

# The Danes and Europe: From EC 1972 to Euro 2000 – Elections, Referendums and Attitudes

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Within Europe, the Danish electorate is the one that has most often expressed its opinion about the European Union in elections and in national referendums. Votes and attitudes are analysed for the five elections to the European Parliament between 1979 and 1999 and in the six referendums – from the first on membership of the EC in 1972 to the September 2000 referendum on acceptance of the euro, the European single currency. The article gives an overview of the development of Danish public opinion in relation to the European Union from 1960 to 2000, the turnouts at referendums, and the elections and results for the European Parliament. It is shown that since Denmark joined the EU, public opinion has fluctuated greatly, although the balance among Danish European Parliament members has remained stable. The reasons for the frequent use of referendums in Denmark and a thematic outline of the six referendums are put forward. The article concludes with a comprehensive analysis of public attitudes towards the referendum on the euro in 2000. It is shown that regional electoral patterns have vanished, but underlying attitudes are manifested in the public.

## Introduction

Over the past 30 years, the Danish electorate is the one that has most often expressed its opinion about the European Union (EU) (earlier the European Community (EC)) in referendums and elections to the European Parliament. The most recent opportunity was in the referendum on 28 September 2000 regarding Danish participation in the European single currency and the third phase of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The result was a 53 percent 'no' vote from the Danish voters.

The first intention here is to update earlier articles on Danish referendums on the EU and to analyse the result of the recent referendum. The second intention is to present a broader picture of the Danish electorate's attitudes to Europe and to focus on developments over time. This general

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and historical background is important in order to understand the 2000 referendum, but also to understand how the Danes' basic attitudes to Europe and the EC/EU are structured and have developed since the early 1960s. First, the historical background is outlined, followed by an analysis of the 2000 referendum.

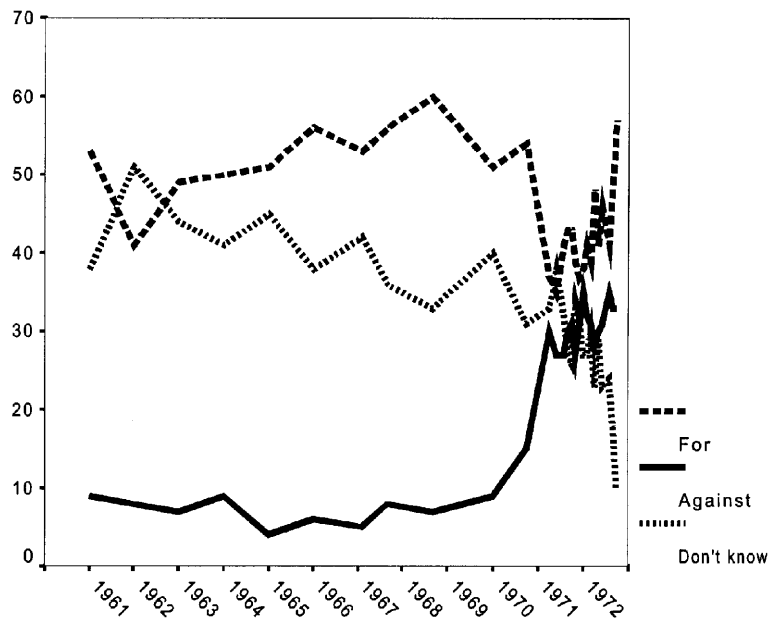
## The 1972 Referendum and Attitudes towards Membership

In 1972, the first Danish EC referendum, with a 63 percent 'yes' majority, made it possible for Denmark to join the EC. Before this decision, various solutions for Denmark in European politics had been debated for decades, with a so-called Nordic solution as the most frequently proposed alternative. In 1961, Denmark and Norway for the first time started negotiations with the European Economic Community (EEC), and intense political and legal debates took place in the Danish Parliament. However, these debates were ended by the breakdown of negotiations with the EEC in early 1963 (Petersen & Elklit 1973). After the failure of the second round of negotiations in 1967, minor changes could be observed in public opinion. However, the years until 1970 were characterized by a very large proportion of voters not knowing what to vote if a referendum on membership came up, a 'yes' majority of about 50 percent, and very few opponents of membership. It was not until 1970, when EU membership again entered the political agenda as a major issue, that public opinion shifted dramatically (see Figure 1). The renewed debate in early 1970 quickly led to a decline of the 'yes' majority and a sharp increase in the 'no' minority, while the 'don't know's only slowly declined. The referendum on 2 October 1972 had the highest turnout in any Danish public election ever – 90 percent voted, 57 percent voted 'yes', and 33 percent voted 'no'. The polls shown in Figure 1 were close on the 'no' vote but underestimated the 'yes' vote by 8 to 10 percent, indicating that during the last weeks of the campaign the 'yes' parties seemed to be successful in convincing those voters still in doubt.

After Denmark joined the EC on 1 January 1973, public opinion quickly changed.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, only one-third of the voters evaluated membership as positive in the Eurobarometer surveys (Nielsen 1993, 19). For a short period just after membership started, the majority supporting membership disappeared in the polls, and this happened again for a longer period in the early 1980s (see Figure 2). In 1986, the European Single Act was put to referendum which, as soon would be evident, was the kick-off for more referendums in the coming years. Fifty-six percent voted 'yes', with a turnout of 75 percent. In the early 1990s, two-thirds of the voters evaluated membership positively (Nielsen

Figure 1. Attitudes to Membership of the EEC, 1961–73 (Percent).

Question: 1961–71: ‘Are you for or against Denmark joining the EEC if Britain becomes a member?’, 1972: ‘Britain has now decided to apply for membership in the EEC. Are you for or against Denmark joining the EEC?’



Source: Gallup Institute for the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*, compiled in Martens (1979, 188–89).

1993, 19), and support for membership reached even higher levels than in the 1960s – and the Danes voted ‘no’ to the Maastricht Treaty!

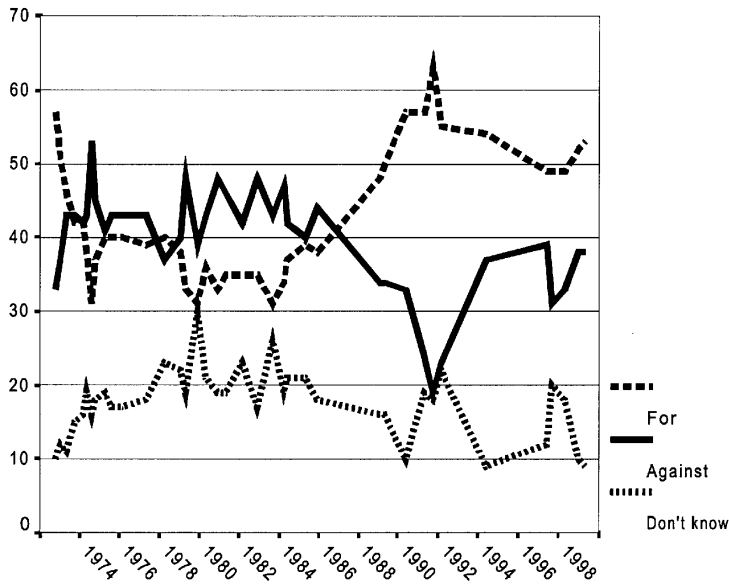
In 1997, support declined to the level of the beginning of the 1990s and in the latest polls, from May 1999, 53 percent supported EU membership, 38 percent were against membership, and 9 percent were in doubt whether to support membership or not.

