationality leads parties in a two-party system to becloud their policies in a fog of ambiguity," and finally ends up arguing that voters have no incentive to understand political issues and hence that "rational behavior by political parties tends to discourage rational behavior by voters" (p. 136). The directional model (and the theory of symbolic politics more generally), starts from the assumption that people have an uninformed and diffuse understanding of policies, and then argues that vote-maximizing political parties will offer clear and unambiguous policy alternatives. An obvious extension of the directional argument would seem to be that voters who are continuously presented with such alternatives will gradually acquire more discriminating and differentiated understandings of policy issues, as well as their own position on these (and hence approximate the spatial assumption).⁷

In an amended Rabinowitz-Macdonald model, the spatial element would ensure that the distribution of voter preferences played an important role for the choice of vote-maximizing party strategies. By implication, the joined

7. It is also instructive to consult one of Rabinowitz and Macdonald's main sources on this issue. Thus Edelman (1967) writes in his principal work on the role of symbols in politics that, "every instance of policy formulation involves a 'mix' of symbolic effect and rational reflection of interests" (p. 41). Although he argues that the latter is primarily exercised by interest groups, he also implies that both rational and symbolic effects are significant in the electorate, and indeed in every individual (see especially pp. 172-178).

model would reintroduce the question of the endogeneity of preferences and raise the possibility that followers' political attitudes may be affected by parties involved in opinion formation.⁸ In this mixed Rabinowitz-Przeworski perspective, we would expect that the issue positions of party elites would be related to elite-voter attitude disparity in a U-shaped pattern with radical parties exhibiting the most pronounced disparities.

Figure 1 summarizes the discussion in terms of the assumptions and predictions that the different models make about preferences and voting behavior. First, the Downs-Hirschman theory assumes both exogenous preferences and spatial voting. From this perspective, nonrepresentative leaders are the result of the influence of extreme party militants, and we expect a curvilinear disparity of (intraparty) attitudes. In the Przeworski-Sprague model, party leaders deviate from their constituencies when they pursue long-term strategies of political mobilization, whereas parties seeking short-term vote maximization will tend to resemble the Hirschman pattern. The Macdonald-Rabinowitz theory abandons (or modifies) the proximity assumption of the spatial model and predicts a moderately polarized pattern where both activists and leaders take more extreme positions than their voters, delimited only by an exogenously given "region of acceptability." Finally, in the combined Przeworski-Rabinowitz model, we expect that parties seeking fundamental political change and pursuing strategies of political mobilization will deviate from the moderate polarization pattern in an attempt to sway public opinion in a favored direction.

THE DATA

An adequate empirical test of the theoretical models presented in the previous section requires data about the positions of voters, party activists, and party leaders on a series of salient political issues. The present analysis is based on the European Political Party Middle Level Elite (EPPMLE) survey of delegates to the party conferences of 56 parties in 11 West European countries in 1979. It is supplemented at the mass level by Eurobarometer data collected simultaneously in the then nine EEC-member countries (Eurobarometer 11). Both surveys were sponsored by the European Communities.

While the Eurobarometer surveys are widely known and well-documented, the EPPMLE study has generated relatively little scholarly attention.

8. This point is clearly implied by Edelman (1967), who writes that, "the very question of what man *is*, let alone what he wants, is in part a product of the political system, and in turn conditions the system" (p. 19, emphasis in original).

		Is Voting Spatial?	
		YES	NO
Are Voter Preferences Exogenous?	YES	Downs-Hirschman Model: Curvilinear Disparity	Rabinowitz-Macdonald Model: Moderate Elite-Voter Polarization
	NO	Przeworski-Sprague Model: Mixed Pattern of Opinion Leadership and Curvilinear Disparity	Przeworski-Rabinowitz Model: Mixed Pattern of Moderate Polarization and Opinion Leadership

Figure 1. Four models of voting and their predictions of intraparty attitude disparities.

Yet the study is unique because it provides broad comparative and cross-national data about an important segment of the political elite that is rarely studied in more than one or a few parties at a time, let alone across a wide range of different party systems. The EPPMLE survey is based on a questionnaire submitted to all party delegates at the various national party conferences (or to a sample in the case of very large conferences), and it includes party leaders (e.g., members of parliament) as well as a broad range of lower-level party officials and party activists. The data is not strictly representative of all active party members in the statistical sense (because delegates are not chosen randomly), nor is it accurately described as a population (because only a portion of active members—which may be thought of as the universe of cases—are delegates). Nevertheless, delegates to national party conferences represent a broad segment of a party's internal constituency, and in the public mind, the national party conference is often seen as more or less synonymous with the party itself. The data set therefore provides a unique

opportunity to test hypotheses about party strategies and internal party divisions.⁹

The scope of the present analysis has been limited to seven countries that represent major European party systems and that do not diverge so radically in their political cleavage structures that systematic comparison is impaired. The seven countries are Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The 37 parties from these countries that were included in the study are listed in Appendix A.¹⁰ Data on the position of elites and rank-and-file voters on different policy dimensions is constrained to four issues that were identical, or nearly identical, in the two surveys: income equality, government control of multinational corporations, nuclear energy, and penalties for terrorism (see Appendix B for the question wording).¹¹ The first two issues are associated with the traditional economic left-right dimension in European politics, whereas the latter (highly salient at the time) have come to be identified with a new "postmaterialist" or "cultural" dimension (see especially Inglehart [1984], who analyzes the same Eurobarometer-11 data).

A factor analysis of both the elite and the mass data, which includes an additional number of issue items that were similar (although, unfortunately, not identical) in the two surveys, confirms this interpretation.¹² The procedure produces two distinct dimensions for both elites and voters—one which includes primarily traditional economic issues and one which includes primarily "New Politics" issues (see Table 1). The pattern is most distinct at the mass level, where the two dimensions stand out very clearly. This may be interpreted as an expression of higher "ideological constraint" among elites than among mass publics (Converse, 1964).

The four issues that were identical, or nearly identical, in the two surveys are italicized in the table. Note that the four items load on the two dimensions as expected, and that, except for the nuclear energy question at the elite level,

9. For a more thorough introduction to the EPPMLE survey and its history, see Reif, Cayrol, and Niedermayer (1980). Pierre (1986) has pointed out some of the limitations of the data set.

10. The most notable exclusions from the data set are the Communist parties in Italy and France. No data was obtained for these parties in the EPPMLE survey.

