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Notes on New Data Sets

Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file, 1999–2019

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ABSTRACT

Research on party competition and political representation relies on valid cross-national measures of party positions. This research note reports on the 1999–2019 Chapel Hill expert survey (CHES), which contains measures of national party positioning on European integration, ideology, and several European Union (EU) and non-EU policies for six waves of the survey, from 1999 to 2019. The trend file provides party position measures for all 28 EU countries and 1196 party-year observations. In this article, we analyze the evolving party positions on European integration from 1999 to 2019, with a particular focus on how EU positions are related to economic left-right and the Green/Alternative/Libertarian-Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist dimension (GAL-TAN). The dataset is publicly available on the CHES website.

How are party positions on European integration connected to the positions that parties take on economic and cultural issues? This question is fundamental for an understanding of democratic competition in Europe and highlight the importance of gaining valid information on party positioning.

With the help of experts in more than 28 countries, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) offers party position data on ideological dimensions, European integration, specific policy positions, along with other party characteristics like salience of anti-establishment rhetoric. This research note reports on the 1999–2019 CHES trend file, which contains measures of national party positioning on European integration, ideology, and several European Union (EU) and non-EU policies for six waves of the survey, from 1999 to 2019.

Previous CHES papers presented evidence regarding the validity, reliability, and cross-national comparability of the survey (Steenbergen and Marks 2007; Hooghe et al., 2010; Bakker et al. 2014, 2015; Polk et al., 2017). In this article, we focus on stability and change in party positioning in the 21st century and how party positions on Europe intersect with basic ideological dimensions of contestation. Despite enormous change in Europe and the EU, there is remarkable stability in EU positions over time against the backdrop of wide cross-sectional variation in which ideologically extreme parties generally take more Euroskeptic positions than their mainstream counterparts. However, two major changes have occurred. First, while EU positions were initially related to economic left-right positioning in our data, they are now more closely associated with GAL-TAN (Green/Alternative/Libertarian- Trad itional/Authoritarian/Nationalist) positioning. Second, as theorized by Hutter and Kriesi (2019), Hooghe and Marks (2018), de Vries (2018), and Jackson and Jolly (2021), there is evidence of the emergence of a transnational cleavage pitting parochial nationalist parties against cosmopolitan transnationalist parties.

In this article we introduce the CHES 1999–2019 trend file and discuss its key policy and ideological indicators. Second, we interrogate the data for trends in stability and change in EU positions over time and across countries, highlighting that despite considerable stability in aggregate party positioning on European integration over time, there have been considerable changes among some party families. Third, we argue that the relationship among the main dimensions (economic left-right, GAL-TAN, and EU) have changed over time, with GAL-TAN emerging as a far more consistent correlate with EU positions. Cumulatively, our findings provide evidence consistent with the emergence of a transnational cleavage in contemporary European societies.

1. CHES 1999–2019

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey has tracked party positions for more than two decades: The first survey was conducted in 1999 with subsequent waves in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2019. Its geographic scope has also widened: The survey started with 14 West European countries in 1999, but quickly expanded to current and prospective EU members in post-communist Europe and beyond. The latest survey in 2019 includes all 28 EU member states (including the United Kingdom), plus

Table 1
Summary of CHES 1999–2019.

Country	First survey year	Party-Year observations	Country	First survey year	Party-Year observations
Belgium	1999	72	Bulgaria	2002	44
Denmark	1999	55	Czech Republic	2002	37
Germany	1999	45	Estonia	2006	24
Greece	1999	40	Hungary	2002	31
Spain	1999	74	Latvia	2002	38
France	1999	61	Lithuania	2002	51
Ireland	1999	41	Poland	2002	42
Italy	1999	84	Romania	2002	36
Netherlands	1999	61	Slovakia	2002	51
United Kingdom	1999	42	Slovenia	2002	42
Portugal	1999	33	Croatia	2014	25
Austria	1999	35	Malta	2014	4
Finland	1999	50	Luxembourg	2014	13
Sweden	1999	51	Cyprus	2014	14

Norway, Switzerland, the Western Balkan states, Ukraine and Turkey.[1] Between 1999 and 2019, the number of national parties included in the CHES dataset has grown from 143 to 268.

While the historical CHES data goes back to 1984 (Ray 1999), we focus on the 1999–2019 version of the survey because CHES evolved into a broader survey in 1999, including issues beyond EU positions.[2] To compile the trend file, we merge the individual surveys (1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2019) and add several auxiliary variables that researchers commonly use (e.g., vote and seat shares in European and National elections, party family, government status, etc.).[3] Table 1 provides a summary of the observations in the dataset.