## Elections for the European Parliament

Danish citizens’ interest in the EC/EU is very different measured by turnout in elections for the European Parliament compared with turnout at referendums on the EC/EU (see Figure 3). On the one hand, turnout in elections for the European Parliament was, until recently, the lowest turnout in any form of public election in Denmark, probably due to the powerlessness of the European Parliament,<sup>2</sup> the distance of Brussels, the Danish press paying

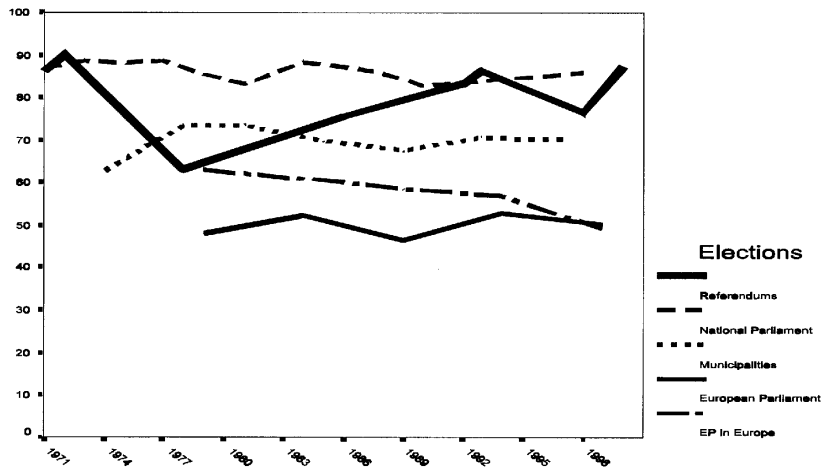
Figure 2. Attitudes to Membership of the EC/EU, 1973-99 (Percent).

Question: 'If you were to vote for Danish membership of the EC/EU today would you vote for or against Danish membership?'



Source: Gallup Institute for the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*.

Figure 3. Turnout at Danish Referendums, Local, National, and European Parliament Elections, and at European Parliament Elections in All EU Member States.



Sources: Statistics Denmark (2000).

much less attention to EU politics than national politics, and parties nominating candidates perceived to be of less prominence and importance than at national elections (see below). On the other hand, turnout at referendums on the EC/EU is high – sometimes even higher than the 80–85 percent turnout at Danish national elections. The Danes are interested in EU issues, but, like most other citizens in Europe, are only moderately interested in the European Parliament. Many referendums regarding European issues do not seem to raise public awareness of the European Parliament. Rather they seem to have the opposite effect. As the turnout depicted in Figure 3 shows, for many years Denmark had a lower turnout at European Parliament elections than other EU countries.

Denmark has at least three different party systems in elections: for the municipalities,<sup>3</sup> the Danish Parliament (*Folketinget*), and the European Parliament; the fourth party system for the regional level (*Amt*) is very similar to the national party system.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the basis of the different party systems has been the national party system comprising the four ‘old’ parties: the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, and the small but powerful centre party the Social Liberals. Since its arrival in 1960s, the left-wing Socialist People’s Party has had a presence in Parliament, and in the 1970s and early 1980s various small left-wing parties (e.g. the Communist Party) also became represented. Following the electoral earthquake in 1973, two centre parties, the Christian People’s Party and the Centre Democrats, and the extreme right-wing Progress Party have been on the national political scene. Also a Georgeist Party (*Retsforbundet*) and a left populist party (Common Course) have been in Parliament for short periods. In the late 1980s, the many small left-wing parties joined a common list, the Unity List, which has been in Parliament since 1994. After a split within the Progress Party in 1995, a new right-wing party, the Danish People’s Party, was formed, and the few remaining members of the European Parliament (MEPs) representing the Progress Party decided not to run for the next national election. Most parties in the national party system also take part in elections to the European Parliament.

However, since the first election in 1979, the Movement Against the EC/EU has also become an important actor. Some of the small left-wing parties – presently the Unity List – are not putting forward their own list of candidates but have candidates on the Movement’s list, and also the Georgeist Party used this strategy and had one MEP from 1984–93. After the Maastricht referendum in June 1992, the June Movement was formed as a more pragmatic and politically more broad-reaching Eurosceptical movement than the left-wing-dominated Movement Against the EU. The June Movement became the stronger of the two movements, and support

Table 1. Electoral Support for Parties and Movements in Danish Elections for the European Parliament, 1979–99, and Distribution of the Danish MEPs

	Electoral support (%)					Members of the European Parliament				
	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
Georgeist Party	3.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Left Socialists	3.5	1.3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
June Movement	–	–	–	15.2	16.1	–	–	–	2	3
Movement Against the EC/EU	20.9	20.8	18.9	10.3	7.3	4	4	4	2	1
Socialist People's Party	4.7	9.2	9.1	8.6	7.1	1	2	1	1	1
Social Democrats	21.9	19.5	23.3	15.8	16.5	3	3	4	3	3
Social Liberals	3.3	3.1	2.8	8.5	9.1	–	–	–	1	1
Centre Democrats	6.2	6.6	8.0	0.9	3.5	1	1	2	–	–
Christian People's Party	1.8	2.7	2.7	1.1	2.0	–	–	–	–	–
Conservative Party	14.0	20.8	13.3	17.7	8.5	2	4	2	3	1
Liberal Party	14.5	12.5	16.6	19.0	23.4	3	2	3	4	5
Progress Party	5.8	3.5	5.3	2.9	0.7	1	1	–	–	–
Danish People's Party	–	–	–	–	5.8	–	–	–	–	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	15	15	16	16	16
Turnout	47.8	52.4	46.2	52.9	50.5					

Source: Statistics Denmark (2000).

for these movements has been at a level of about 20 percent of voters; the 1994 election, which showed slightly higher electoral support, was an exception. As Table 1 shows, electoral support and the distribution of 15 or 16 MEPs have been stable: five or six seats to the movements and the Eurosceptical Socialist People's Party, three or four MEPs to the Social Democrats, five to seven seats to the Conservative and Liberal Parties, one or two MEPs to the minor centre parties, and sometimes one seat to the extreme right wing. Three important factors for the electoral patterns and developments can be identified.

First, the national swing is as important for European Parliament elections as it is for local elections (Thomsen 1998). Examples are the Danish People's Party and the Progress Party in 1999, and the fluctuations between the Conservative and Liberal Parties in the 1980s and 1990s. Second, leading and well-known politicians are important, not least because candidates in general are perceived to be less prominent and of less importance compared with those in national politics. Many candidates have been unknown, young, and inexperienced politicians or older politicians using the European Parliament as a retirement post after many years in national politics. For three election periods, the popular chairman of the Centre Democrats, Erhard Jacobsen, was an MEP as well as a member of the Danish

Parliament. In 1994, after many years in the Danish Parliament, the former minister of the environment and first lady Lone Dybkjær was the first MEP for the Social Liberals, and in 1994 the former Prime Minister Poul Schlüter gave the Conservative Party a much better vote than the national swing indicated. In 1999, Mogens Camre, a former Social Democrat, ran for the Danish People's Party on a strong right-wing programme, which was given much of the credit for the party mandate.