11. Respondents who either had no opinion or did not know what to answer on these issues were excluded from the analysis. This means that 26.6% were missing from the EPPMLE survey and 28.0% from the Eurobarometer-11 survey. Because the percentages are so similar, the alternative procedure of coding these respondents as taking a neutral position has little effect on the results.

12. One issue, women's right to abortion, did not load clearly on any Europeanwide dimension and has been excluded from the analysis. One question concerning the environment was discarded because it was clearly a "valence issue" producing very little variance in the responses.

Table 1
*Principal Component Factor Analysis of Party Elites
 and Mass Publics in Seven West European Countries (varimax rotation)*

		Factor I	Factor II
Eurobarometer (N = 3,989)	<i>Greater effort to reduce inequality</i>	.76	
	<i>Stronger public control over multinationals</i>	.68	
	More public ownership of industry	.61	
	More economic aid to Third World countries	.39	
	<i>More severe penalties for terrorism</i>		.70
	<i>Nuclear energy should be developed</i>		.68
	<i>Stronger military defense effort</i>		.67
European Political Party Middle Level Elite survey (N = 3,653)	<i>More control of multinational corporations</i>	.78	
	<i>Reducing income differences</i>	.76	
	Reducing public control of private enterprise	.56	.54
	<i>Most severe penalties for terrorism</i>		.82
	Taking account of national interest in Third World aid		.74
	<i>Developing nuclear energy</i>	.40	.65
	Increasing military expenditures	.45	.52

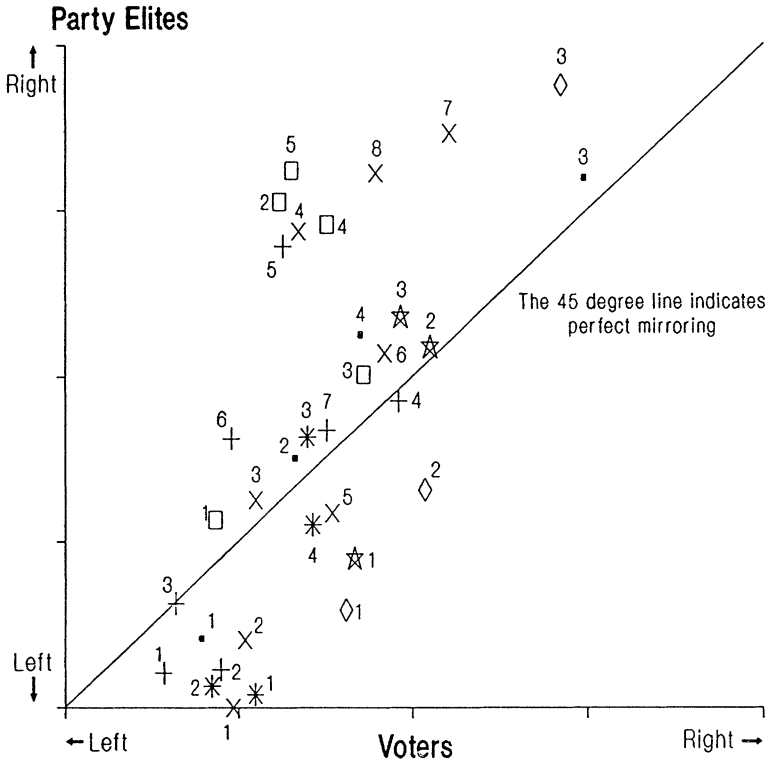
Note. Only factor loadings above .20 are shown. Explained variance: Factor I = 16% (voters), 22% (elites); Factor II = 14% (voters), 19% (elites). Italicized items are the ones used in the comparative analysis.

they have higher factor loadings than any other item. This is, of course, comforting; especially because it must be presumed that the issue structure in the electorate is the most salient for voting behavior. In the following, representational economy dictates that the four issue items are combined into their underlying dimensions. Because this procedure is justified both theoretically and empirically, it presents few problems.

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY ELITES AND VOTERS

Figures 2 and 3 compare the average position of party elites and party voters on the two issue dimensions.¹³ As one would expect in open and competitive party systems, the issue location of parties is highly correlated with the positions taken by these parties' voters. In this sense, European political parties are highly responsive to sentiments in the electorate. At the same time, however, it is apparent that representation is not adequately described as a simple mirroring of voter opinions. Especially near the political

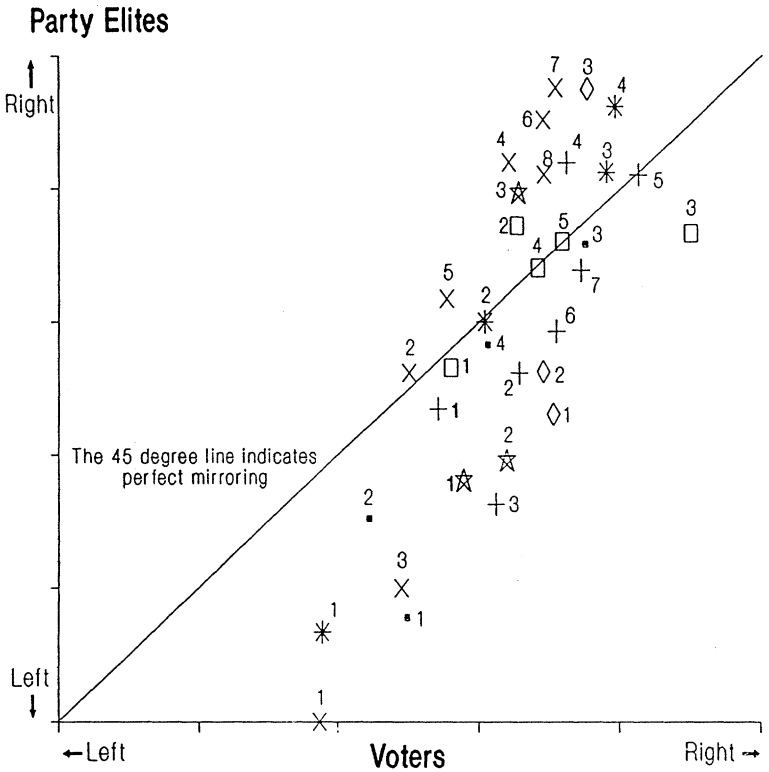
13. Party elites are here defined as activists holding regional or national elected or party offices.



