Information, involvement and identity: A social psychological investigation into British attitudes towards the euro

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I certify that the thesis presented by me in 2007 for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the University of London is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others, and that the extent of any work carried out jointly by myself and any other person is clearly identified in it.

Signed Caroline Roberts

Date 23/10/07

ABSTRACT

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the debate surrounding Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the question of whether Britain should join dominated the political agenda. Public opinion was characterised by widespread opposition to closer integration with Europe. This thesis investigates the social psychological processes underlying the dynamics of public attitudes towards the euro during this period. It focuses on three factors, shown in previous research to be particularly useful in explaining variation in support for EMU: the nature of *information* about the issue circulated by the media, variation in public *involvement* in the issue and the strength of people's attachment to British national *identity*.

The empirical studies undertaken draw on a number of theoretical approaches but two in particular play a central part in the thesis: the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) and Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, 1987). Together, they provide a social psychological framework for understanding the role of information, involvement and identity in attitude formation and change.

Four empirical studies were undertaken. The first two focus on the media. Study A looks at how much press coverage of the single currency issue the public was exposed to over the course of the debate. Study B looks at the content of this coverage, particularly in relation to forms of persuasive argument employed by press outlets of differing political outlooks. The next two studies focus on the role of involvement and identity in persuasion. Study C is an analysis of data from a public opinion field experiment – a Deliberative Poll – and study D reports an experiment especially designed to test the postulates of the ELM in relation to public attitudes towards the euro. The final chapter contains a summary of the thesis, some conclusions and a discussion of some of the emerging issues.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FOREWORD

Historical and political context of the research

British political ambivalence towards integration in Europe can be traced as far back as the 1950s, when the decision was taken not to participate in the European Coal and Steel Community (a core group of six European nations formed in 1951), to concentrate instead on its close ties with the Commonwealth and the USA. Later, when talks began to discuss the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), culminating in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, British politicians remained sceptical because of concerns that membership of the EEC would have a negative impact on trade links outside of Europe. As the UK began to trade more and more with the EEC and as the Community grew stronger economically, however, the arguments for participating became more compelling. Britain finally joined in 1973, following two failed applications during the 1960s vetoed by French President Charles de Gaulle (partly out of concerns that Britain's relationship with the US would compromise its commitment to its European partners). However, politicians were divided as to whether the decision to join had been appropriate for the UK. Because Britain had not been involved from the outset, it had not been able to influence the decisions that shaped the institutions of the European Community (EC), and so some were not well suited to the British economy. As a result, a number of concessions had to be made when Britain joined, which negatively impacted on trading links with the Commonwealth. There was also widespread reluctance to pursue even closer integration, which many saw as a step closer to political union and ultimately, towards the establishment of a federal Europe. For this reason, the Labour government took the decision to hold a referendum on whether Britain should stay in the EEC or not.

The vote was held in 1975 and despite widespread opposition towards continued British membership of the EEC (with 55% of those expressing an opinion in pre-referendum polls claiming they would vote against staying in the Common Market), the 'Yes' camp succeeded in achieving a swing in public opinion of 22%, resulting in 67% voting in favour of staying in to 33% voting against (Worcester, 2000). But Britain's relations with its EEC partners remained problematic because of the Government's continued disinclination to support further political and economic developments within the

Community. Throughout the next decade, the Conservative Prime Minister Thatcher, became increasingly hostile towards EC projects aimed at creating stronger political links within Europe. In particular, Thatcher vehemently opposed European Commission President Jacques Delors' plans for European-wide social rights and only with reluctance consented to join the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) in 1990, which had been established in 1978 with the purpose of achieving currency stability across the continent, in order to lay the foundations for a union of European currencies.

In 1987, despite her disinclination to support closer integration, Thatcher signed the Single European Act – a treaty which promoted the improvement of living and working conditions for European citizens and laid down a timetable for achieving a full internal market by January 1993. These plans were later consolidated in the Treaty on European Union, which was the outcome of negotiations that took place at a summit in Maastricht in 1991. The Maastricht Treaty introduced new forms of co-operation between European governments on issues such as defence and justice, adding a concrete political dimension to integration for the first time. In addition, the treaty committed EC nations to the decision to establish Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). It provided a clear timetable for the unification process and laid down the criteria for entry into its final stage, the single European currency.

British politicians continued to view the European project with suspicion and resistance grew at both the political and popular level. Prime Minister John Major, who unlike his predecessor had been keen to put Britain at the heart of Europe, was held back by the divided attitudes to European integration held by his party. Many Conservatives feared that integration would result in a loss of British sovereignty and the centralisation of power in Brussels. Many, like Thatcher herself had been, were suspicious of the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty (especially those in the Social Chapter) and even supporters of the single currency had concerns that the proposed timetable and criteria for achieving the convergence of the European Union (EU) economies were unrealistic and over-ambitious. In addition, concerns about EMU were partially vindicated when it became clear that Britain had joined the ERM at an exchange rate against the Deutschmark that was too high to sustain. In September 1992, as a result of excessively destabilising currency speculation on the pound, Britain was forced to withdraw, an event which fuelled political, media and public opposition towards integration and in particular towards the single currency. Major struggled to get the treaty ratified by

Parliament, despite achieving opt-outs for Britain over the single currency and the social chapter and over the course of his leadership he was unable to unite the Conservative Party on the issue of Europe.

By the time the New Labour government came to power in 1997, plans for the introduction of the single European currency – the 'euro' – were well advanced. The decision about which EU Member States had achieved the necessary economic convergence to qualify for inclusion in EMU was made in Spring 1998, and the exchange rates at which countries would join the single currency were fixed. Eleven qualifying countries signed up to the new currency (later joined by a twelfth – Greece – in June 2000), while the remaining EU member states at that time – Denmark, Sweden and the UK – opted out of participation at the first wave. The euro was launched as an electronic currency for use by banks and foreign exchange dealers in January 1999, and in 2002, euro notes and coins went into circulation.