In this way, the outcome of the European Parliament election is closely related to developments on the national political scene, and groupings in the European Parliament (left, right, etc.) have so far played a minor role in elections.

The level of support for Eurosceptical parties and movements has been about 25 to 35 percent – much less than the level of Euroscepticism demonstrated in polls and in the vote in the six referendums on the EC and the EU. This reflects the dilemma many voters face when choosing between party loyalty and their Euroscepticism.

## Why So Many Referendums? The Institutional Setting and the Demand for Referendums

Six referendums on the EU is the highest number in Europe – most EU countries have never held a referendum on the European issue. However, some present members of the EU have held referendums, e.g. Ireland has held five referendums (1972, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2001), France two (1972, 1992), Britain (1975) and Italy (1989) one each, and Finland, Austria, and Sweden all held one when entering the EU in 1994 (updated from Laursen 1994b, 303–4; Pesonen et al. 1998). The Danish use of referendums is not part of a traditional Danish practice of public involvement in politics – during the past 30 years, only one referendum has been held on another issue. There are several explanations why Denmark has referendums on EU issues.

First, Article 20 of the Danish constitution stipulates that a law ceding sovereignty must be submitted to a referendum if not approved by at least a five-sixths majority in the Danish Parliament. Ceding sovereignty has been the official reason for the referendums in 1972, 1992, 1998, and 2000. However, as early as 1971 all major parties came to an agreement that the question of whether Denmark should join the EU would be submitted to a referendum even with a five-sixths majority supporting membership (Koch & Togeby 1999). This political agreement was confirmed in the 1998 referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty and in the 2000 referendum, when it was stated that the issues would be submitted to a referendum even if they were approved by a five-sixths majority (Law No. 322 of 6 June 1998; Law No.

288 of 2 May 2000). Since the establishment of the four Danish exemptions to the Maastricht Treaty by the 1993 referendum, there have been additional political agreements stipulating that the exemptions could not be removed without a referendum (Petersen 1999, 107). In 1993, the EU issue was submitted to a referendum under Article 42 of the constitution and in 1986 as a consultative referendum (not mentioned in the constitution). Thus, it is not for strictly constitutional reasons that Denmark has had six referendums on EU issues.

However, in the present discussion of the Nice Treaty, the dominant parties in Parliament argue that according to Article 20 of the constitution a referendum is not needed, which has also been confirmed by the Justice Department (Law No. 179 of 2 March 2001; Justice Department 2001).

This interpretation of the Nice Treaty has been challenged by the Eurosceptical parties and movements. Furthermore, in the referendums in 1972, 1998, and 2000, Article 20 was not decisive in determining whether there should be a referendum or not. In this way, the constitutional minimum requirements are being used politically in a new way to avoid a referendum, which should be seen in relation to the ‘no’ to the euro delivered by the referendum of 2000. This political use may be the beginning of a challenge to the institutionalization of Danish referendums on EU issues (see below).

Second, the reason for submitting the European issue should, therefore, be seen not as a consequence of strictly legal reasons, but rather as a consequence of political reasons. One of the major political reasons has been the internal split within the Social Democratic Party. Because of fears of the EC question influencing national elections and strengthening Eurosceptical Social Democratic candidates to Parliament, Social Democrats in and outside the government were led to see a referendum as a method of separating national politics from this international issue (Martens 1979, 28–44). The referendum in 1972 was first planned as a non-binding consultative referendum. The debate, however, quickly turned in favour of a binding referendum following the rules of Article 20 in the constitution for ceding sovereignty. National and party political problems were decisive in the introduction of referendums on EC/EU matters. The next referendum in 1986 was also the product of national political disputes, where tactical manoeuvres of the two opposition parties – the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats – and the Liberal–Conservative government ended with a very unexpected referendum on the EC reform package (Worre 1988, 369–70). Not only the Social Democratic Party has had an interest in dealing with internal opposition – referendums have been a way for all parties in Parliament to deal with the fact that some of their voters as well as their members of Parliament have had differing views on European issues. Referendums have made it possible to decouple domestic politics and European issues.



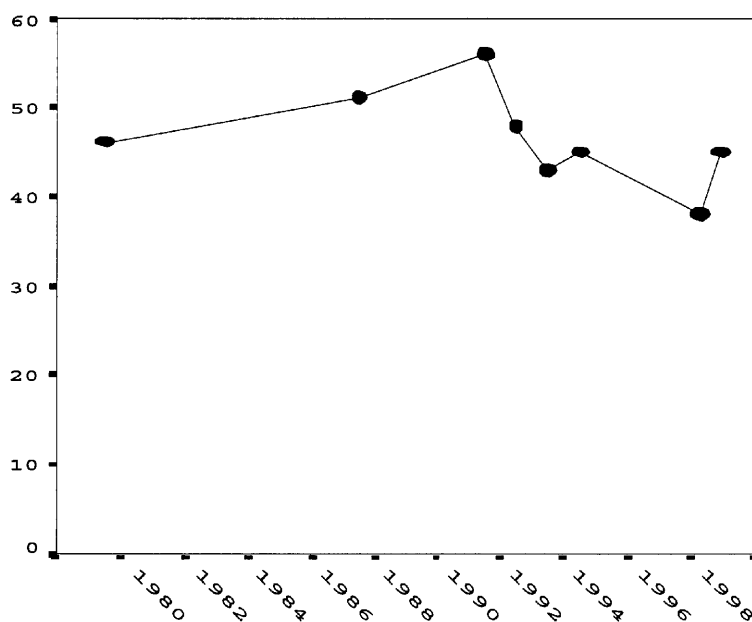
Third, several minor parties and individual politicians in Parliament have on their agenda a general wish for more referendums. However, this seems to play a minor role among the reasons for referendums in Denmark.

Fourth, the widespread use of referendums has institutionalized the referendum instrument as a must when European issues are involved. In the 1990s, there was general agreement among almost all parties – in fact establishing a tradition – for referendums whenever major EU decisions were to be made. This tradition is very often legitimized with reference to the divided population and the many narrow ‘yes’ or ‘no’ majorities – the logic being that with a deeply divided population and with the results of the referendums swinging back and forth between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, major decisions cannot be made without consulting the voters in a referendum. However, the discussion in Parliament on the Nice Treaty shows that the institutionalization is not so deep that it cannot be changed if a strong majority in Parliament should decide to do so. Therefore, the general claim for referendums on EU issues in Denmark seems to be weakened by the ‘decision’ that the Nice Treaty did not cede sovereignty and therefore did not need to be submitted to referendum. In this way, questions of whether future treaties will cede sovereignty still seem relevant to whether Denmark will hold referendums on EU issues. Nevertheless, it may very well be the current political situation which decides whether forthcoming treaties cede sovereignty, rather than legal reasons.