Key:

+	x	*	☆	◇	□	·
Belgium:	Denmark:	France:	Germany:	Britain:	Italy:	Netherl.:
1 PCB/ KPB	1 SF	1 PSU	1 SPD	1 LAB	1 PSI	1 PvdA
2 PSB	2 SD	2 PS	2 FDP	2 LIB	2 PSDI	2 D'66
3 BSP	3 RF	3 UDF	3 CDU/ CSU	3 CON	3 PLI	3 VVD
4 PRL	4 CD	4 RPR			4 DC	4 CDA
5 PVV	5 KrF				5 MSI	
6 CVP	6 V					
7 PSC	7 KF					
	8 Frp					

Figure 2. Mean location of party voters and party elites on an economic issue dimension.



Key:

+	×	*	☆	◇	□	•
Belgium:	Denmark:	France:	Germany:	Britain:	Italy:	Netherl.:
1 PCB/ KPB	1 SF	1 PSU	1 SPD	1 LAB	1 PSI	1 PvdA
2 PSB	2 SD	2 PS	2 FDP	2 LIB	2 PSDI	2 D'66
3 BSP	3 RF	3 UDF	3 CDU/ CSU	3 CON	3 PLI	3 VVD
4 PRL	4 CD	4 RPR			4 DC	4 CDA
5 PVV	5 KrF				5 MSI	
6 CVP	6 V					
7 PSC	7 KF					
	8 Frp					

Figure 3. Mean location of party voters and party elites on a cultural issue dimension.

extremes, the level of intraparty congruence is rather low. This finding is inconsistent with the pure Downsian model of electoral competition, which predicts a "tight" fit around the 45-degree line. Instead, it corroborates previous findings that party elites are more polarized than the electorate.

A more fine-grained analysis is possible by examining the differences in the degree to which party elites deviate from their electorates. Thus a rough typology of parties with three categories can be constructed: (a) parties that adopt Downsian positions in close proximity to their voters, (b) parties that exhibit a Rabinowitz-Macdonald logic of moderate issue leadership, and (c) parties that conform to a Przeworski-Sprague pattern of more radical political mobilization. It is instructive to briefly examine some of the parties that are either converging to their voters' mean position (the first type), or sharply diverging from it (the third type).

Beginning with the Downsian parties, there are 8 parties on the economic dimension and 10 parties on the cultural dimension that are located in close proximity to their constituencies. However, of these parties, there are only 3 that unambiguously adopt Downsian positions on both dimensions: the Flemish Christian Democratic Party (PSC), the French Liberal Party (UDF), and the Dutch Christian Party (CDA). Furthermore, in the case of the two Christian democratic parties, the data may be inadequate because it does not include any religious and moral issues that must be presumed to be important for the electoral appeal of these parties. In general, therefore, the observed pattern is consistent with the Rabinowitz-Macdonald thesis that parties must take a strong stand on at least one issue dimension to be electorally competitive.

Turning to the parties exhibiting the most pronounced patterns of political leadership, we find on the economic dimension that all the socialist parties (except for the Italian and Flemish) deviate in a left direction from their voters.¹⁴ This result is in accordance with the directional model, which predicts that parties favoring equality and state regulation of the economy must take intense left positions. Yet the most extreme outliers—the Danish Socialist People's Party (SF), the French Unified Socialist Party (PSU), and the British Labour Party—may be better understood in a Przeworski-Sprague perspective where strong commitment to social change presupposes opinion leadership.

The positive outliers are also most readily interpreted in light of the Przeworski-Sprague model. Thus, at the time of the survey (1979), new economic ideas favoring free markets, deregulation, and a rollback of the welfare state were actively being adopted and promoted by liberal and

14. A negative outlier is also missing from the Italian case, but this is almost certainly a result of the exclusion of the Communist Party from the EPPMLE survey.

conservative parties throughout Western Europe. Privatization and monetarist economic policies were advocated as fundamental alternatives to the hitherto prevailing neo-Keynesian consensus, and it is not surprising to find among the Right opinion leaders such parties as the British and Danish conservatives, the Italian Christian Democrats (DC), and the Belgian (Flemish) Liberal Party (PVV).

On the “left libertarian” side of the cultural dimension, the “entrepreneurial” parties can be identified as the Danish SF, the French PSU, and the Dutch Socialist Party (PvdA). In the Danish and Dutch cases, such policy leadership was clearly facilitated by a socioeconomic and political environment that was conducive to the politicization of New Politics issues, and the intense controversy over the French nuclear program in the mid-1970s suggests a similar characterization of the French case (Kitschelt, 1989b, chap. 2). Conversely, the Danish and British conservatives, and the Danish liberals, were the most active in pulling their voters toward the “right-authoritarian” pole. In general, however, and contrary to the pattern for the economic dimension, it appears that left parties were more active than right parties in mobilizing voters on the cultural dimension. This confirms the impression that the neo-liberal challenge in the early 1980s was primarily aimed at the interventionist welfare state (i.e., deregulation and free markets), whereas the New Left challenge was primarily cultural and postmaterial in orientation (i.e., libertarian and green).

It is clear from this analysis that although elites are not unresponsive to mass opinion, there are powerful political processes that—contrary to the Downsian expectation—drive party elites to adopt policy positions that are more extreme than those of their followers.¹⁵ The variance in these deviations and the brief assessment of the different strategies adopted by European parties also suggest that active issue leadership and opinion formation are important ingredients in explaining low levels of elite-mass attitude congruence. As noted from the outset, however, we need more disaggregated data to corroborate the importance of these processes and to assess their relative weight. As it stands, we do not know with any degree of certainty whether party elites adopt noncongruent policy positions primarily because they are pushed by radical intraparty constituencies, because they try to maximize electoral support in a directional voting environment, or because they seek to mold and affect public opinion. In the following sections, I consider each of these possibilities.