Unlike its predecessor, the new Labour leadership was broadly united on the issue of EMU, committed in principle to joining the euro, but only if a) the economic case for doing so could be established as 'clear and unambiguous' and b) the public voted in favour of British membership in a referendum. This position was outlined in a statement to the House of Commons by the Chancellor Gordon Brown in October 1997, which was later published as the 'National Changeover Plan' (HM Treasury, 1997). The plan detailed the criteria by which the suitability of the single currency for the British economy could be assessed. Five 'economic tests' were proposed, aimed at establishing the relative costs and benefits of EMU membership for the British economic interest. Broadly, they concerned: 1) the compatibility of business cycles and economic structures, and the suitability of shared interest rates; 2) whether the British economy was sufficiently flexible to cope with any problems that may arise; 3) whether joining EMU would encourage investment in Britain by foreign firms; 4) the impact of joining on the UK's financial services industry; and 5) the impact of joining on employment (HM Treasury, 2003). Only on meeting the economic tests, would the Government make the recommendation for Britain to join the single currency and agree to hold the referendum.

Public opinion on whether Britain should join the euro came to dominate the political and media debate surrounding EMU in the late 1990s and early 2000s. At the time when the proposal to the ESRC for the research undertaken in this thesis was written (in 1999), it was widely believed that a euro referendum was inevitable, indeed imminent, and certainly likely to take place during the lifetime of the grant. In the end, however, the promised vote did not materialise. Widely referred to as the 'sixth test', the status of public attitudes towards Europe and the euro were viewed as the linchpin in the decision over not only whether to join, but also when the referendum itself would be held. However, similar votes held in Denmark in September 2000 and in Sweden in September 2003, resulted in majorities voting against joining (53% and 56% respectively), leaving the British government reluctant to hold a referendum until high levels of public opposition in Britain showed signs of abating. The first assessment of the economic tests was announced in June 2003 and the decision was that 4 out of 5 of the tests had not been satisfactorily met (though clear advantages for the UK's financial services sector were evident). No case for UK membership could be made unless economic flexibility and convergence could be achieved (which would also help satisfy the remaining two tests concerning the impact of the euro on British jobs and the issue of foreign investment); and no case for membership could be made while public support was apparently so weak.

Overview of thesis

This thesis is about public attitudes towards European integration and specifically, about attitudes towards the introduction of the euro during the 1990s and early 2000s. The Labour government's commitment to decide whether Britain should join the euro by means of a referendum placed public opinion at the forefront of political and popular debate about the issue. The strength and direction of public attitudes would decide not only the future of Britain's economic and political relationship with Europe, but perhaps more importantly, would also determine when the conditions and timing were appropriate to hold such a vote. Understanding the nature of British public attitudes towards Europe and their determinants were matters of both academic and political interest.

British public opinion surrounding European integration held wider interest during this period because of the extent to which it deviated from the views held by citizens of other EU countries. Since the 1975 referendum on the EEC, public support for closer integration in Europe remained consistently low, lower than almost anywhere else in the EU. In fact, in 'Eurobarometer' surveys carried out on behalf of the European Commission, British citizens not only exhibited the lowest levels of support for integration compared with other EU countries, but also showed they were the least well informed about EU-level politics and that they were the least likely to identify themselves as Europeans. The research conducted here was designed to explore the relationship between these findings.

Studies of public opinion towards European integration have been carried out across a range of disciplines within the social sciences, including political science, media and communications research and psychology. This research has mainly been descriptive in nature, taking as its starting point data from opinion polls and comparative surveys to develop and test theories about the causes of widespread British opposition to closer integration in Europe. The opportunities for analysis presented by such data are appealing, but the findings sometimes present an image of public attitudes as being relatively static and unchanging. Public opinion data is often analysed and interpreted as such, while the question of how attitudes are formed and changed, how they are expressed and the reliability and validity of their measurements tend to be neglected. This thesis adopts a social psychological approach to understanding public opinion, which is based on theories of attitude change. As such, the underlying assumption of the research undertaken is that attitudes can be relatively labile; their expression vulnerable to contextual influences. I argue that in order to understand the nature of public attitudes towards EMU, it is necessary to examine the psychological processes by which attitudes are formed and changed and the factors that influence those processes. This background to the thesis is presented in chapter 1.

In particular, I explore three factors that have been shown to be important to understanding variation in public support for European integration: (1) the nature of *information* about Europe disseminated by the British media, (2) people's *involvement* in the political and economic issues involved in EMU (i.e. how much they know about the issues and how interested they are in them), and (3) their sense of British national *identity*. In order to examine how these three factors influence public opinion, I turn to social psychological theories of persuasion, which provide a basis for understanding how people's attitudes are formed and changed. Specifically, I adopt the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) as the overarching framework for the thesis, because it provides a theoretical account of attitude change in response to information, at varying levels of issue involvement. To understand the role played by national identity, I turn to the social identity paradigm (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hogg and Abrams, 1988), and in particular, self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1985; 1987), which helps to explain how people's attachment to their national identity can influence their attitudes and the way in which they respond to information relevant to the debate surrounding EMU. Together these approaches provide a model for understanding public attitudes towards the euro that integrates the different roles played by information, identity and involvement. In chapter 2, I present an overview of the theory behind the thesis, describing in detail the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and some of the controversies surrounding it – including the way in which it treats the role played by social identities in persuasion. In this context, I introduce the social identity approach.