Whatever the reason for the many referendums, the Danes are very interested in the referendums on the EC/EU, and very divided on the issues – but how do the Danes evaluate the many referendums presented to them? Are they weary of this element of direct democracy or do they embrace it? Their basic beliefs about referendums as a part of democracy are also characterized by a split electorate, but with a tendency towards less support for more referendums (see Figure 4).

In the early 1990s, the pattern seemed to be that after a referendum the support for further referendums declined (Svensson 1999, 255). However, this pattern is not found in the late 1990s, when support for more referendums – as expected – increased at the time of the 1998 referendum, but not to the high levels of support in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and, more importantly, declined further after 1998 and reached its lowest level ever just before the euro referendum in 2000. It has been suggested that groups of citizens felt that the political elite were using referendums to manipulate voters (Svensson 1999, 256), by presenting the same or almost the same question to the people again and again, forcing the voters to go further towards European integration than the majority of voters wanted. If this interpretation is correct, support for more referendums should decline most among ‘no’ voters. Unfortunately the data do not give the opportunity to examine this question over time. However, a survey conducted a month

Figure 4. Percentage Agreeing on the Item 'Many more political issues should be decided by referendums', 1979–98.



Source: Svensson (1999, 256).

before the 2000 referendum shows that citizens favouring the single currency strongly disfavoured more referendums, whereas the opposite can be said about citizens who disfavoured the euro (see Table 2).

One interpretation of the clear division among citizens in Table 2 is that 'yes' supporters would have their way even without a referendum,

Table 2. Demand for More Referendums on EU Issues 2000 Divided on Support for the Euro  
Question: 'Should more EU issues be decided by referendums?'

	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	N	Percent difference
'Yes' supporters	24	3	73	350	-49
'No' supporters	65	4	31	332	34
Undecided	45	7	48	123	-3

Note: 'Agree' consists of 'strongly agree' and 'somewhat agree'. 'Disagree' consists of 'strongly disagree' and 'somewhat disagree'. The survey was conducted between 24 and 31 August 2000 by PLS RAMBØL Management by telephone for House of Mandag Morgen and the University of Southern Denmark. The response rate was 51 percent.

Table 3. Demand for More Referendums on EU, National, Regional, and Local Issues, 1999 and 2000

Question: 'Should many more EU/national/regional/local issues be decided by referendums?'

	Agree completely (%)	Agree partly (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree partly (%)	Disagree completely (%)	N	Percent difference
2000							
EU issues	33	11	4	8	44	814	-8
National issues	28	12	4	8	48	799	-16
Local issues	36	16	3	6	39	808	7
1999							
National issues	21	21	7	19	32	1114	-9
Regional issues	12	23	10	21	34	987	-20
Local issues	14	22	9	20	35	1113	-19

since a clear majority in Parliament support further integration, whereas for citizens who are against further integration more referendums on EU issues seem to be their only chance to prevent further European integration.

No matter what the reason is, it is clear that the support for more referendums has declined somewhat among the Danes, even though a large minority continues to want more referendums. This conclusion is supported even more if attitudes to different kinds of referendums are analysed. In all cases, the majority is against more referendums – with local referendums in 2000 being the exception (see Table 3). Attitudes were much more polarized in 2000 close to the Euro referendum than in 1999, when the 1998 referendum had just ended and the next referendum was not yet announced. The campaign before a referendum not only makes citizens think about the specific issue of the referendum, but also seems to make beliefs about referendums as a democratic tool more clear – the 'neither agree nor disagree' share is also lower.

The Danes are against more referendums, but do they want fewer? All the surveys analysed above ask citizens about their attitudes to more referendums. However, a rephrasing of the question may give a more accurate picture of their attitudes. Instead of asking about attitudes to more referendums, the question was put this way: 'What is your attitude to referendums – in general and not in an EU context? Should we have more, is the present number suitable, or should we have fewer?' Asked this way, the picture is clear: the Danes want to continue the tradition of having many referendums on EU questions, as Table 4 shows, whereas a minority of voters want either more or fewer referendums.

Table 4. Attitudes to the Number of Referendums (Percent)

More	16
Same number	60
Fewer	20
Don't know	4
<i>N</i>	1207

*Source:* Survey carried out on 25 September 2000 by Sonar for the newspaper *Morgenavisen Jyllands-posten*.

## Referendums on the EC and EU

The turnout at the six referendums on EU questions during the past 30 years has been very high – on average 82.2 percent – compared with other public elections (see Figure 3), and compared with the ten referendums on other questions held in the past 85 years – average turnout 57.5 percent. For the last seven non-EU referendums (all since World War II) the average turnout is 62.8 percent. Since the lowering of the voting age to 18 in 1978, the EU has been the only topic of referendum. In order to understand the process behind the referendums, a brief overview of the EU referendums and their themes follows.

As Table 5 shows, in all referendums the economy issue has played a major role as an argument for supporting further cooperation within the EU, just as loss of Danish sovereignty has been a major argument against. Furthermore, several referendum-specific issues surface at each referendum. The threat to the Danish welfare model manifested itself as a major issue in the 2000 referendum, along with loss of national identity and cultural traditions.

The various parties have generally held a steady course on recommending either a 'yes' or a 'no' in the referendums. Only the Social Democrats, the Christian People's Party, and the Social Liberals have at some point changed their general support to a 'yes' during the six referendums. The number of mandates in Parliament supporting a 'yes' does not correlate in any significant way with the 'yes' votes, indicating that party loyalty is weak when it comes to following the party line (Pedersen 1996, 29–30). The very strong commitment to the EU among the parties in Parliament has not affected the Danish voters, who have preserved their scepticism and taken an independent stand.

### *Regional Patterns*

In Denmark, the regional political-administrative level – the county (*amt*) – is the basis for 14 electoral 'county-districts', not including Copenhagen,

which is divided into three 'grand-districts' (Elklit 1999). Attitudes to the EU vary greatly in these 17 districts, and until the last referendum the picture was very clear: the Copenhagen metropolitan area voted 'no' and the rest of Denmark voted 'yes', especially the areas in Jutland with large agricultural and agro- and fishing-industrial interests. This centre-periphery or town-country pattern is also found within each electoral district, where citizens in the large towns are more Eurosceptical than people living in the country. The pattern in other Scandinavian countries is the opposite – there the centre/centres vote 'yes' and the periphery/peripheries vote 'no' (Petersen 1999, 117). The 1994 referendums on membership in Sweden, Finland, and Norway showed a clear centre-periphery pattern, in which the 'yes' support was located in the high population density areas of the south and southeast parts of the countries (Ringdal & Valen 1998; Pesonen et al. 1998).