15. In average, and across both dimensions, party leaders are nearly twice as extreme as their supporters.

DISCOUNTING THE ROLE OF PARTY ACTIVISTS

In Figures 4 and 5, the political parties have been segmented into three organizational levels: one for leaders holding regional or national offices, one for all other conference participants, and one for rank-and-file party voters. In addition, high- and middle-level party elites have been distinguished by whether they hold party or elected office.¹⁶ To facilitate the presentation, political parties have been classified into seven "party families," and the figures represent simple averages of policy positions using parties as the unit of analysis.¹⁷

The emerging pattern is clear. On both the economic and cultural dimensions, but especially on the former, the mean issue positions of the various party segments reveal a *polarized pattern*, where the middle-level activist and the party leader are both taking more extreme positions than their mean constituency voter. Contrary to the expectations of the curvilinear disparity thesis, there is no general tendency for the party leadership (whether elected or not) to be closer to their constituency than middle-level activists.¹⁸ To the contrary, a majority of high-level party elites deviate more from their voters than do middle-level militants.¹⁹ Hence, at least for most of the parties and countries included in this study, there does not seem to exist any dilemma between internal party democracy and external representation as implicated by the law of curvilinear disparity. Instead it could be argued that greater leadership responsiveness to lower-level party activists in several cases would draw parties closer to the center position of their electorates.²⁰

A more detailed look at the figures reveals that the leadership of socialist and left parties are displaced to the left of their voters, whereas for all other party families, the elites are shifted to the right of their respective constituencies.²¹ This pattern is precisely what would be predicted by the directional

16. The division into organizational levels has been made so as to maximize the variance in attitudes. Moreover, it should be noted that a finer division does not alter the general pattern, but instead increases the margin of error of the results.

17. The definitions of these party families are provided in Appendix A.

18. An exception seems to be the social liberal party group. The curvilinearity in this group, however, is predominantly driven by one party, the British Liberals, which has a very small elite at the highest organizational level (10 are holding party office; 6 elected office).

19. None of these differences, however, are statistically significant at a .05 level.

20. Because none of these differences are statistically significant, this conclusion requires that the elite data is treated as if it were population data—a somewhat dubious, although not entirely unreasonable, assumption.

21. Treating parties as a whole, this pattern is statistically significant at a .05 level for all party families except the liberals on the economic dimension, and for the radical left, the social democratic, and the conservative party groups on the cultural dimension.

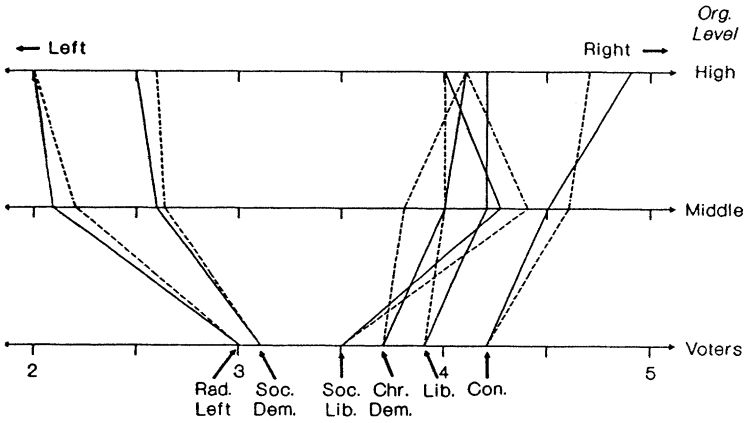


Figure 4. Mean location of high- and middle-level party elites compared to party voters on an economic policy dimension, by party families and type of office (solid lines = party office, dashed lines = elected office).

Note. The scale varies between 2 ("left") and 8 ("right"). See Appendix B for definition of party families.

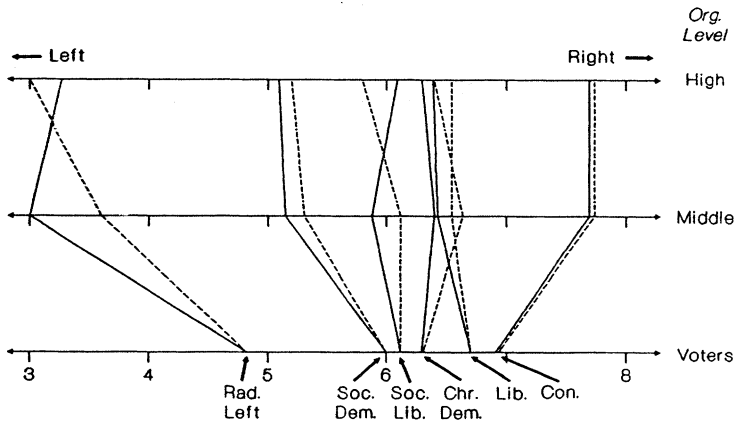


Figure 5. Mean location of high- and middle-level party elites compared to party voters on a cultural policy dimension, by party families and type of office (solid lines = party office, dashed lines = elected office).

Note. The scale varies between 2 ("left") and 8 ("right"). See Appendix B for definition of party families.

theory of voting: parties seemingly compete by presenting clear alternatives to their voters, not by appealing to the mean voter in their electorate as a straightforward spatial logic would lead us to expect. Overall, the New Politics dimension is less clearly polarized than the economic dimension because three of the party families (i.e., social liberals, Christian democrats, and liberals) take positions close to their constituency means. Yet, both the radical left parties (to a lesser degree also the social democratic party family) and the conservative party group adopt fairly extreme positions compared to their constituencies.

A straightforward interpretation of these results would be that the New Politics issues in several countries had not yet (i.e., by 1979) become fully politicized. According to Rabinowitz and Macdonald's theory, nonpoliticized issues will not generate much attention to, or care for, candidates' positions among voters, nor will such issues induce parties to take intense stands. On the other hand, given the presence of certain socioeconomic conditions, these are precisely the circumstances under which entrepreneurial parties can politicize and induce people to take sides on a new issue dimension. Following the argument by Przeworski & Sprague (1986), such parties may "stretch out" a new policy space and subsequently take electoral advantage of this space.

The pattern presented in Figure 5 confirms the impression in the previous section that such leadership came primarily from left parties pursuing a left libertarian agenda, and to a lesser extent, from conservative parties trying to organize people around a "right authoritarian" alternative (Dalton, Flanagan, & Beck, 1984; Kitschelt, 1989b). This seemingly important role for party leadership in the political agenda-setting process is significant because it suggests new insights into the dynamics of electoral politics. The prevalent explanation for the emergence of the New Politics division follows the sociological approach pioneered by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and emphasizes the rise of a new "post-material" cleavage in society (e.g., Dalton et al., 1984; Inglehart, 1977). In contrast, the findings presented here indicate that parties did not merely position themselves in relation to already developed cleavages in the electorate, but instead played an active role in defining and mobilizing voters behind the new issues. It thus seems reasonable to conjecture that the emergence of new political cleavages (conflicts over political issues) cannot be reduced to the study of the emergence of new social cleavages (divisions in peoples' life experiences).²² Rather, the transformation of people's daily experiences into political values is profoundly affected

22. By implication, much of the cross-country and cross-time variance in electoral volatility may be a result of political entrepreneurs persuading segments of the electorate that their interests lie outside the realm of the established political agenda.

by the interpretations of such experiences by political elites (as suggested by Sartori, 1969).