Over time, the experts have consistently assessed party positions on support for European integration and general left-right ideology, economic left-right, and GAL-TAN (Green/Alternative/Libertarian-Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist).[4] Since 2006, the CHES experts have also placed party positions on specific policies, such as deregulation, immigration policy, multiculturalism, urban-rural, and the environ-

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[1] There are also candidate surveys in 2007, 2014, and 2019 with party position data for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.

[2] For reference, the survey dates are as follows: 1999 survey (Spring/Summer 2000), 2002 survey (September 2002–April 2003), 2006 survey (Summer, 2007), 2010 survey (January 2011–March 2011), 2014 survey (December 2014–February 2015), and the 2019 survey (February 2020–May 2020).

[3] Note that the individual-year survey datasets (i.e., 2019) also include Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey and these countries can be merged in easily. The specific survey codebooks have more information on experts, parties, and response rates. In 2019, for instance, 1803 experts were contacted and 421 surveys were completed, yielding a 23.3 percent response rate.

[4] For reference, the specific question wordings are: "EU Position = overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in YEAR. 1 = strongly opposed; 7 = strongly in favor". "Left-Right General = position of the party in YEAR in terms of its overall ideological stance. 0 = extreme left; 10 = extreme right"."Left-Right Economic = position of the party in YEAR in terms of its ideological stance on economic issues. Parties can be classified in terms of their stance on economic issues such as privatization, taxes, regulation, government spending, and the welfare state. Parties on the economic left want government to play an active role in the economy. Parties on the economic right want a reduced role for government. 0 = extreme left; 10 = extreme right"."GAL-TAN = position of the party in 2019 in terms of their views on social and cultural values. 'Libertarian' or 'postmaterialist' parties favor expanded personal freedoms, for example, abortion rights, divorce, and same-sex marriage. 'Traditional' or 'authoritarian' parties reject these ideas in favor of order, tradition, and stability, believing that government should be a firm moral authority on social and cultural issues. 0 = Libertarian/Postmaterialist; 10 = Traditional/Authoritarian".

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ment. Since 2014, the European Election Study has incorporated individual-level versions of most of these questions allowing for researchers to construct party-partisan incongruence measures (cf. Bakker et al. 2020; Rovny and Polk 2020). In the most recent surveys, we added several questions relevant to party scholars, such as issue position blurring, salience of reducing corruption and salience of anti-elite rhetoric, which was used by Norris and Inglehart (2019) as a marker of populism.[5]

2. Stability and change in EU positions

Have party positions on European integration changed between 1999 and 2019? Despite major changes in the politics of the European Union during this period, party positioning on the EU dimension has been remarkably stable throughout these twenty years. Due to issue ownership (Budge and Farlie 1983; Seeberg 2017) and the stickiness of party strategies (Kitschelt 1994), it is difficult for parties to change positions (Hooghe and Marks 2018; Bakker et al., 2020). Dimensional positioning is more stable than positioning on particular issues, and particularly, positioning on a party's secondary issues (e.g. Koedam 2021). Overall, support for the European Union (measured on a 1–7 scale going from 1, strongly opposed to 7, strongly in favor) has increased slightly from 4.72 in 1999 to 5.05 in 2019. Fig. 1 displays the stability of EU positions disaggregated by region.

To be clear, there is far more variation between party families than over time within party families, as we highlight in Fig. 2. Fig. 2 showcases this change and stability in EU position over time aggregated by party family using dot plots. Consistent with Marks et al. (2002), the mainstream party families are far more supportive of the EU in 2019 (Christian Democrats: 6.03, Socialists: 5.95) than are the more extreme parties on the left (3.27) and right (2.36).[6]

In the 2019 data, the most Euroskeptical party was not surprisingly the United Kingdom Independence Party, but several other parties that were near the extreme, including the French National Rally, Debout La France, the Dutch Forum voor Democratie, and the Greek Golden Dawn. In contrast, the most pro-European Union parties included the Dutch D66 and the Hungarian Demokratikus Koalíció. Several party families have become noticeably more pro-Europe since 1999, especially the Greens with average position of 4.5 in 1999 to 5.6 in 2019. Radical Left parties, while still on the Euroskeptical side of the midpoint, are not nearly as extreme (2.9 in 1999 to 3.8 in 2019).[7]

Given that Green parties are evolving away from pure challenger party status, we investigate individual Green party shifts over time. Growth in Green EU support could be an expression of a shift towards more office-seeking strategies and away from more green policy purity (Strom 1990). As more Green parties join national governments (Dumont and Bäck 2006; Röth and Schwander 2021), increased EU support from Greens may signal this family's emergence among the mainstream pro-EU group of parties (Marks et al. 2002). It could also be the case that the EU itself is increasingly viewed as an ally by the Green par-

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[5] The codebooks and questionnaires are available at chesdata.eu.