The 'no' centre and 'yes' periphery are still the basic picture in Denmark, but differences have weakened, as shown in the last row in Table 6, where the average differences in electoral results in the 17 districts from the national electoral results are calculated. The differences in the latest referendums dropped to half and then to one-quarter of the differences in the first two referendums. The vanishing regional pattern in Denmark is also different from the voting pattern in Norway, where the centre-periphery dimension seems rather stable over time (Ringdal & Valen 1998, 187). Copenhagen and the western part of Jutland traditionally constitute the extremes on the continuum of 'yes' percent in the different referendums in Denmark. In 1972 one district in Copenhagen had a 'yes' percentage of 43.8 whereas Ringkøbing had a 'yes' percentage of 75.3. In 1986 these large differences were still present. However, from the 1992 referendum the difference narrows. In 1998 the southern district in Copenhagen still presents the lowest yes percentage of 47.4 whereas Ringkøbing has the highest of 61.3. In 2000, the lowest 'yes' in Copenhagen was 44.5 and the highest in Jutland was 50.4, a difference of only six percent compared with the up to 40 percent difference in the 1986 referendum. This dramatic shift has taken place within only 15 years. Even though the Danes continue to be divided on the EU question, this division is dividing the various parts of Denmark to a much lesser degree, the split occurring more and more within all parts of Denmark. Whereas the 'no' in 1992 was the 'no' of Copenhagen and parts of the islands (nine out of the 17 districts and counties), the 'no' in 2000 was the 'no' of all Denmark (15 of the 17 districts and counties) – but of course not all Danes.

A closer examination of the 17 districts reveals that five counties – North Jutland, Århus, Funen, Bornholm, and Storstrøm – have always had the same 'yes' or 'no' majority as the country as a whole. Closest to the national result was Funen, followed by Roskilde, Århus, North Jutland, and

Table 5. Overview of the Six Referendums' Themes and Party Support

	Major themes in the public debate	Parties in Parliament for/against (mandates in Parliament at time of referendums <sup>5</sup> )
1972 <sup>a</sup>		
Membership of European Community	For: • Economic advantages • Avoid isolation Against: • Loss of Danish sovereignty, national identity, and cultural traditions • Caught up in big-power politics	For: 90% • Social Democrats (40%) • Social Liberals (15%) • Conservative Party (18%) • Liberal Party (17%)
Turnout 90%		Against: 10% • Socialist People's Party (10%)
1986 <sup>b</sup>		
Single European Act	For: • Economic advantages • Trade Against: • Loss of Danish sovereignty, national identity, and cultural traditions • Harmonization, protection of Danish environmental standards • A first step towards a political union	For: 44% • Conservative Party (24%) • Liberal Party (13%) • Centre Democrats (4%) • Christian People's Party (3%) • Social Liberals (6%) • Socialist People's Party (12%) • Social Democrats (32%) • Left socialist (3%) • Progress Party (3%)
Yes vote: 56% Turnout 75%		Against: 56%
1992 <sup>c</sup>		
Maastricht Treaty	For: • Economic advantages • The principle of subsidiarity Against: • Loss of Danish sovereignty, national identity, and cultural traditions • Openness and democracy	For: 82% • Conservative Party (17%) • Liberal Party (17%) • Centre Democrats (5%) • Social Democrats (39%) • Social Liberals (4%) • Christian People's Party (2%) • Socialist People's Party (9%) • Progress Party (7%)
Yes vote: 49% Turnout 83%		For/against Against: 16%

1993 <sup>d</sup> Maastricht Treaty supplemented by Edinburgh Agreement Yes vote: 57% Turnout 87%	For: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic advantages</li> <li>• The principle of subsidiarity</li> </ul> Against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Danish sovereignty, national identity, and cultural traditions</li> <li>• Openness and democracy</li> <li>• Undemocratic to vote twice on same treaty</li> </ul>	For: 93%  Against: 7%  For: 80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative Party (17%)</li> <li>• Liberal Party (17%)</li> <li>• Centre Democrats (5%)</li> <li>• Christian People's Party (2%)</li> <li>• Social Democrats (39%)</li> <li>• Social Liberals (4%)</li> <li>• Socialist People's Party (9%)</li> <li>• Progress Party (7%)</li> </ul>
1998 <sup>e</sup> Amsterdam Treaty Yes vote: 55% Turnout 76%	For: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic advantages with focus on employment</li> <li>• Peace project through enlargement to the east</li> <li>• Edinburgh exemption is guaranteed</li> <li>• No re-negotiation opportunity</li> </ul> Against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build-up a Fortress Europe with closed frontiers</li> <li>• Step towards political union</li> <li>• Weak environmental guarantee</li> <li>• Xenophobic regarding the Schengen open borders commitment</li> </ul>	Against: 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Party (2%)</li> <li>• Socialist People's Party (8%)</li> <li>• The Unity Party (3%)</li> <li>• Danish People's Party (7%)</li> </ul>
2000 <sup>f</sup> European single currency (euro) Yes vote: 47% Turnout 88%	For: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic advantages</li> <li>• More say in EU matters</li> </ul> Against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threat to the Danish welfare model</li> <li>• Loss of Danish sovereignty, national identity, and cultural traditions</li> <li>• Falling euro value compared with the US dollar</li> <li>• Haider effect – member state sanctions against Austria</li> </ul>	For: 78%  Against: 22%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative Party (9%)</li> <li>• Liberal Party (24%)</li> <li>• Centre Democrats (5%)</li> <li>• Social Democrats (36%)</li> <li>• Social Liberals (4%)</li> <li>• Progress Party (2%)</li> <li>• Socialist People's Party (8%)</li> <li>• The Unity Party (3%)</li> <li>• Danish People's Party (7%)</li> </ul>

*Note:* The June Movement, established in 1992, and the Movement Against the EC/EU, established in 1972, have campaigned for a 'no' in all referendums. *Sources:* <sup>a</sup> Petersen & Elklit (1973); Worre (1988); Siune & Svensson (1993). <sup>b</sup> Worre (1988); Siune & Svensson (1993). <sup>c</sup> Siune & Svensson (1993); Laursen (1994a). <sup>d</sup> Laursen (1999). <sup>e</sup> Petersen (1999). <sup>f</sup> Downs (2001). However, Andersen et al. (2000) find that the Haider argument was not present among voters' final reason for their decision. <sup>g</sup> www.ft.dk. The figures in the table exclude the fact that a few members of Parliament did not follow their party's recommendation.

Table 6. Regional Distribution of the 'Yes' Percentage in Referendums on EU Questions, 1972–2000

	1972	1986	1992	1993	1998	2000
Denmark	63.4	56.2	49.3	56.7	55.1	46.8
Copenhagen	47.5	36.3	38.3	44.7	49.2	45.7
South district	43.8	33.4	36.3	42.2	47.4	44.5
East district	48.3	35.3	37.4	44.4	48.8	45.0
West district	49.7	39.7	41.0	47.0	51.1	47.5
Island counties	63.9	54.9	49.6	56.5	54.6	46.4
Copenhagen	58.2	49.8	48.9	55.4	54.4	47.7
Frederiksborg	64.1	58.0	53.5	59.5	57.6	50.6
Roskilde	63.9	55.1	51.6	59.0	55.7	48.3
West Zealand	67.0	56.9	48.6	55.4	51.9	42.1
Storstrøm	68.6	56.1	48.4	55.0	51.9	42.4
Bornholm	62.6	57.3	49.3	53.0	53.0	41.0
Funen	67.5	57.6	48.1	56.2	55.3	46.1
Jutland counties	68.6	62.5	51.6	59.9	57.0	47.4
South Jutland	75.1	68.3	54.1	61.5	56.9	48.5
Ribe	70.9	68.1	53.7	61.3	58.1	47.8
Vejle	68.3	62.5	51.9	60.8	56.2	47.5
Ringkøbing	75.3	73.7	57.5	66.4	61.3	50.4
Århus	62.1	53.5	48.7	57.4	56.3	48.7
Viborg	74.6	67.7	53.6	62.8	59.5	47.6
North Jutland	66.3	59.5	48.7	55.9	54.5	43.2
Average difference in district results from the national result	7.1	8.1	4.2	4.8	2.9	2.3

Source: Statistics Denmark (2000).