A final test of the curvilinear disparity thesis compares different organizational levels of those parties that are identified with the most extreme policy positions. It is conceivable that these parties have taken such electorally "suicidal" positions that only zealot activists could be responsible, whereas party leaders would be liable to stage a "revolt from above" in an attempt to restore the party's electoral appeal. If so, it could be argued that although the Hirschman model does not account very well for the behavior of parties engaged in the game of mainstream centripetal party competition, it does explain those important exceptions that generate most of the electoral volatility in European party politics.

Figure 6, however, dashes any such hopes for a rescue of the Hirschman thesis: on both dimensions, the middle-level activists of mobilizing parties take positions that either mirror those of their leaders or are less extreme.²³ In a few cases, the top echelons are slightly less radical than the middle-level activists, but the overwhelming impression is one of intraparty coherence or, in some cases, peak-level leadership. This pattern fits the Przeworski-Sprague thesis far better than the Hirschman prediction, although it is difficult to determine the causal weight of directional voting in producing this picture. Yet, considering the size of voter-elite attitude disparities, it seems safe to conclude that opinion leadership has played an important role.

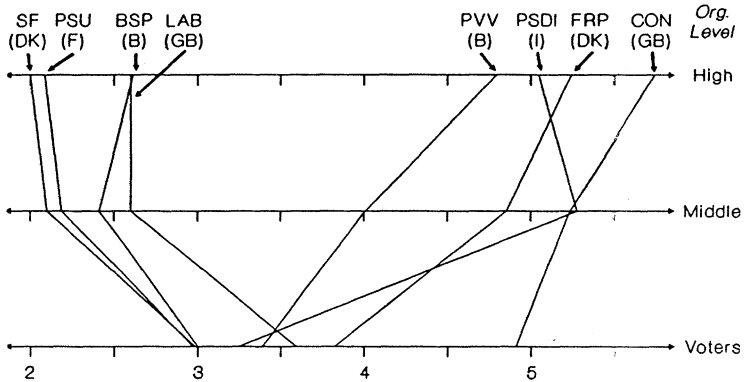
VOTE GETTING AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The lack of empirical support for the curvilinear disparity thesis suggests that the causes of poor attitude congruence lies less in a subversion of vote-maximizing rationality than in the very logic of such rationality. Directional theory hypothesizes that vote-maximizing parties will adopt more extreme positions than their own voters. As I have argued extensively above, however, a mixed model that combines directional and spatial effects is more likely to explain voting behavior and party competition than any of the "pure" versions. In this section I try to substantiate this claim empirically.

According to directional theory, in electoral systems that approximate proportional representation, vote-maximizing parties are expected to locate at or near the region of acceptability (Listhaug et al., 1990; Rabinowitz et al., 1991; Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989). Because this region is common to

23. The division between elective and party office has been dropped in Figure 6 without affecting the resulting pattern.

a) Economic Dimension



b) Cultural Dimension

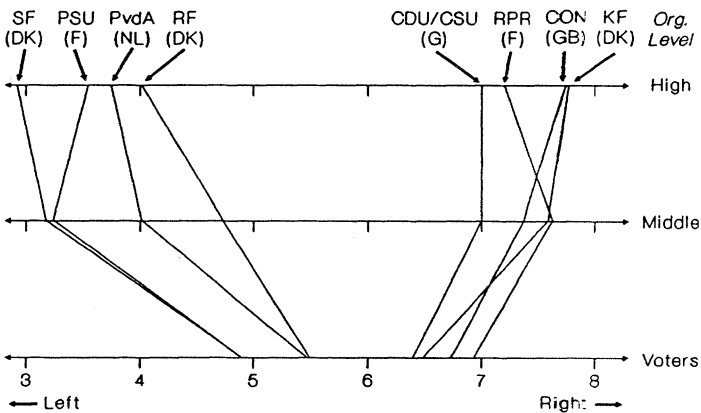


Figure 6. Mean location of extreme parties on an economic and a cultural policy dimension by organizational level.

all voters, the distribution of voters in the electoral space should not affect competitive party positions on either side of the center. In contrast, if voter perceptions of whether a party is unrepresentative (extreme) vary with the

issue positions of individual voters, then the distribution of voters will be important for determining maximizing party strategies, just as it is in the spatial model. More precisely, any party strategy that is vote maximizing in the spatial model is also maximizing in the combined spatial-directional model, but such that equilibrium party locations in the latter are more extreme than in the former by a factor proportional to the strength of the directional effect (see Iversen, 1994). Hence, in a mixed spatial-directional model, parties are likely to adopt moderately extreme positions compared to their own electorates, yet remain sensitive to the spatial location of these electorates.

Although models that incorporate euclidian distance as a theoretical variable (such as traditional spatial theory) cannot produce any definite predictions about party strategies when there are several parties and issue dimensions, a consensus is developing that parties will differentiate their voter appeals and thus be dispersed across the entire competitive space (e.g., Shepsle & Cohen, 1990; Cox, 1987, 1990; Kitschelt, in press, chap. 4). Although it has already been concluded that the pure Downsian model is an inadequate description of party behavior, it remains to be seen whether European parties nevertheless exhibit sensitivity to spatial distance and thus conform to mixed-model expectations. The interesting question is whether parties engage in product differentiation as predicted in the spatial and mixed models, or whether they tend to cluster around a common region of acceptability as predicted in the (pure) directional model.²⁴

Figure 7, which shows the issue positions of all party elites on both issue dimensions, sheds some light on this question. Note first that the two issue dimensions are correlated so that parties taking left positions on the economic dimension also tend to take left positions on the cultural dimension. This suggests that party competition tends to be compressed to a single left-right axis which, combines both cultural and economic issues. Under these conditions, directional theory would predict a moderately polarized pattern where parties would be concentrated around two "focal points": one on either side of the center (thereby leaving the center "empty"). Yet, from Figure 7 it appears that the only party system that can be described in these terms is the British, where one party (the Conservatives) takes issue positions that are clearly opposed to those preferred by both the Liberals and the Labour Party. In all other cases, one would be hard-pressed to identify a common boundary around which parties tend to cluster. Instead we find a pattern where parties

24. In directional theory there can be only two distinct electorates on a single dimension, one on either side of the center. For each electorate there is an ideal point, which constitutes the region of acceptability. Consequently, there is no incentive for parties to product differentiate if they are on the same side as the center.