[6] In addition to temporal variation, there is geographic variation as well: parties from the new members from central and eastern Europe are more supportive of the EU in every period than are parties from the old members (significant at P < 0.001 level). Also, new to the system parties are more Euroskeptic than their more seasoned competitors (significant at the p < 0.01 level).

[7] The agrarian/center party family also had a major shift, but this is among the smallest party families with only 4 parties in 1999 and 5 in 2019. Among these 5 2019 parties, only two remained from 1999 (Swedish Center and Finnish Center Parties). Thus, the change from 1999 to 2019 is mostly due to extensive party turnover within the family. Notably, though, while the Finnish Center Party remained pro-EU throughout (between 4 and 5 on the 7-pont scale), the Swedish Center Party did change dramatically in its EU position, going from 3.7 to 6.1.
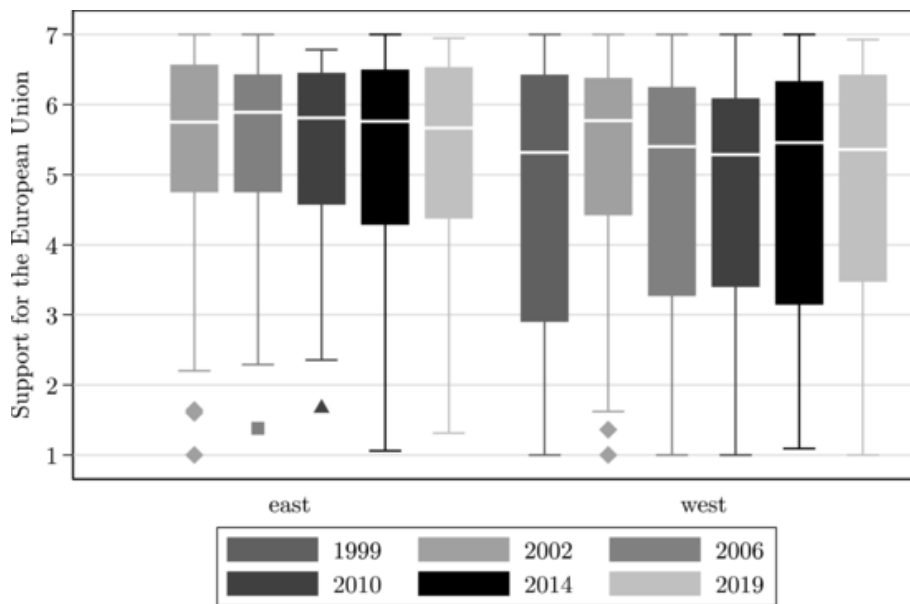
Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 1999-2019 Trend File.
Note: Higher values indicate stronger support for European integration.