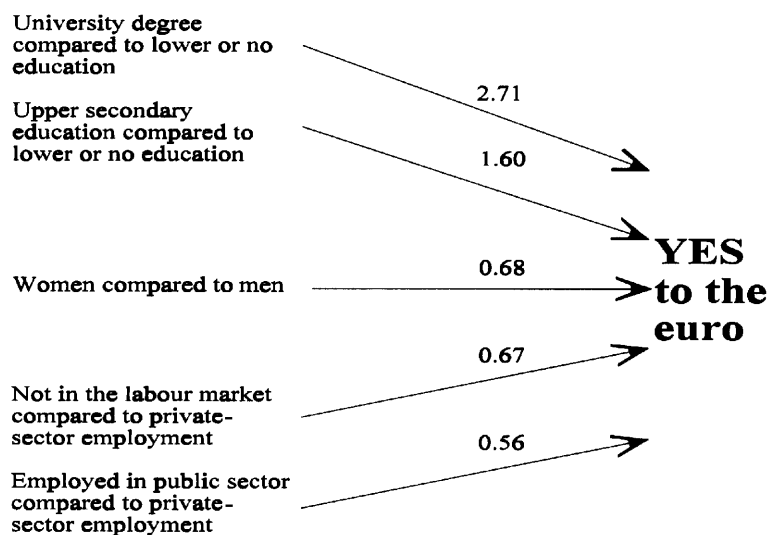
Bornholm. In the last four referendums, Copenhagen County too has had the same 'yes' or 'no' majority as Denmark as a whole, and closest to the national result was Funen, followed by Copenhagen, Århus, West Zealand, and Roskilde.

## Euro/EMU Referendum 2000

During the debate prior to the referendum of 2000, the media and several opinion polls tried to map how different social-demographic groups would vote. However, their attempts were relatively poor and in contradiction to each other. Furthermore, the opinion polls predicted the election outcome rather poorly. The purpose of this part of the article is to map the reasons why people voted as they did. The first model will focus on social-demographic characteristics, the second on knowledge about the election subject, and the third model on underlying attitudes.



Figure 5. The Odds for a 'Yes' Compared with Specific Social-Demographic Characteristics.



*Note:* The figure shows the odds ratios in a binomial logistic regression. Odds ratios equal to 1 indicate that there is a 50/50 chance for a 'yes' vote when the independent variable changes. Odds ratios below 1 indicate that a 'yes' vote will become less likely when the independent variable changes. Odds ratios above 1 indicate that the chance will become more likely when the independent variable changes. All odds ratios are significant:  $p < 0.000$ . Hosmer and Lemeshow's goodness-of-fit test  $\chi^2 = 5.988$  significant,  $p = 0.649$ . Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.069$ . 1521 cases are included in the analysis. The model correctly predicts 58.5 percent of cases. Age, geography, and workers/white-collar are all non-significant and are therefore not included in the model. When the modelling is conducted in a stepwise manner, the odds ratios do not change significantly, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem in the model. The survey was conducted by PLS RAMBØLL Management by telephone. The response rate was 60 percent, with seven callbacks. The sampling was carried out through simple random sampling on telephone numbers approximately 2 months before the referendum. Undecided respondents were asked how they would vote if they had to take a stand, which left only 8 percent undecided and excluded from the analysis. At a later stage, the survey will be available from the Danish Data Archives.

### *Social-Demographic Characteristics*

In order to be able to understand the relationship of different social-demographic characteristics to the vote, a binomial logistic regression is conducted. See Figure 5.

Education has the strongest impact on the result of the vote. Voters with a university degree have 2.71 times higher odds for voting 'yes' than voters with lower or no education, when other variables are controlled. Voters with an upper secondary education have 1.6 times higher odds for voting 'yes' than voters with lower or no education. The odds ratio for women compared with men is 0.68, which indicates that women vote 'no' to a greater extent than men. People who are not in the labour market or employed

in the public sector vote 'no' to a greater extent than voters employed in the private sector. Education and gender correlate with employment. However, the correlation is relatively weak (Spearman  $r = 0.2$ ). The model confirms many of the early findings from other surveys in previous Danish referendums.<sup>4</sup> Men, the privately employed, and the more educated vote 'yes' to a greater extent (Siune & Svensson 1993; Siune et al. 1994). However, the model does not find that age, geography, and worker/white-collar are significant, these having been relevant factors in previous EU referendums. That age and geography are not significant is confirmed by another analysis based on different surveys (see Jakobsen et al. 2001), and by the actual vote (see Table 6).

Jakobsen et al. (2001) find that worker/white-collar is significant; however, we find that if private/public-sector employment is included it cancels out the effect of worker/white-collar.

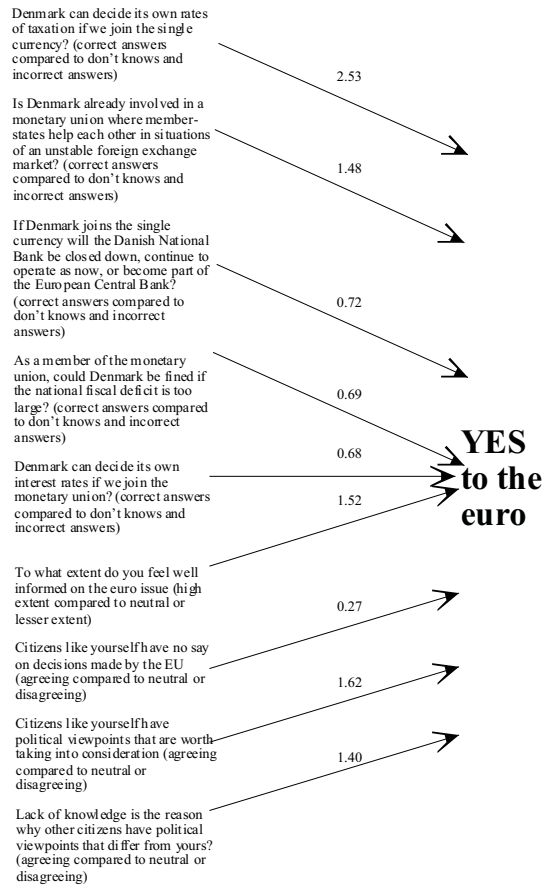
The model predicts correctly to a degree of 58.5 percent. Compared with the initial distribution almost equally divided between 'yes' and 'no' (48 percent 'no' and 52 percent 'yes'), this is relatively good.