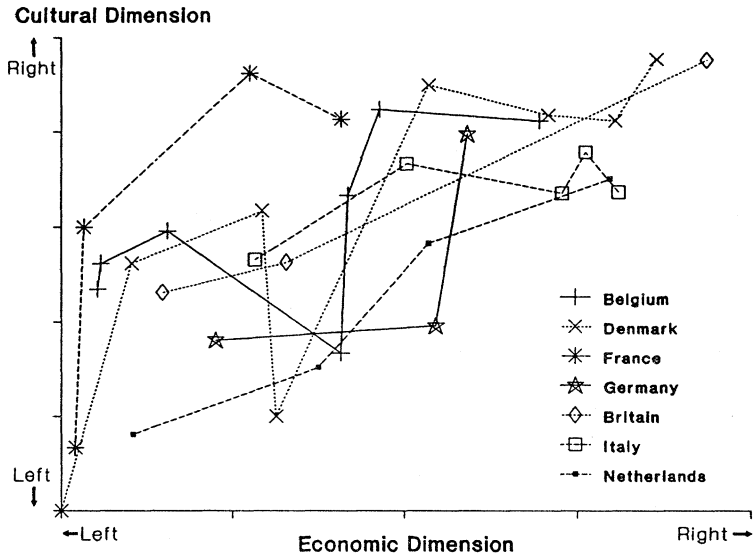


Figure 7. Location of parties on two issue dimensions.

offer a differentiated array of policy positions across the entire competitive space.

The nonexistence of a common region of acceptability is only one of two possible interpretations of the pattern exhibited in Figure 7. Alternatively, we may speculate that some parties refrain from adopting vote-maximizing positions, and that only those close to the region of acceptability enjoy electoral success. To explore this possibility, the euclidian distance of all parties from the center of the issue space was calculated. The resulting vector lengths represent the location of parties relative to the boundary of a (hyper) sphere in the space (Rabinowitz et al., 1991). If a region of acceptability does exist (which would constitute such a boundary), then we expect this region to be revealed by the level of support of parties with different vector lengths. If such a region does not exist, then the support of parties would be determined by their strategic location relative to one another and relative to the distribution of voters. In this case we should find no systematic relationship between vector lengths and electoral support.

Figure 8 relates party vector lengths (i.e., the distance of parties to the neutral center) to the percentage of the total vote any party obtained in the

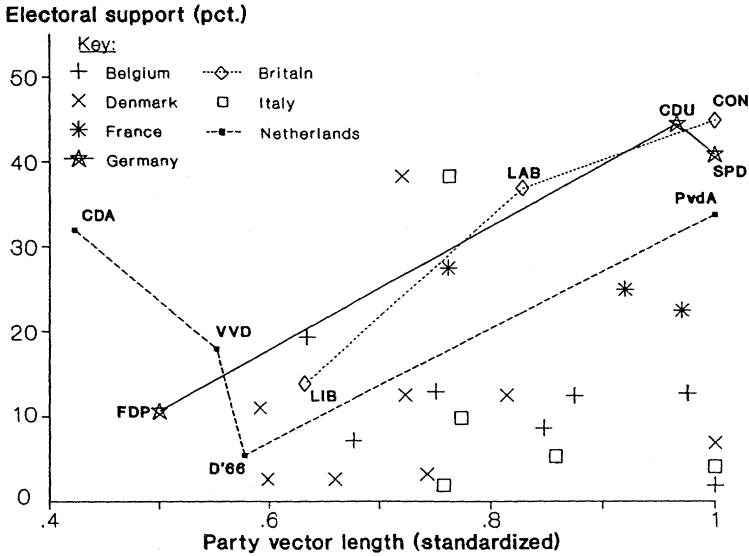


Figure 8. Vector lengths of parties and electoral support.

Note. Electoral support is a party's percentage of votes in the national election closest to 1979.

national election closest to the date of the survey.²⁵ Again, no systematic and consistent pattern is revealed across party systems. In the cases of Belgium, Denmark, and Italy, there is no observable relation between the two variables: some parties with similar vector lengths differ in their level of support, whereas other parties with different vector lengths enjoy similar levels of support. In the Dutch case there seems to be a pattern, but it is inconsistent with the idea of the existence of a region of acceptability. Thus both the CDA, which has a short vector length, and the PvdA, which has a long vector length, attract higher levels of support than other Dutch parties.

The only countries that exhibit a pattern that can be said to be consistent with the idea of a region of acceptability are Germany and Britain. In these cases the large parties are positioned around the boundary of a common

25. Because the width of the competitive space varies from country to country, the vector lengths reported in Figure 8 have been standardized so that the party with the longest vector in each country is given the value of 1, whereas all others are given values according to their relative position to that party.

All electoral results were obtained from Jacobs (1989). In the case of France, the figures are the results from the first ballot.

sphere in the issue space away from the center (where the two small liberal parties are located). Although this pattern is clearly more polarized than one would expect in the pure Downsian model, a mixed model would have predicted precisely this configuration. Thus, when only three parties compete and entry costs are high, the mixed model suggests that at least two parties should adopt positions away from the center (in order to present intense alternatives), yet without taking such extreme positions that they appear unrepresentative in the eyes of the majority of voters concentrated in the center. Unlike the pure directional model, however, the mixed model does not rule out that the third party may rationally stay closer to the center to "pick up" those centrist voters who feel abandoned by the relative extremity of the two dominant parties.²⁶ Again, the validity of this conclusion depends (like all strategy recommendations derived from models with a spatial component) on the distribution of voters in the policy space. The point is that, unlike the mixed model, the pure directional theory cannot explain the existence of centrist parties without discarding the vote-maximization assumption.