The empirical content of the thesis consists of four separate studies, which are introduced in chapter 3. In the first two studies (A and B), I consider the nature of information disseminated by the British media. In study A (chapter 4), I focus on the amount of coverage given to the EMU issue by newspapers during the 1990s and its relationship to public concerns about European integration during this period. In study B (chapter 5), I examine the content of that coverage, in an analysis of the different arguments about the euro circulated by the pro- and anti-European press at the time of key events that marked the course of the debate. In the following two studies, I test predictions derived from the theoretical approaches adopted in the thesis using data from two pieces of research. In study C (chapter 6), the data came from a public opinion field experiment – a deliberative poll on Europe that was carried out by the UK's National Centre for Social Research in 1995. I present a secondary analysis of the data, in which I test hypotheses based on the tenets of the ELM concerning the effect of information on attitudes at varying levels of issue involvement. In study D (chapters 7 and 8), I collected my own data in an ELM-style experiment, in which I investigate the effect of information, involvement and identity on attitudes and the psychological processes by which attitudes are formed and changed. The results of these empirical studies are discussed in chapter 9, in which I draw conclusions about the nature of public attitudes towards EMU and the robustness of the theoretical approach used to investigate them in this thesis.

1 UNDERSTANDING VARIATION IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an introduction to the substantive focus of the thesis. I start by discussing what is meant by the terms 'attitude' and 'public opinion'. I present an overview of the status of British public opinion towards Europe and the single currency up to and during the period of investigation, showing how it compared with public opinion across the rest of the European Union at this time. I then review the literature relating to three separate fields of inquiry that have sought to explain variation in public attitudes towards European integration and which have motivated and informed the development of the thesis. Each one concerns the role of a different factor relevant to understanding variation in public attitudes towards European integration, and specifically, the single currency. In this thesis, I refer to these factors as (1) *information* about Europe circulated by the media, and in particular, information found in newspapers; (2) people's sense of national *identity*; and (3) public *involvement* in the issues surrounding EMU and their issue-relevant knowledge. The overall aim of the thesis is to investigate variations in public attitudes towards the single currency, by introducing a social psychological perspective that integrates each of these three factors into a single model. The theoretical framework for the thesis is introduced in chapter 2 and the specific aims and objectives of the empirical work are presented in chapter 3. This chapter describes the background to the research undertaken.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Defining attitudes and public opinion

Before considering the status of public opinion about Europe and the euro during the period in which the empirical research was carried out, it is important to clarify the focus of this thesis by defining what is meant by the terms 'attitude' and 'opinion'. For the most part, I use the two terms interchangeably throughout the thesis to refer the same thing. However, it is helpful to consider some more formal definitions, to ensure a common understanding of these concepts individually.

The study of attitudes has been a central concern within social psychology for over 80 years. A variety of definitions have been proposed during this time, but current thinking in the field generally agrees on the idea that attitudes are cognitive representations of a person's positive or negative evaluations of different 'objects', including physical objects, people, behaviours, issues or policies (Wegener and Carlston, 2005; p. 493; Bem, 1970; Oskamp, 1977; Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). A distinction is often made in earlier theories between three components of attitudinal responses – the affective, behavioural and cognitive components (Allport, 1954). The thesis developed here is primarily focused on the cognitive component of attitudes, though the three are generally viewed as being intrinsically linked with one another.

Attitudes can be regarded as a summary of the variety of beliefs people hold about a particular object. Beliefs consist of information a person has about the object that may be either fact or opinion and "may have positive, negative or no evaluation implications for the target of the information" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p.7). Attitudes are generally stored in memory, but where they do not already exist, are assumed to be constructed at some point (Wegener and Carlston, 2005). Attitudes vary not only in terms of their 'valence' (how positive or negative they are), but also in terms their strength (Krosnick and Petty, 1995) and accessibility in memory (e.g. see Fazio, 1995 for a review), in terms of the knowledge base that underpins them and their importance to the person holding them (Krosnick, 1990). Central concerns of the field of attitudes include the different functions attitudes serve (e.g. Katz, 1960; Maio and Olson, 1990), the confidence with which they are held (Berger, 1992) and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). These issues are not included in the scope of this thesis. Instead, the focus here is on the question of how attitudes are formed and changed and the strength with which they are held.

The reason for using the term 'public attitudes' synonymously with the term 'public opinion' is that the study of public opinion is concerned with "the formation, communication and measurement of citizens' attitudes toward public affairs" (Glynn et al., 1999; p. 17). As with research into attitudes, research into public opinion has also defined its subject matter in a variety of different ways. The mainstream perspective conceptualises public opinion as the aggregate expression of individual opinions distributed through the population (Glynn et al., 1999). These opinions are assumed to be measurable using conventional survey methods. Alternative approaches have argued that public opinion is a reflection of majority beliefs (e.g. Noelle-Neumann, 1984) or of elite or media opinion (e.g. Lippman, 1922). However, the mainstream definition is adequate for the purposes of the present research. Nevertheless, this definition is adopted in recognition of the observation that "public opinion is clearly more than responses to public opinion polls. It is the verbal expression of culture, of social interactions, of psychological processes." (Glynn et al., 1999; p.207).

A distinction is sometimes drawn between attitudes, opinions and values in terms of the strength with which they are held. For example, Worcester (2000) has argued:

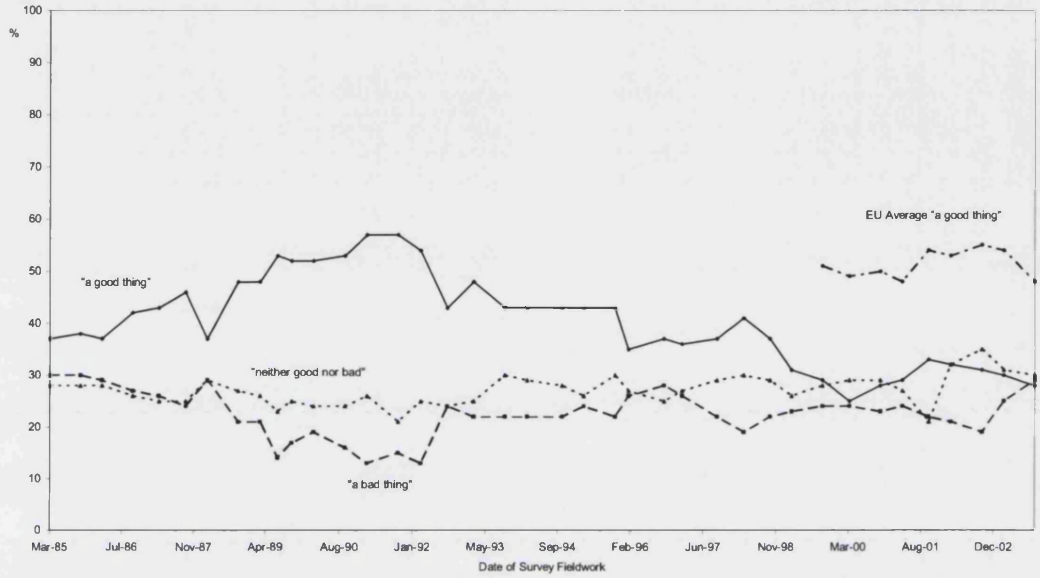
> *"Opinions are the ripples on the surface of the public's consciousness, shallow and easily changed. (...) Attitudes are the deeper and stronger currents below the surface (...). Values are the deep tides of public mood, slow to change, but powerful."* (Worcester, 2000; p.18)

It is helpful, therefore, to consider the conviction with which a particular viewpoint is held as well as the way in which it has been measured. Opinion polls typically use single-item measures to record people's opinions about specific objects because this usually provides a quick and adequate description of what people think. Researchers interested in attitudes tend to use more sophisticated multi-item scales – or sometimes what are called 'indirect' techniques (e.g. Greenwald et al.'s (1998) implicit association test) – to tap into the attitude underlying a person's opinions and beliefs. In chapter 2, I describe the methods typically used to measure attitude formation and change. The next section presents the findings of surveys that have used single-item measures of public opinions about Europe and the euro.

1.2.2 British public opinion about Europe and the Euro

One of the most significant and widely-used sources of information about public opinion on European integration is the Eurobarometer survey. This survey, which is fielded bi-annually, is funded by the European Commission and was set up in 1973 to provide time-series data on a range of different topics across the different Member States of the EU. One of the longest running questions in the Eurobarometer series asks respondents whether they consider their country's membership of the European Union to be a 'good thing', 'a bad thing' or 'neither good nor bad'. Figure 1.1 shows trends in support for the EU in Britain using data from this question from 1985 to 2003.

Figure 1.1 Public support for the European Union in Great Britain (1985-2003)



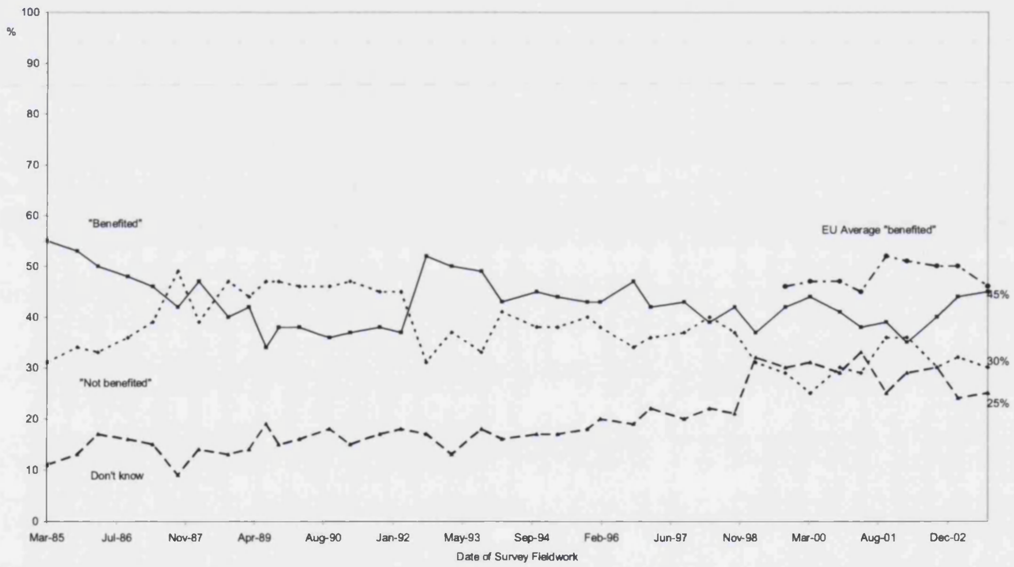
Source: Eurobarometer

Support for the European Union among British citizens grew over the course of the 1980s (apart from an anomalous dip in 1987), reaching a high point in the early 1990s. In spring 1985, 37% of British adults thought UK membership of the EU was 'a good thing', and this proportion had risen to 57% by 1991. In the autumn of 1992, support fell sharply to 43%, following British withdrawal from the ERM, marking the start of a more gradual period of decline during the 1990s. From 1997 to 2003, the proportion of people who considered EU membership to be a good thing dropped to some of its lowest recorded levels. In autumn 2003 (Eurobarometer 60), just 28% of UK citizens supported their country's membership of the EU, while 29% believed UK membership of the EU to be a bad thing. It is noteworthy that the proportion believing EU membership to be 'neither good nor bad' (30% in autumn 2003) had also risen, suggesting that many British people remained uncertain of their views about European integration.

A further measure of support for European integration asks respondents whether they believe the country has benefited or not from membership of the EU (figure 1.2). The

Eurobarometer has been fielding this question since 1984. Once again, it is clear from figure 1.2 that the trends in British public opinion about EU membership have been far from constant. These data, however, depict a slightly more positive picture of British public opinion about Europe than that shown in figure 1.1. From 1992 to 2003, the proportion of British citizens who believed that the UK had benefited from EU membership was greater than for those who felt the country had not benefited. In autumn 2003, 45% of the public had a positive view of the benefits of EU membership, compared with 30% who thought Britain had not benefited. Note, however, that the proportion of the public who reported that they did not know whether Britain had benefited or not from the EU more than doubled over the course of a decade from 13% of British adults in 1993 to 30% in 2003.

