

## European Integration and National Elections

The Impact of EU Issue Voting on National Electoral Politics

Do attitudes towards European integration influence vote choice in national elections – a phenomenon I refer to as European Union (EU) issue voting? Evidence concerning EU issue voting so far has been mixed. Some scholars demonstrate that there is an electoral connection between European and national politics, while others show that European integration has had no demonstrable effect on national elections. This study examines these conflicting findings across time (1990-2005) and space (Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands). The results indicate that EU issue voting indeed exists, but only when certain conditions are present. EU issue voting is more likely to occur in elections in which the EU issue is orthogonal to the dominant dimension of political conflict (i.e. the left/right ideological dimension), the extent of partisan conflict over European integration is high and the degree of EU issue salience among voters is high. These findings have important implications for our understanding of how European integration affects national electoral politics and party competition, as well as for general notions of political representation.

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