The evidence presented in this section is clearly not conclusive. In particular, without longitudinal data one has to be very careful in drawing any conclusions about the link between policy position and electoral support. The limited number of policy issues is another obvious problem. With these caveats in mind, however, the idea that a unique region of acceptability exists receives no support. Instead, parties seemingly differentiate their electoral appeals to capture voters who are positioned in different spatial locations. The inference seems to be that although voters prefer parties offering relatively intense policy stands (as was clearly demonstrated in previous sections), political elites are not insensitive to the specific issue positions of their own constituencies. This conclusion mirrors the finding above that, whereas party elites tend to magnify the attitude differences found in the electorate, they are generally very responsive to voter sentiments.

ARE PARTIES MORE THAN VOTE MAXIMIZERS?

Although there can be little doubt that rational, vote-maximizing parties should take issue positions that are more extreme than those prevalent in their electorates, a mixed model in which voters are equally sensitive to relative extremity does not anticipate that parties vary systematically in the degree to

26. If the major parties locate beyond the region of acceptability, this could also be rational in the directional model. In this case, however, the large parties are not vote maximizing.

which they deviate from their constituencies.²⁷ Yet, as noted above, parties positioned toward the extremes on the two issue dimensions often take more deviant positions from their constituencies than centrist parties. This pattern was attributed to attempts by some political parties to actively influence public opinion formation, as theorized by Przeworski and Sprague (1986). This final section attempts to “untangle” directional effects from mobilizational effects.

To be able to detect directional effects, the mean distance of all parties and their voters from the neutral center was calculated across every issue. The competing hypotheses can now briefly be summarized as follows. According to directional theory, if a party’s voters are to the left of the center (which here implies that they deviate in a negative direction), then the party should adopt a position that is even farther to the left (producing a negative deviation from the party’s mean voter). Conversely, if voters are to the right of the center, the party should be even farther to the right and thus display a positive deviation from its voters. The size of the disparities is predicted by the theory to exhibit a random pattern around some optimal degree of intensity (i.e., the region of acceptability). A pure spatial model, in contrast, would predict a high level of policy congruence between parties and their voters, with no anticipation of any systematic pattern of deviations. Finally, mobilizational theory concurs with directional theory in regard to the predicted signs of the elite-voter disparities, but it predicts a systematic tendency for extreme parties to exhibit a lower degree of congruence (because they are seeking political change) than centrist parties (because they are trying to hold the center).

Figure 9 shows the position of parties relative to the neutral center as well as the sign and level of attitude disparities. The symbols for the observations indicate whether voters and elites are on the same side of the center. As it turns out, parties and their voters are on the same side of the center in 27 out of 34 cases, and of these 27 cases, directional theory predicts the correct sign in 23 instances. The probability that this outcome occurs if the sign of the deviation is random (as predicted by spatial theory) is less than 2 in 10,000 independent trials (using the binomial probability distribution). If the 7 cases where voters and parties are located on opposite sides of an issue are coded

27. It is the case, however, that a model that integrates directional voting (using the scalar product) and spatial voting (using squared distance) through a linear combination implies that elite-voter disparities are more pronounced among extreme parties than among center parties. One may think of such a model as incorporating both spatial and leadership effects, and I have referred to it elsewhere as the representational policy-leadership model (Iversen, 1994).

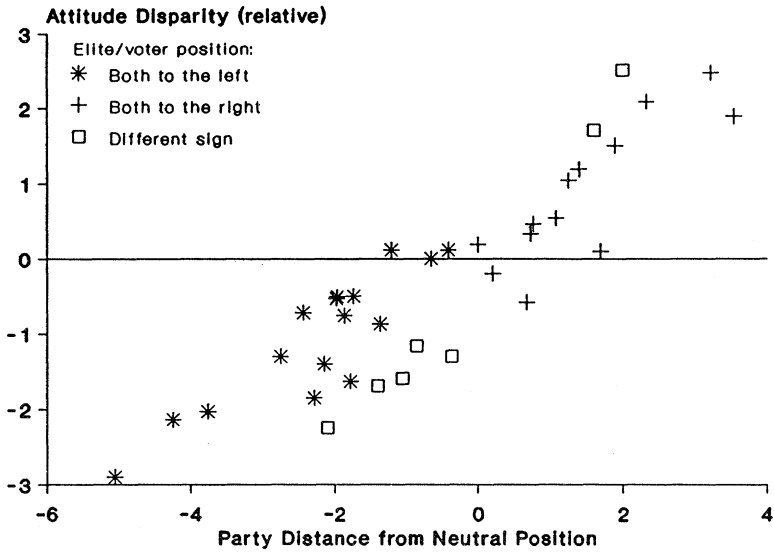


Figure 9. Political extremity and relative elite-voter attitude disparities.

as carrying the “wrong” sign (according to directional theory), the probability increases to slightly less than 2 in 100—still very strong support for the directional hypothesis.²⁸ Once again, therefore, party elites are found to deviate from their constituencies in a manner that is consistent with the (mixed) directional, but not with the (pure) spatial, theory.

Another and equally clear tendency is evident in Figure 9, however, which is best understood within the framework of mobilizational theory. Thus party elites who are relatively extreme compared to the center tend to deviate far more radically from their voters than do more centrist elites. It would be difficult to explain this pattern solely in terms of either the spatial or directional model, whereas it is in good agreement with a Przeworski-Sprague interpretation, stressing the central role of political parties as “educators” of the public. Figure 10 makes the empirical basis for this conclusion more evident. It compares elite positions with absolute elite-voter disparities and clearly shows that attitude disparities conform to a U-shaped pattern

28. This coding procedure is somewhat unfair to directional theory because none of the three models predict this pattern. On the other hand, the first procedure is too accommodating because the 7 “odd” cases should somehow weigh against the theory. It therefore seems safe to conclude that the true probability is somewhere between 2/100 and 2/10,000.