Fig. 1. Party support for the EU over time.
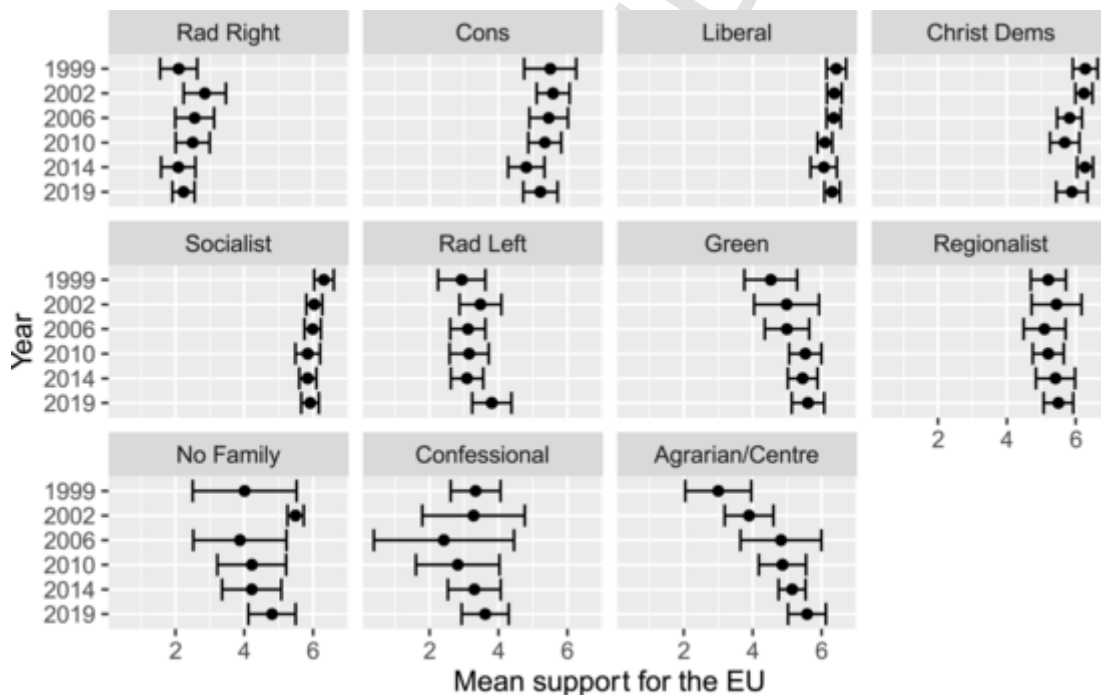
Note: Higher values on the x−axis indicate more suppor t for European integration.

**Fig. 2.** Mean support for the EU (with 95% confidence interval).

ties as the EU focuses more on environmental issues and sustainability goals.[8]

To shed light on these matters, we created a scatterplot in Fig. 3 with Green parties and a simple linear fit regression line. For Green parties, just as with all parties, support for European integration is statistically significantly related to vote share. Basically, larger parties are more supportive of the EU than are smaller, challenger-type parties. In the Green family case, the only Euroskeptical parties (i.e., with scores below 4) are small, with the only exception being the Swedish Environment party (MP) (in 2006 and 2010). But MP itself has radically shifted their position, going from 1.3 in 1999 to 5.1 in 2019, which also corresponded with the party's move from challenger party to coalition partner in national government (Bolin and Aylott 2019).

As the MP example suggests, there is a temporal element. In Fig. 4, we showcase the 6 biggest Green parties (by vote share) over time. Ex-

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[8] As an example, see the EU's handling of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in 2015 by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/sustainable-development-goals_en).
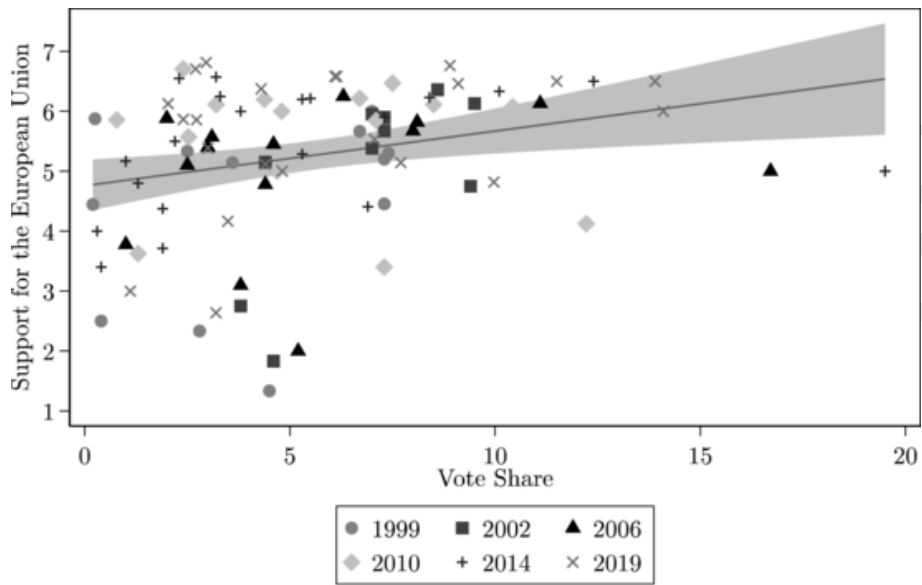
Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 1999-2019 Trend File
Note: Higher values on the y-axis represent more support for European integration. The solid line
is a simple linear fit regression line; the shaded area around the line is the 95% confidence interval.