Figure 1.2 Percentage of British adults believing Britain has benefited or not benefited from EU membership (1985-2003)



Source: Eurobarometer

One of the advantages of using Eurobarometer data to examine support for European integration stems from the opportunity it provides for comparative analysis. It is only by comparing data from the British sample with those collected elsewhere that a fuller picture of the nature of British public opinion about Europe can be gained. The proportion of British citizens stating that EU membership is a 'good thing' has, in general, followed a similar trend over time as that for the EU as a whole. However, despite similarities in the trend lines, it is immediately apparent from figure 1.1 that the proportion of British people who consider EU membership to be a good thing is significantly lower than that for the EU as a whole, and it has remained so, throughout the past 20 years (data for the EU average is only shown here for surveys conducted since 1999). While 28% of British citizens thought EU membership was a good thing in 2003, this compared with an average for the EU as a whole of 48%. Similarly, with respect to beliefs about whether or not Britain has benefited from membership of the EU, the profile over time is broadly similar to that for the EU as a whole. Again, however, considerably lower proportions of British citizens believe that their country has benefited from EU membership (32% in 2003) compared with the figures for the EU as a whole (50% in 2003).

Measures of support for the single currency among EU citizens showed a similar pattern of results during this period, with lower levels of support in Britain, compared with the EU countries that had already adopted the euro, as well as with Denmark and Sweden, which, like Britain, opted out of participation at the first wave. In 1994, over half (53%) of all EU citizens supported EMU. By 2003, this had risen to two thirds of all EU citizens (66%). Of those living inside the eurozone (i.e. in countries that had already adopted the euro as their currency) three quarters (75%) supported economic and monetary union with a single currency, compared with 53% of Danes, 41% of Swedes and just 24% of Britons.

Knowledge about EU affairs and European identity

People in Britain not only held the least favourable attitudes towards the EU and the single currency in Europe, they also stood out from their European counterparts on a number of other measures included in the Eurobarometer surveys. Two in particular are highlighted here – measures of knowledge and awareness about EU affairs and measures of strength of identification with Europe.

One indicator of how knowledgeable people are about European integration asks respondents to rate on a scale of one to ten how much they feel they know about the European Union, its policies and its institutions. In Spring 2003, the EU average score on this scale (where 1 means 'knowing nothing at all' and 10 means 'knowing a great deal') was 4.25 (across the 15 EU Member States at that time). The highest levels of self-rated knowledge were found in Austria, where the average score was 5.12. The lowest levels of knowledge were found in Britain, where the average was 3.68. This compared with mean scores of 4.69 for Denmark and 4.54 for Sweden (though it should be noted that their scores may have been higher because citizens of both these countries would have benefited from information campaigns associated with their euro referendums). Just one fifth of British citizens gave themselves a score above six on the scale, compared with over two fifths of citizens in the highest scoring nation, Austria.

Eurobarometer questions about the extent to which people in the EU identify themselves as Europeans and feel proud to be European and the concerns people have that closer integration will result in a loss of national identity, have received particular attention in the psychological literature considered in more detail later (e.g. Breakwell, 1996; Breakwell and Lyons, 1996). In order to find out whether Europeans feel European, the Eurobarometer asks respondents, 'In the near future, do you see yourself as [British], [British] and European, European and [British] or European only?' In 2003, two fifths (40%) of all EU citizens claimed they would continue to view themselves as their own nationality only. The remainder identified themselves as European *and* their own nationality (44% choosing their own nationality first, followed by European). In the UK, however, the findings once again were in stark contrast to those from the other Member States. Nearly two thirds (64%) of UK respondents claimed they would continue seeing themselves as British citizens only, and less than a quarter (24%) considered themselves to be both British *and* European.

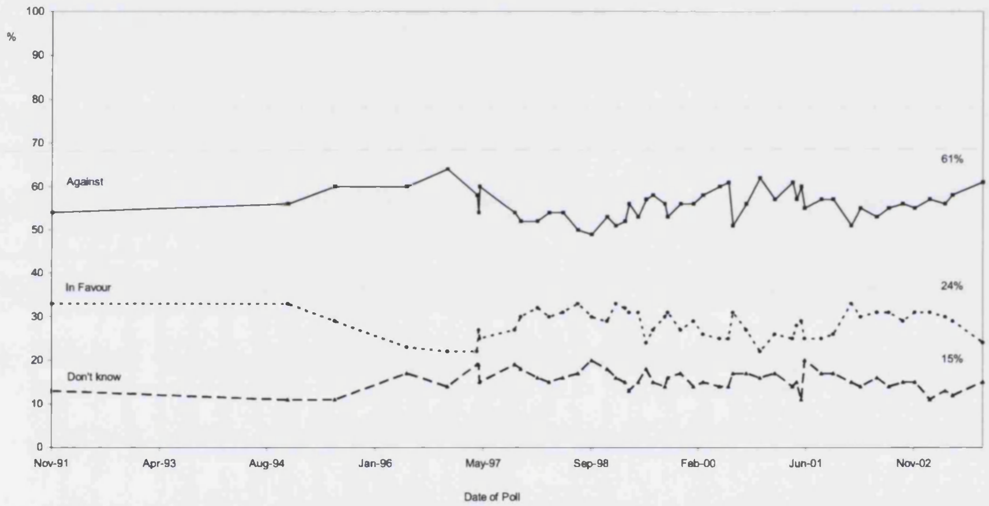
Voting intentions in a referendum on the euro

The major opinion research organisations in Britain (including Gallup, ICM, Ipsos-MORI (then MORI) and GfK NOP (then NOP)) were all regularly polling the public on issues relating to Europe during the period of investigation. The polls conducted by MORI are of particular interest here, because they provide a long-running time series on voting intention in a euro referendum (starting in 1991) and was one of the most widely used indicators of the British public's position on EMU by the media.