#### *Knowledge of the Election Subject, Knowledge Items, and External and Internal Efficacy*

In the debate up to the referendum, 'yes' campaigners often claimed that whether you voted 'yes' or 'no' was a matter of knowledge. However, knowledge items are rarely included in surveys. The reason for this exclusion may be the difficulty of finding which knowledge items are relevant at any given point in time, and how to make a distinction between knowledge and attitudes which vary from person to person. The logistic regression in Figure 6 indicates exactly this difference, because some forms of knowledge increase the probability of a 'no' and other forms of knowledge increase the probability of a 'yes'. This indicates on the one hand that respondents base their votes on rather selective knowledge (Hansen & Andersen 2001). On the other hand, it may also indicate that other variables, such as general attitudes towards the EU, affect respondents' votes as well as influencing the level of knowledge or even more reciprocal relationships between the variables.

Correct answers to questions of whether Denmark can decide its own rate of taxation and whether Denmark is a member of existing monetary unions increase the odds for a 'yes' vote by 2.53 and 1.48, respectively, whereas correct answers to questions of what will happen to the Danish national bank, whether Denmark could be fined, and whether Denmark can set its own interest rate all decrease the odds for a 'yes'. The latter three knowledge items may all be interpreted as a loss of Danish independence, whereas the items about the possibility of setting the rate of taxation and about

Figure 6. The Odds for a 'Yes' Compared with Specific Knowledge Items and External and Internal Efficacy.



Note: The figure shows the odds ratios in a binomial logistic regression. All odds ratios are significant:  $p < 0.01$ . Hosmer and Lemeshow's goodness-of-fit test  $\chi^2 = 4.988$  significant,  $p = 0.759$ . Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.259$ . The model correctly predicts 69.6 percent of cases. 1360 cases are included in the analysis. Interest in politics is not significant and is therefore not included in the model. When the modelling is conducted in a stepwise manner, the odds ratios do not change significantly, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem in the model. The survey was conducted by PLS RAMBØLL Management by telephone. The response rate was 60 percent, with seven callbacks. The sampling was carried out through simple random sampling on telephone numbers approximately 2 months before the referendum. Undecided respondents were asked how they would vote if they had to take a stand, which left only 8 percent undecided and excluded from the analysis. At a later stage, the survey will be available from the Danish Data Archives.

Denmark already being a member of a monetary union would merely see Danish acceptance the euro as part of a continuing *status quo*. Knowledge has an impact on one's vote; however, a different kind of knowledge has a

different impact. The model also shows that the more well informed voters are the more likely they are to vote 'yes'.

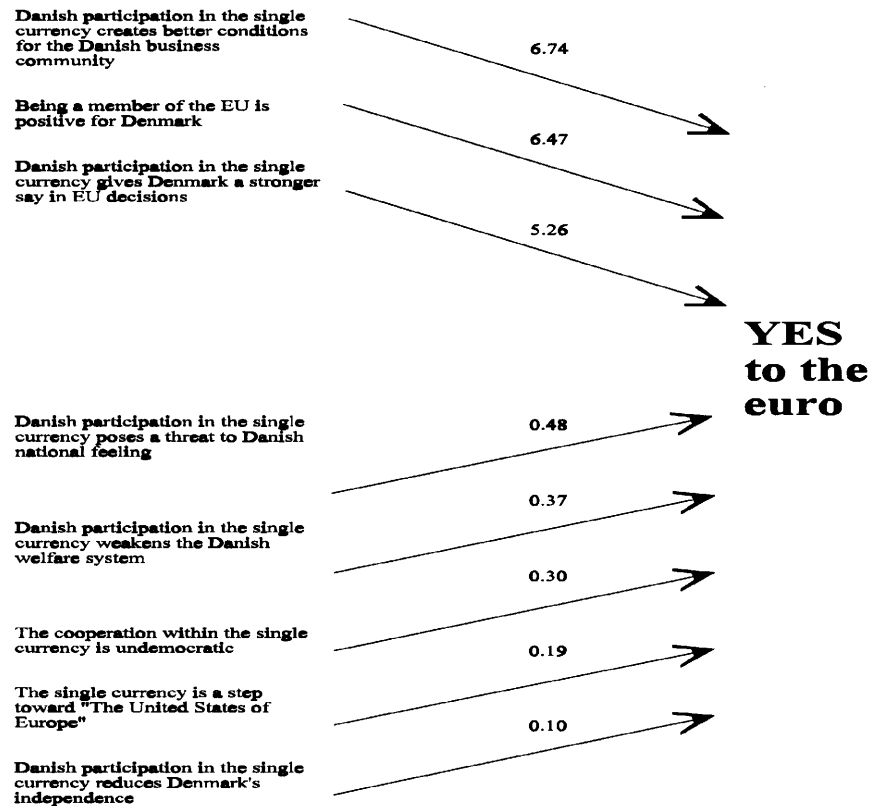
The three last items in the model are, respectively, elements of external and internal political efficacy (Campbell et al. 1954; Lane 1959; Zimmerman 1989) and political tolerance (Andersen & Hansen in review). Political efficacy is the effect indicating whether voters feel that their political actions have or can have an impact upon the political process (Campbell et al. 1954, 187).

Political efficacy may be divided into external political efficacy, which indicates to what extent the political system is responsive to one's efforts to influence policy, and internal efficacy, which indicates to what extent the voter feels competent to participate in political acts (Zimmerman 1989; Hansen 2001). People voting 'yes' indicate a much higher internal and external political efficacy. External political efficacy could be the result of the large majority of members in the Danish Parliament supporting 'yes', a result that has caused voters supporting 'no' to feel neglected in the political process. The result that voters with a high internal political efficacy vote 'yes' by a factor of 1.62 compared with neutral or less internal political efficacy could be interpreted as an effect of the massive 'yes' campaign, which to a great extent focused on trying to explain the highly complex euro project, and, by trying to do so, pushed many of the 'no' voters away. When agreeing on the item that 'lack of knowledge is the reason why other citizens have political viewpoints that differ from yours', the odds are 1.4 times higher compared to neutral or disagreeing categories. This could be interpreted as the 'yes' voters having to some extent adopted the 'yes' campaign messages whereas 'no' voters rejected them. As a result, the two sides in the campaign were talking at cross-purposes. The same phenomenon may also be interpreted as reflecting the 'yes' voters' arrogance and lack of tolerance towards people with other political views.

#### *Underlying Attitudes*

The last model uses differing underlying attitudes to explain the vote (see Figure 7). Three attitude items strongly increase the chance for a 'yes' vote. The three may be summarized as economic gain, general attitude towards the EU, and influence in EU decisions. The odds for these three items are much higher compared with the knowledge and social-demographic items put forward in Figures 5 and 6. There are five items which make a 'yes' vote significantly less likely. The strongest relationship among these items relates to the question of whether the euro will reduce Danish independence. When people agree on this item, there is only one-tenth of a chance for a 'yes' vote compared with people being neutral or disagreeing. Agreeing that the single currency is a step towards 'The United States of Europe', that the project is undemocratic, or that it poses a threat to the Danish welfare state and to

Figure 7. The Odds for a 'Yes' Compared with Different Aspects of Attitudes to the Euro Issue.