Fig. 3. Green party support for European integration, by vote share.
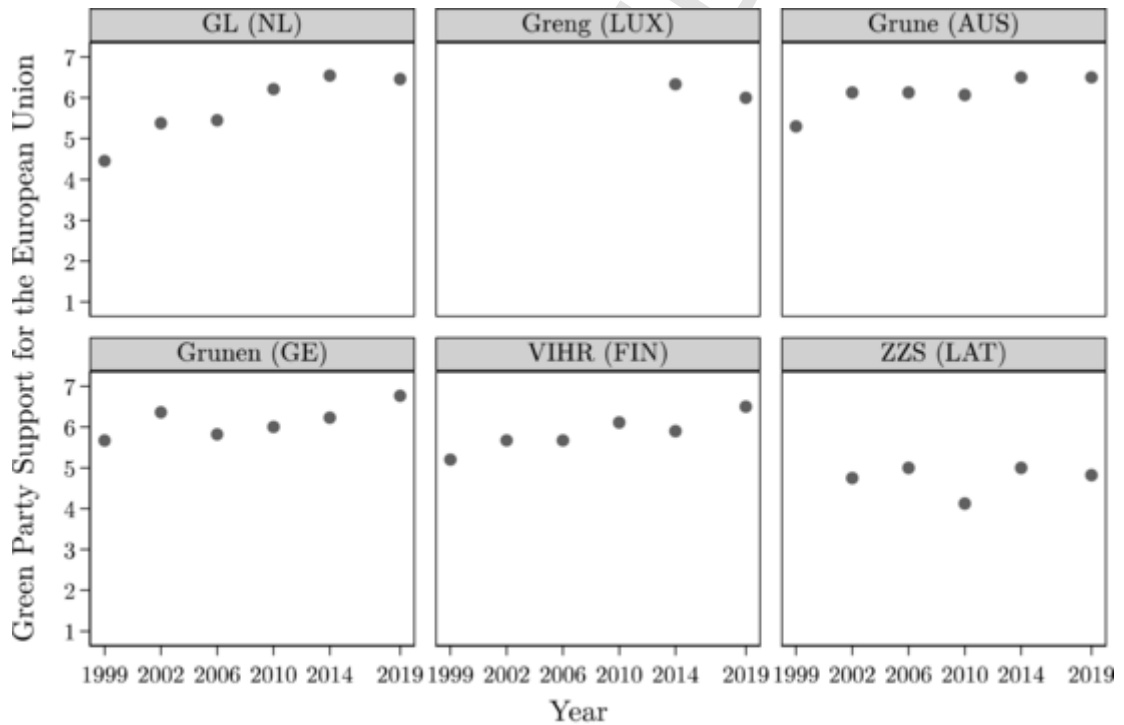
Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 1999-2019 Trend File.
Note: Higher values indicate stronger support for European integration.

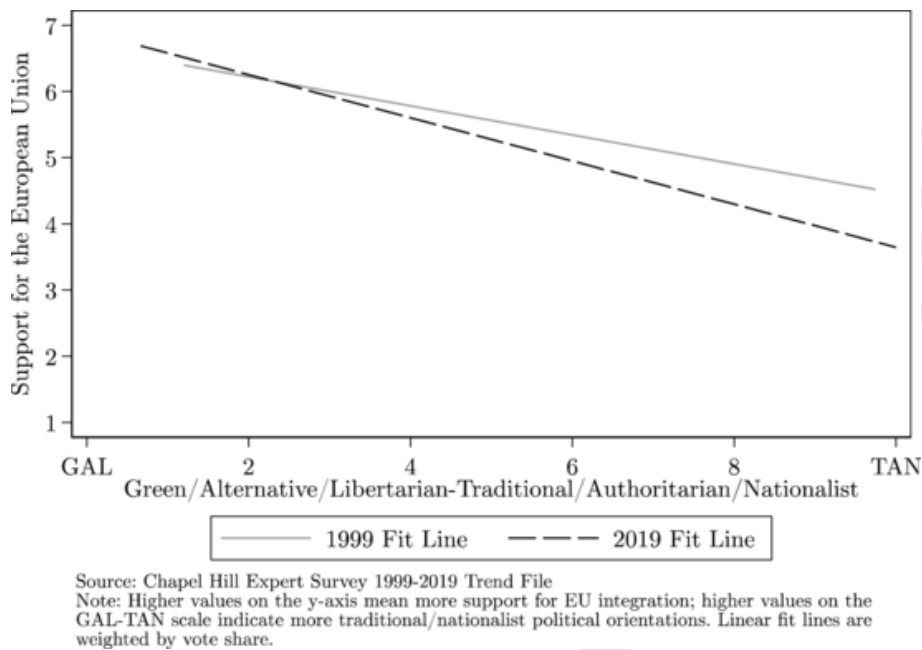**Fig. 4.** Green party support for European integration over time.