Figure 1.3 shows the trend in responses to these polls from 1991 to September 2003 (although note that the lower frequency of polling on this issue in the early part of the

1990s gives the impression of a smoother trend line prior to May 1997). One of the most striking features of these data is, once again, the extent of public opposition in Britain towards a single currency. In November 1991, as the debate surrounding British membership of a single European currency first really entered the public arena around the time of the Maastricht summit, over half of British adults (54%) stated that they would vote against Britain participating in such a project. One third of the public were in favour of a single currency and 13% were uncertain which way they would vote in a referendum. By September 2003, opposition had risen to 61%, with just under a quarter (24%) reporting that they would vote in favour of joining.

Figure 1.3 Voting intentions in a referendum on the euro (1991–2003[1])



Source: Ipsos-MORI

Figure 1.3 is also striking because of the consistency of the picture of public opinion on the euro that is depicted. During the twelve-year period shown in the chart, public opinion remained relatively constant, with similar proportions of respondents selecting each of the answer options throughout. In particular, opposition remained at a high level throughout this period, as did the proportion of the public stating that they did not know how they would vote in a referendum on the euro.

[1] It is interesting to note that since 2003, this question has only been fielded on a few occasions, most recently in 2005, when 57% reported they would vote against joining the euro, 26% in favour, and 16% did not know.

1.2.3 Variation in attitude valence and attitude strength

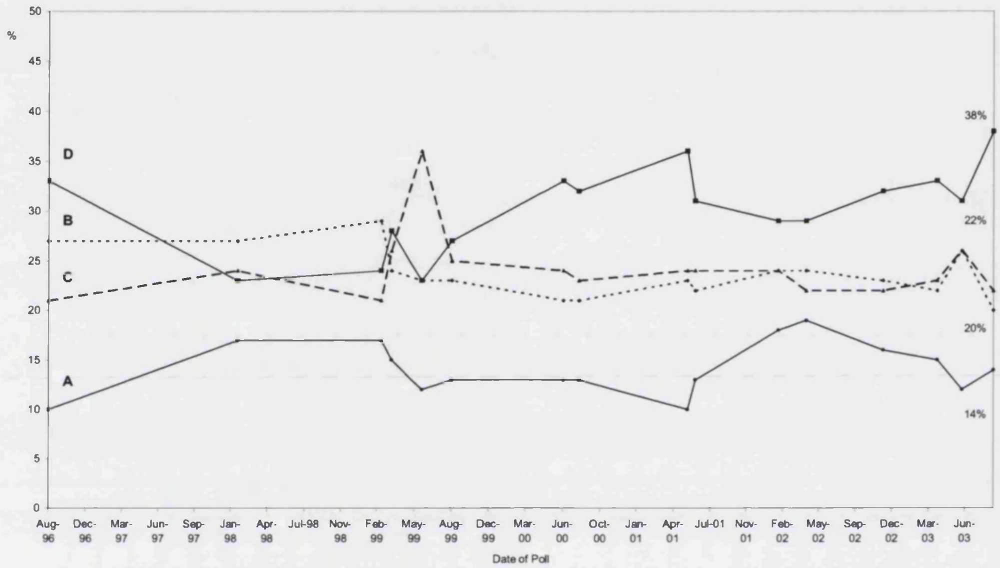
Because attitudes towards the euro remained relatively constant during this period, it was often assumed that they were fixed and stable. Indeed, this assumption not only underpinned the government's decision to delay a referendum on British membership of EMU but also much of the research in the field, which explored the different background variables that predicted variation in people's attitudes, both within and between countries. For example, Ahrendt (1999) analysed data from the Eurobarometer and Continuous Tracking Survey (also collected by the European Commission's Opinion Analysis Unit) collected between 1995 and 1998 and found significant differences in support for the euro on the basis of sex, age, education and socio-economic status. More favourable attitudes towards the euro were found among men, among those aged 54 and under, among those with higher levels of education and among those employed as managers, compared with those in manual occupations (Ahrendt, 1999). More recent data from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey also supports the finding that the key demographic characteristics associated with varying levels of support for the euro in Britain at this time were sex, education and class (Evans, 2001; 2003).

One limitation of analyses of this kind, however, is that they tend to overemphasise differences in the *direction* or valence of attitudes, while failing to take into consideration variations in their *strength*. This problem is confounded by the tendency for expressed attitudes to vary as a function of relatively subtle changes to question wording in survey research (Schuman and Presser, 1981). One example of this is provided by a question fielded by MORI to capture variability in the strength of attitudes towards the euro. Respondents were asked to choose the response closest to their view of British participation in EMU. The options included 'strongly support' (A in figure 1.4), 'strongly oppose' (D in figure 1.4), and 'don't know' (not shown in figure), as well as '*generally* in favour...' (B), and '*generally* oppose...' (C) '...but could be persuaded to change my mind if the government said it would be bad/ good for the economy'[2]. The question was intended to identify respondents who had not yet

[2] Full question wording:
Q: Which of the following best describes your own view of British participation in the single currency?
A: I strongly support British participation

made up their minds on the euro issue – the so-called “waverers” (Worcester, 1999; 2000; Mortimore and Atkinson, 2003) – by giving them the opportunity to express uncertainty about their views. The results indicate that people are happy to admit that their attitudes are not as fixed as they might appear when they are measured using a less ‘sophisticated’ polling question. Trend data from the ‘waverers’ questions are shown in figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 Views on British participation in single currency (1990-2003[3])



Source: Ipsos-MORI

Analysis of the ‘waverers’ question identifies a majority of the electorate who are still undecided in their attitudes and who claim to be open to persuasion on the issue of British participation in the euro – a group great enough in number to influence the outcome of a referendum. Mortimore and Atkinson (2003) identified the key characteristics of this segment of the electorate. By classifying voters according to their responses to the ‘waverers’ question and their intentions to vote in a referendum and in the next general election, their analysis identified six different types of wavering voter and explored the different characteristics of each. Like Ahrendt (1999) and Evans (2003), they also found that sex, education and socio-economic classification were

B: I am generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy.
C: I am generally opposed to British participation, but could be persuaded in favour of it if I thought it would be good for the British economy.
D: I strongly oppose British participation.