*Note:* The figure shows the odds ratios in a binomial logistic regression. All odds ratios are significant:  $p < 0.02$ . Hosmer and Lemeshow's goodness-of-fit test  $\chi^2 = 9.946$  significant,  $p = 0.269$ . Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.822$ . The model correctly predicts 90.6 percent of cases. 887 cases are included in the analysis, since 'don't know' answers are excluded from the explanatory variables. All odds are the agreeing category compared with neutral or disagreeing category. When the modelling is conducted in a stepwise manner, the odds ratios do not change significantly, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem in the model. The survey was conducted by PLS RAMBØLL Management by telephone. The response rate was 60 percent, with seven callbacks. The sampling was carried out through simple random sampling on telephone numbers approximately 2 months before the referendum. Undecided respondents were asked how they would vote if they had to take a stand, which left only 8 percent undecided and excluded from the analysis. At a later stage, the survey will be available from the Danish Data Archives.

Danish national feelings are also strong, significant indicators of a 'no' vote. In the Danish National Deliberative Poll on the euro issue, an open question found that 'economy' for 'yes' voters and 'independence' for 'no' voters were the most significant reasons for their vote (Andersen et al. 2000).<sup>5</sup>

The attitude model correctly predicts 90.6 percent of the votes, whereas Figures 5 and 6, respectively, correctly predict 58.5 percent and 69.6 percent. Underlying attitudes predict the vote better than the previous two models, which indicates that the euro issue is a matter of attitudes and values/beliefs rather than prescribed characteristics and knowledge. These findings are confirmed by the fact that regional differences have considerably weakened over the past 30 years with regard to European issues on the referendum agenda in Denmark. See Table 6.

## The Danes, Europe, and the EU

Throughout the past 30 years, the Danes have had paradoxical and polarized attitudes to the EC and EU. The Danes have been both extremely active (high turnouts at EU referendums) and very passive (low turnouts at European Parliament elections); they have both strongly supported membership of the EU and voted ‘no’ to the Maastricht Treaty and the euro. But what is the essence of their attitudes – is there an essence? – and has this essence changed over time?

A key to understanding attitudes and behaviour in the past 30 years is the low level of identification with Europe among Danish citizens (see Table 7). The basic emotional identification with Europe – Europe, not the EU – is very low among Danes, who tend to feel attached to the nation, to the city, village, or other place where they live, and to the municipalities.<sup>6</sup>

The low level of identification with Europe has placed European politics low on the public political agenda and also low on the individual agendas of most Danes – and parties, media, etc. The major – if not the only – issue regarded as important is the big issue of EU membership.

Table 7. Feelings of Attachment to Various Geographic Units (Percent)

	No attachment	Some attachment	Strong attachment	N
Denmark	4	15	81	1126
The city/village/place you live	8	31	61	1124
The municipality	8	44	48	1125
The region	13	44	43	1125
Scandinavia	15	48	37	1111
The world	20	50	30	1088
Europe	19	54	27	1108
The county	29	55	16	998

Source: Buch & Ejersbo (forthcoming).

This issue is not accentuated in European Parliament elections, but has been made – by parties, media, and voters – the basic question in all referendums on the EU. Around this constant debate, developments have moved the frontline from an east versus west, countryside versus city, or farmer/fisher versus industrial/public-sector conflict to a conflict within the east and the west, the countryside and the city, etc. However, the basic question is still the same: are you for or against membership? Or, to be more precise: is this next step – the single European Act, euro, etc. – necessary for continued membership? The important change in the 1990s was a development away from voting on the basis of occupation or socio-economic position to voting on the basis of general attitudes towards the EU. In the 1970s, EC attitudes were in line with the traditional left–right spectrum – with the left in opposition to ‘the capitalist EC project’, the right in favour of ‘peaceful cooperation between Western European democracies’, and the Social Democratic Party caught in the middle of this debate, with a division among the party’s voters, members, and politicians as the consequence. From the beginning of the twenty-first century, this picture has changed – towards more Euroscepticism among right-wing voters, and more positive attitudes towards the EU among left-wing voters. The EU has brought a new dimension into Danish politics, cross-cutting the old left–right spectrum, and this dimension is much more multifaceted than previous EU debates dominated by economic issues. This development is a challenge to all parties – as for decades it has been a challenge to the Social Democratic Party. Whether the implication of this development is continued decoupling of national politics and EU politics, or an EU-ization of national politics and the end of the tradition of referendums, has been at the centre of the Danish political debate since the September 2000 referendum. The White Paper presented by the government (Regeringen 2001) in June 2001, as a consequence of the ‘no’ delivered by the September 2000 referendum, does not discuss this issue, even though the title of the White Paper, ‘Denmark and Europe. Enlargement, Globalization and Popular Support’, focuses on the most important policy questions in the EU: enlargement, implementation of the EMU, defence and security (ESDP), justice and home affairs (JHA), other specific policies, and the new initiatives taken at the Nice meeting. The White Paper only sporadically discusses the problem of popular support, even though popular support must be viewed as one of the main problems for Danish EU policy. The White Paper points to European solutions to the Danish problem, and pays very little attention to the possibility of national solutions and policies to resolve the gap between on one side a parliament dominated by EU-positive parties and politicians, and on the other side a divided population. The crucial question is whether the gap is (1) the product of an uninformed

population, as some politicians suggest, and calls for more information, debate, etc., (2) the product of errors in EU policies or structures, as the White Paper implies, or (3) the product of 30 years of decoupling of national and EU politics. The last possibility deserves at least to be considered and debated.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### NOTES

1. After it was decided that Britain would join the EEC, the polling question was changed. The question did not explicitly set British membership as a prior condition for support of Danish membership. The wording mentioning British membership may very well have created some bias towards the economic advantages of membership, since Britain was very important for Danish exports. Without the focus on Britain, respondents may have found it easier to include other arguments for and against EEC membership which they believed were important. The change in wording may in this way account for some of the changes after 1973.
2. Several Danish politicians have named the Parliament the 'Micky Mouse Parliament'.
3. At local elections, local lists are active in one-third of the 275 municipalities, and only the Social Democrats, the Liberals, and the Conservatives have candidates in all or almost all municipalities. This creates almost 275 different party systems (Elklit 1997).
4. Similar results are reported from the 1994 referendums in Norway, Finland, and Sweden (see Ringdal & Valen (1998) for details).
5. Oskarson & Ringdal (1998) report that democracy/independence and economy were also the most important arguments for voters in the 1994 referendums in Norway, Finland, and Sweden. However, in Denmark the economy has primarily been an argument supporting a 'yes' vote, whereas democracy/independence has been an argument supporting a 'no' vote (see also Table 5). In Norway, Finland, and Sweden the two sides have not monopolized the argument to the same degree (Oskarson & Ringdal 1998).
6. The low level of identification seems to be substantial also over time. In the Eurobarometer surveys, the Danes are confronted with four options of how they might see themselves in the future – Danish only, Danish and European, European and Danish, and European only. In 1995, 48 percent of the Danish population saw themselves as 'Danish only' in the near future, whereas in spring 1999 and autumn 2000, respectively, 56 percent and 46 percent saw themselves as 'Danish only' in the future (Eurobarometer 1995; 2000a; 2000b).

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