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 1999-2019 Trend File
Note: Higher values on the y-axis mean more support for EU integration; higher values on the GAL-TAN scale indicate more traditional/nationalist political orientations. Linear fit lines are weighted by vote share.

Fig. 5. Relationship between GAL-TAN and EU over time.

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 1999-2019 Trend File
Note: Higher values on the y-axis mean more support for EU integration; higher values on the Economic Left-Right scale indicate more conservative economic orientations. Linear fit lines are weighted by vote share.
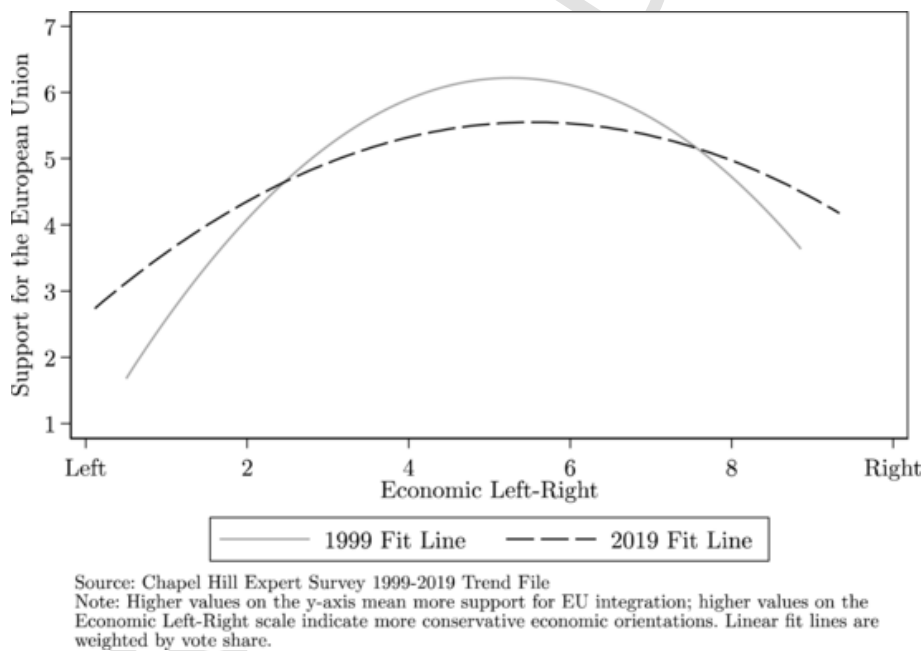
Fig. 6. Relationship between Economic Left-Right and EU over time.

cept for the Latvian ZZS and the Luxembourg Greng party, the other 4 are much more pro-EU in 2019 than they were in 1999.[9]

In the same time period, though, Green parties have not significantly shifted their positions on economic left-right (1999: 3.13 (std error = 0.27) to 2019: 3.42 (standard error = 0.25)) or GAL-TAN (1999: 2.12 (std error = 0.23) to 2019: 2.35 (standard error = 0.33)), suggesting that it is not simply ideological moderation. However, the cor-

relation between GAL-TAN and EU support is notably stronger (−0.42 in 1999 to −0.61 in 2019) whereas the correlation between Economic left-right and EU position is about the same (−0.14 to −0.15).[10] The remarkable shift for Green parties is the much stronger connection between immigration policy and EU position. In 2006, the correlation is just −0.12 but by 2019 the correlation is −0.48. These descriptive analyses point towards a changing mix of issues and dimensions in modern European politics (cf. the transnational cleavage literature (de Vries 2018; Hooghe; and Marks 2018; Hutter and Kriesi 2019; Jackson

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[9] It is not simply a matter of joining government and moderating positions. We tested difference of means between government and non-government Green parties and only in 1999 was there a significant difference (with non-government parties at a mean of 3.78 (standard error = 0.56) and government parties at 5.52 (standard error = 0.14). If you include all parties in the analysis, there is a statistically significant difference in every year between government and non-government parties, with government parties up to 1.72 points higher.