[3] By 2005, the proportion of waverers had increased: A: 10%; B:21%; C: 27% and D: 25%.

important variables associated with the strength and direction of people's attitudes towards the euro. In addition, however, the authors found newspaper readership to be a powerful predictor of British voters' attitudes. For example, a group they labelled the 'diehards' consisted of those who claimed to be certain they would vote in a referendum and who claimed to be either strongly in favour or strongly against joining the euro. Those who were strongly against EMU were significantly more likely to be regular readers of right-wing newspapers, The Daily Mail and The Mail on Sunday and The Daily Telegraph. By contrast, those who strongly supported British participation in the euro were more likely than average to read left-wing newspapers, the Daily Mirror, The Guardian or The Observer. These findings were also backed up by Evans's (2003) analysis of BSA data, in which he highlighted the significance of newspaper readership, and in particular, the distinction between reading tabloids and broadsheets, as a key predictor of variation in attitudes towards the euro (broadsheet readers being more likely to support British membership of EMU).

1.2.4 Summary

In summary, British public opinion about Europe throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s was characterised by high levels of opposition towards membership of the EU and joining the single currency, low levels of knowledge about European integration and reluctance among British people to identify themselves as 'European'. Opposition levels were highest among women, among those with lower levels of education and among those in manual occupations. Opposition was also stronger among regular readers of anti-European newspapers. Nevertheless, closer inspection of the data reveals a high proportion of respondents who claimed not to know their opinion on EMU and when asked, a majority of the public claimed to be 'open to persuasion' and apparently undecided in their views.

1.3 Explaining variation in support for integration

The comparative dimension of Eurobarometer data has made the survey particularly appealing to researchers interested in exploring cross-national differences in attitudes towards European integration (e.g. Hewstone, 1986; Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991;

Gabel and Palmer, 1995; Gabel, 1998a; Ahrendt, 1999). Secondary analyses of Eurobarometer data constitute a significant part of the literature and have helped provide a picture of the dynamics of public opinion across all Member States throughout the history of the survey, as well as led to the development of a number of different theoretical accounts of variation in aggregate levels of support across the EU (particularly among political scientists such as Anderson and Kaltenthaler, 1996; Gabel and Palmer, 1995; Gabel, 1998a; 1998b; Kaltenthaler and Anderson, 1999). These researchers present some of the most theoretically formalised explanations of aggregate variation in public attitudes towards European integration and specific integrative policies such as EMU. For example, according to Inglehart's (1970; 1990) 'silent revolution' theory, support for integration is associated with people's value orientations towards economic and political issues that are developed during the formative years and shaped by socio-economic conditions. As living conditions have continued to improve since the mid-twentieth century, Inglehart (1970) argues that the values of EU citizens have become less oriented towards materialist concerns such as economic and physical security towards what he terms 'post-materialist' values, characterised by priorities such as intellectual fulfilment and self-actualisation. Inglehart, Rabier and Reif (1991) argue that the EU is more appealing to people who hold post-materialist values – people who tend to be younger and better-educated citizens – because their political values match more closely those that underpin the integrative process.

Other accounts of variation in aggregate levels of support for integration across Europe have emphasised the significance of cognitive mobilisation, which is associated with increased familiarity with the workings of EU institutions and EU affairs (e.g. Inglehart and Rabier, 1978; Anderson, 1995; Anderson and Kaltenthaler, 1996) and economic variables relating to the micro- and macro-level benefits to be derived from EU membership (e.g. Gabel and Palmer, 1995; Anderson and Kaltenthaler, 19965; Gabel, 1998a; 1998b; Anderson, 1995; Banducci and Karp, 2001). Some of these approaches are considered further in section 1.6, but an extensive review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the remainder of the chapter focuses on three areas of inquiry that have investigated in more detail the relationships observed in opinion poll findings about *British* public attitudes towards the EU and EMU, and in particular, sought to explain the reasons behind widespread opposition in the UK towards closer European integration. The first addresses the influence of the media on public attitudes towards Europe, the second considers the role played by national identity and the third explores the significance of low levels of knowledge about integration processes. In each section, I draw conclusions about the implications findings from each area of inquiry have for understanding British attitudes towards the euro.

1.4 The role of the media in public attitudes towards European integration

The media have been said to influence public opinion in at least four different ways (Glynn et al., 1999; McQuail, 2000): firstly, they are assumed to play a role in determining the salience of different issues on the public agenda by drawing public attention onto and away from different topics; secondly, they play a role in informing the public about issues; thirdly, they have the capacity to affect change in people's attitudes and behaviour; and fourthly, they are assumed to influence the formation of social values and norms. While there is continued debate about the extent of media influence on public opinion and the nature of that influence, it is these four spheres of influence, which have received the greatest attention in the literature. Research looking at how the mass media communicate European integration to the public, and the way this relates to attitudes burgeoned during the period in which the empirical research for this thesis was undertaken (e.g. Statham and Gray, 2005; Firmstone, 2003; Gray, 2003; de Vreese, Peter and Semetko, 2001; de Vreese, 2001). Prior to this, the majority of studies had focused on the informational role played by the media and the content of media reports about Europe. This section highlights some key findings from these earlier studies, focusing in particular on the nature of information about European integration and the euro disseminated by the print media.