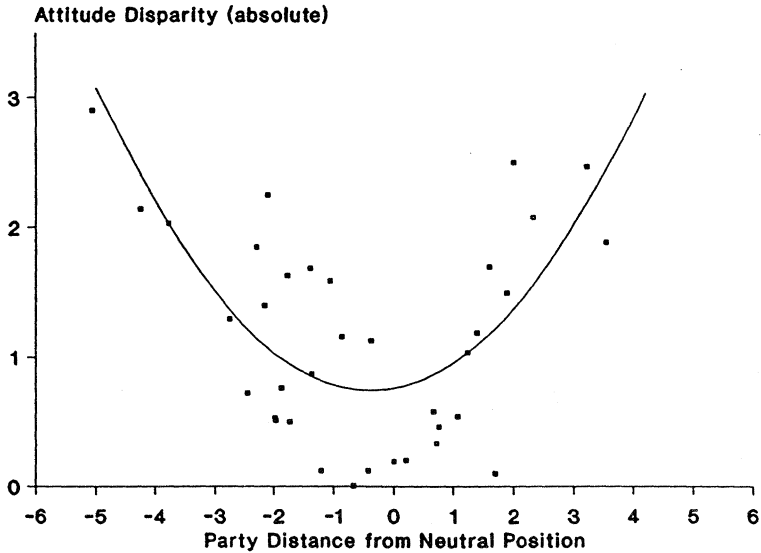


Figure 10. Political extremity and absolute elite-voter attitude disparities.

where policy congruence is high in the center but poor toward the extremes.²⁹ All the fitted parameters of this curvilinear function are significantly different from zero—a result that is inconsistent with the implication in directional and spatial theory that disparities are randomly distributed around some electorally optimal level.

CONCLUSIONS

Political parties do not behave in accordance with Downsian spatial theory, nor is this deviance in behavior the work of extreme militants without a democratic mandate. Instead, party elites at all levels systematically choose policy positions that are considerably more extreme than those of their own electorates. These findings are based on a broad sample of political parties and party systems, and they are remarkable enough to prompt a serious

29. Holmberg (1989, pp. 17-19) finds the exact same pattern for Sweden in 1985. On the basis of the present data, his cautioning that the result for Sweden may not be generalizable to other countries no longer seems required.

reconsideration of the assumptions traditionally made about voting behavior and party competition.

The theory of directional voting proposed by Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) offers one such reconceptualization, and the evidence in this article supports the notion of directional voting. Yet it also suggests that spatial distance enters as an important countervailing determinant of voting behavior. This finding is supported by theoretical reflections, which imply that voters' cognition of political issues are unlikely to be neither sharply positional nor entirely directional. The mixed model of voting recognizes that people look to politicians for guidance and direction, but also that the very participation in the democratic process sharpens their perception of where they stand on the burning issues of the day. Analogously to the concept of bounded rationality, the combined model does not reduce the psychology of voting to one dominant principle, but instead leaves a good deal to empirical evidence.

A second challenge to spatial theory is the idea of endogenous preference formation proposed by Przeworski and Sprague (1986) and others. Because it is so common in studies of voting behavior to assume that voter preferences are fixed, this model breaks new ground in our understanding of electoral politics. The present study has produced evidence that clearly suggests the utility of this perspective for understanding party strategy formation. Compared to both the directional and spatial models, the Przeworski-Sprague theory is the only one that offers a credible explanation for the curvilinear pattern of elite positions and attitude congruence. The supporting evidence for the Przeworski-Sprague model is particularly important because it challenges the conventional sociological explanation for the emergence of new electoral cleavages and party alignments. Instead of party elites simply adapting to changing divisions in the electorate, they often appear to move ahead of public opinion and actively promote the politicization of new issues.

The important contribution of both directional and mobilizational theory, compared to more traditional modes of analysis, is that they model voter and candidate behavior as an interactive process. Although directional theory focuses on how this process is reflected in voters' utility functions, the latter focuses on the capacity of politicians to transform this utility function. Future research should pay close attention to the way in which voting and party strategies jointly condition one another, and how political institutions affect this interactive process. Because the data presented in this article is static, it has not been possible to spell out in any detail the causal mechanisms that influence this dynamic interplay between party leadership, voting, and political institutions. However, the analysis does suggest the promises of such an approach.

Appendix A

Below is a list of the parties included in this study classified into party “families.” Lack of data for levels and types of office holding excludes the Italian DC from the Christian group in Figures 4 and 5. The party is included in Figures 2 and 3, however, using the mean position for the whole party.

Far Right

- Fremskridspartiet (FrP) (Denmark)
- Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) (Italy)
- Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) (Germany)

Conservatives

- Conservative Party (CON) (Great Britain)
- Konservativt Folkeparti (KF) (Denmark)
- Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) (France)

Christian Democratic

- Christelijke Volkspartij (CVP) (Belgium)
- Parti Social Chrétien (PSC) (Belgium)
- Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU) (Germany)
- Christlich-Soziale Union Deutschlands (CSU) (Germany)
- Christian Democratisch Appel (CDA) (Netherlands)
- Kristeligt Folkeparti (KrF) (Denmark)

Liberal

- Partij voor Vrijheid en Vooruitgang (PVV) (Belgium)
- Parti Reformateur Libéral (PRL) (Belgium)
- Venstre (V) (Denmark)
- Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) (France)
- Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) (Netherlands)
- Freie Demokratische Partei Deutschlands (FDP) (Germany)

Social Liberal

- Centrums-Demokraterne (CD) (Denmark)
- Liberal Party (LIB) (Great Britain)
- Partito Socialista Democro Italiano (PSDI) (Italy)
- Democraten '66 (D'66) (Netherlands)

Social Democratic

- Parti Socialiste Belge (PSB) (Belgium)
- Belgische Socialistische Partij (BSP) (Belgium)
- Socialdemokratiet (SD) (Denmark)
- Labour (LAB) (Great Britain)

Appendix A: Continued

Social Democratic

- Parti Socialiste (PS) (France)
- Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) (Italy)
- Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) (Netherlands)
- Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) (Germany)

Radical Left

- Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF) (Denmark)
- Parti Socialiste Unifie (PSU) (France)

Appendix B

Below are the question wordings used in the Eurobarometer 11 and the European Political Party Middle Level Elite survey (EPPMLE) studies. Both issue dimensions constructed from these items are simple additive indexes.

Economic Dimension

Eurobarometer 11

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Stronger control should be exercised over the activities of multinational corporations.
2. Greater efforts should be made to reduce inequality of income.

Respondents could answer: *Agree strongly; Agree; Disagree; Disagree Strongly; Don't Know/No Opinion.*

EPPMLE

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following policy measures:

1. There should be far more active control over activities of multinational corporations.
2. Reduce income differences.

Respondents could answer: *Very much in favor; In favor; Against; Very much against; Don't know/no opinion.*

Appendix B: Continued

Cultural Dimension

Eurobarometer 11

1. More severe penalties should be introduced for acts of terrorism.
2. Nuclear energy should be developed to meet future energy needs.

EPPMLE

1. The most severe penalties should be introduced for acts of terrorism.
2. Nuclear energy should be developed to meet our future energy needs.

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