[10] Note that the relationship between Economic left-right and EU is more fairly modeled as curvilinear than linear (Hooghe et al. 2002), as we demonstrate in Fig. 6.
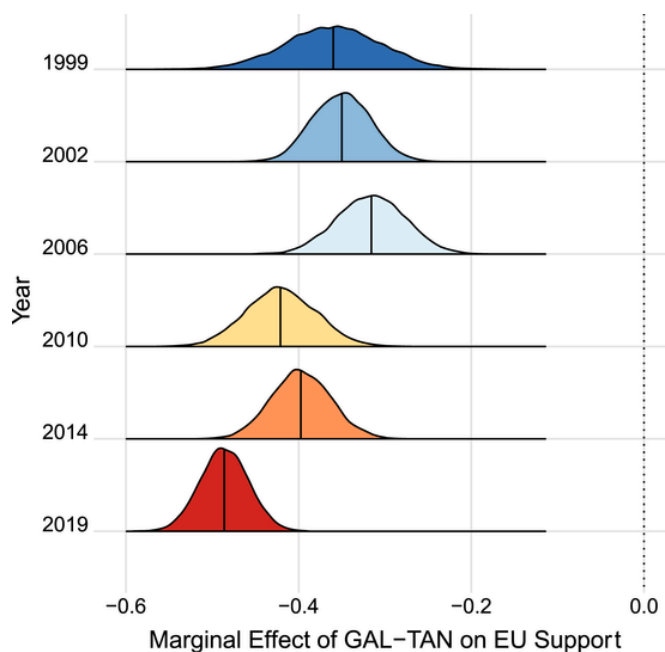
Fig. 7. Marginal effect of GAL-TAN on EU Support over Time. Larger (absolute) values indicate a stronger effect of GAL-TAN position on support for European integration.

and Jolly 2021)). In the next section, we consider this issue with a focus on Euroskepticism.

3. Correlating economic left-right, GAL-TAN, and the EU

While there has been significant stability in party positions on the EU over time, the key correlates have changed. For most of the years of the survey, both economic left-right positions (positive correlation so right-wing parties favor) and GAL-TAN positions (negative correlation so TAN parties are Euroskeptical) have statistically significant correlations with EU position. As early as the first wave of CHES, it was apparent that the cultural positions of parties were strongly correlated with their positions on European integration. Parties on the TAN side of the GAL-TAN dimension oppose the EU while GAL parties tend to support European integration. But the relative strength of the correlation has shifted from economic left-right positions having a stronger correlation in 2006 (0.38 relative to −0.23) to GAL-TAN having the stronger correlation in 2019 (economic left-right has an insignificant correlation of 0.10 in 2019 compared to −0.56 for GAL-TAN).[11] These trends are present in both the EU-14 and the newer members from central and eastern Europe.

Using the updated trend file, we can see that the correlation between GAL-TAN and EU positions has strengthened considerably. The scatterplot with a linear fit by year highlights the negative relationship between GAL-TAN and the EU in Fig. 5. Similarly, we show the relationship between economic left-right and EU has weakened in Fig. 6, using a quadratic fit function.[12]

While both dimensions have explanatory power in regression models, the relationship appears to be changing with GAL-TAN having stronger correlations with EU than does economic left-right in most countries (See Appendix Table A3). For GAL-TAN, the linear fit shows a steeper slope in 2019 than in 2006. In contrast, for economic left-right,

the curve is flatter in 2019 than in 2006. Simple bivariate or quadratic models are insufficient though. Using a regression model predicting EU support as a function of GAL-TAN, economic left-right (alone and squared), government status, a dummy variable for east-west, new party status,[13] and vote share, the marginal effect of GAL-TAN has increased in absolute value over time as shown in Fig. 7.[14]

Based on this simple regression model, Fig. 7 demonstrates this change with TAN parties more Euroskeptic in 2019 than in 1999 (i.e., the effect is more negative).[15] To create this figure and evaluate the differences among these marginal effects, we drew 10,000 values from the posterior distribution of the marginal effect of GAL-TAN for each year.[16] We sampled from a multivariate normal distribution using the mean and standard deviation from the margins output and computed the percentage of the draws from the posterior for one year that were greater than the draws from the subsequent year. Comparing the marginal effect of GAL-TAN from 1999 to 2019, we see that 98% of the draws from 2019 are larger (in absolute value) than the draws from 1999, indicating a significant shift in the effect of GAL-TAN on EU position. We found the biggest single differences to be between 2006 and 2010 and then again from 2014 to 2019, but notably 2019 is statistically significantly different from all other years.

Yet research also indicates that the relationship between GAL-TAN and European integration still varies from country to country (Bakker, Jolly and Polk 2012).[17] Fig. 8 compares the marginal effects of GAL-TAN for 2019 using the same simple model as Fig. 7 (except we exclude east-west because of the country dummies) but allowing the GAL-TAN coefficient to vary by country.[18] In Portugal and Malta, for instance, GAL-TAN and EU are not associated in our data in 2019, whereas the relationship in France and the UK is quite strong with more TAN parties much more Euroskeptical. In most countries, more TAN parties are much more likely to be Euroskeptical than their more cosmopolitan counterparts.

These descriptive analyses provide evidence of stability in party positions over time, but also interesting patterns of change, especially regarding the relationships among dimensions and issues.

4. Conclusion

This research note updates and extends the earlier CHES datasets (Polk et al., 2017; Bakker et al., 2015; Hooghe et al., 2010; Steenbergen and Marks 2007), with more countries and new questions on party characteristics, like anti-corruption and anti-elite salience. The dataset is available online at chesdata.eu.

With the new 2019 data, the CHES now has the longest time series available among expert surveys encompassing European parties.[19] The trend file is easily merged with Party Facts (Döring Regel 2019) and other datasets to conduct these analyses. In addition to other measures of party positions and salience, including manifesto data, public perceptions, elite surveys, and increasingly social media discourse analysis, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey data allows researchers to investigate coalition dynamics, party position changes in response to voter attitude shifts or elections, and incongruence between voters and parties.

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[11] Note that the economic left-right and GAL-TAN dimensions have a statistically significant positive correlation with each other throughout.

[12] In the Appendix Table A1 and A2, we provide simple bivariate model R^2 and models with both GAL-TAN and Economic left-right for 1999 and 2019 which demonstrate these significant changes in the relationships.

[13] This dichotomous variable captures the first time that a political party enters our data.

[14] For full model results, see Appendix Table A4.

[15] In comparison, the coefficients on Economic Left-Right decreased in power over time, though they remain significant.

[16] We drew inspiration from Clarify for this analysis (King et al. 2000).

[17] As Appendix Table A3 demonstrates for 2019, in several countries the correlations are quite low or insignificant.

[18] In Appendix Figures A1-A6, we provide the marginal effect country graphs for each year of the trend file.

[19] A global team under the CHES umbrella is currently expanding to North and South America, along with Japan and Korea.
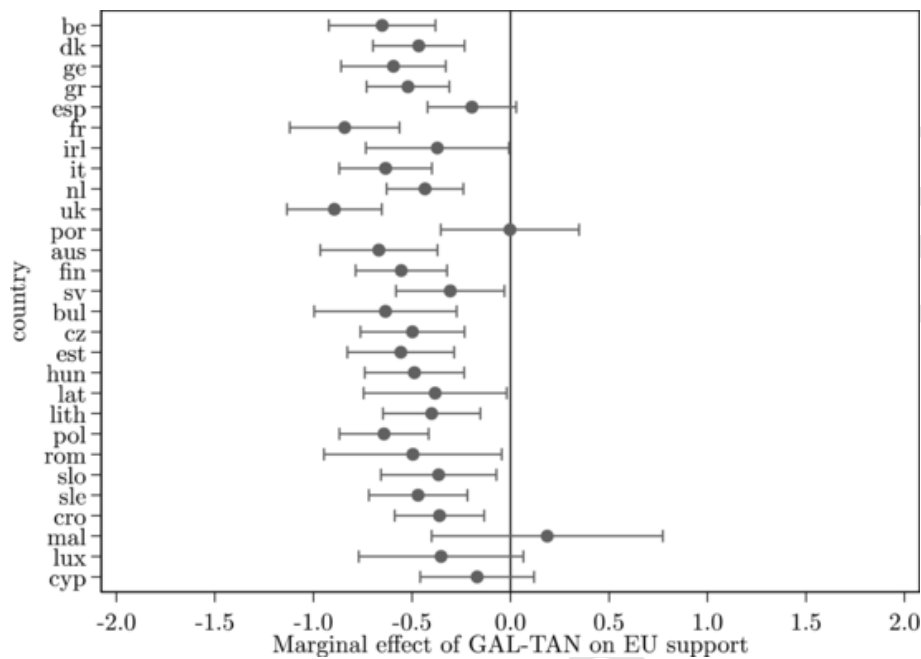
Fig. 8. Marginal effect of GAL-TAN on eu support across countries in 2019.

Data availability

The data are available at chesdata.eu

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102420.

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