There are a number of reasons to focus only on the print media, rather than on the broadcast media (or indeed, on new web-based media). Firstly, there is evidence to suggest that people are less good at integrating information from television news than they are from the print media news (e.g. see Glynn et al., 1999). This would suggest that despite the finding that television is more widely used as a source of information about the European Union (Gavin, 2000; de Vreese, 2002) and that people consider it their *preferred* source when asked in Eurobarometer surveys, it is arguably a less influential source of information about Europe compared with what people read in newspapers (though it may play an important role in the three other areas of influence on public opinion outlined above).

Secondly, the print media in Britain are quite distinct from those found in other countries. For one, newspaper readership is relatively high in the UK compared with other EU countries. British newspapers are also unusually partisan, making them especially interesting to researchers interested in media influences on political attitudes. One outcome of this partisanship is that a large sector of the press has adopted a strongly 'eurosceptic' stance – a position that has found expression in overt hostility towards European integration and, at times, open xenophobia towards citizens of other European countries. This has not only earned the British print media a reputation for its bias on the continent, but it has also attracted a substantial quantity of research interest (e.g. Gavin, 2002; Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Anderson and Weymouth, 1998; Wilkes and Wring, 1998;). Amidst the general proliferation of research into Britain's antagonistic relationship with Europe and studies of the factors underlying widespread British opposition to the EU, a number of key studies have emerged, focusing attention on the role played by euroscepticism in British newspapers.

A third reason for focusing on the press rather than on other media sectors stems from the finding that there is a relationship between newspaper readership and attitudes towards the euro (Evans, 2003). People who regularly read broadsheet newspapers (independent of which title they read) are significantly more likely to be in favour of European integration and the single currency than readers of the tabloid press. This finding is not independent of educational and socio-economic background, both of which account for variance in attitudes towards EMU, so naturally it should be interpreted with caution. However, Atkinson and Mortimore (2003) also found greater numbers in support of British participation in the single currency among broadsheet readers than among tabloid readers, in their analysis of responses to the 'waverers' question. Over one third (35%) of tabloid readers were opposed to the euro, compared with just under a quarter (24%) of broadsheet readers. By contrast, the authors found only 17% of tabloid readers strongly in support of British participation in the euro, compared with over a quarter (27%) of broadsheet readers (Mortimore and Atkinson, 2003). These authors also found that when the electorate was segmented according to their responses to the 'waverers' question and their voting intentions, readership of particular titles was an important characteristic of the different segments identified.

1.4.1 Euroscepticism in the British press

The press sector in Britain is, commercially speaking, highly successful. Despite the fact that there has been an overall decline in newspaper readership in the last fifty years, the press today enjoys a circulation of around twenty-seven million readers. The market is also highly competitive, consisting of only nineteen daily and Sunday titles and, as in other EU countries, these newspapers are owned by just a few large companies (four in the UK). Of the so-called quality newspapers – the broadsheets – The Daily Telegraph is the most popular, with a daily circulation of over 900,000, followed by The Times with a circulation of nearly 700,000 (Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations). By comparison, the tabloid press enjoys a far greater share of the market. To illustrate, The Sun had a circulation of over 3 million in November 2005.

In terms of their political orientation, over half the titles are right-wing and this imbalance is exaggerated in terms of the actual circulation of the different newspapers, with just five million consumers purchasing centre-left publications. The right-wing newspapers also tend to be the anti-European newspapers, meaning that there is a strong anti-European bias in the print media, not only in terms of the number of eurosceptic titles, but – more significantly – in terms of actual circulation. Both market leaders – The Daily Telegraph and The Sun – are right-wing (although The Sun switched to support the Labour party prior to the general election campaign in 1997) and both are staunchly anti-EU.

It is interesting to note, however, that this partisanship and anti-European bias in the British press is a relatively recent phenomenon. The alignment of the different titles into their now established positions on Europe did not properly emerge until the mid- to late-1980s (Wilkes and Wring, 1998). This is argued to have occurred partly in response to events like a speech made by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Bruges, in which she expressed her opposition to Delors' federalist vision for the EU and arguably ignited the debate over national sovereignty (Leonard and Leonard, 2002). Two years later, prior to Thatcher's resignation, The Sun published its now infamous headline – 'Up Yours! Delors!' – referring to the then president of the EC. The article had the effect of awakening public attention to European matters and illustrates the fervour with which certain sectors of the press adopted their positions on the European issue. Later, the Maatricht summit in December 1991 and Britain's withdrawal from the ERM in September 1992 helped to further establish the split on Europe that is evident in the British press today (Wilkes and Wring, 1998).

The concentration of ownership of the different news titles and its associated commercial pressures are argued to have had an impact on the content and style of British newspapers and in particular, on the way in which euroscepticism finds its expression (Anderson and Weymouth, 1998). Both the tabloids and broadsheets alike have adopted an increasingly informal style of discourse in their writing, in order to appear more accessible to the public (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). To examine the impact this has had, it is useful to consider a distinction made by Fairclough (1995) between different functions served by discourse in the press. Fairclough identifies three key discourse functions: a 'representational' function, a 'social identities' function and a 'social relations' function. Representational discourse serves to convey information to the reader and used to be the dominant style adopted in British newspaper journalism. By contrast, the 'social identities' function of discourse serves to heighten the sense of shared identity between the writer and reader, and the 'social relations' function of discourse serves to give the impression of a close and informal relationship between the two. Newspaper discourse has become increasingly 'conversationalised' in response to the demands of the market, such that the relative importance of these three functions has shifted. The information role of the press (served by representational discourse) has been reduced and greater emphasis has been placed on developing a style of reporting that serves the social identities and social relations functions, in order to build up a loyal readership.

One effect of this change in journalistic style has been to diminish the responsibility of the press to provide factually accurate and unbiased information (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). The reduced informational content of newspapers is evidenced in reporting about the relationship between Britain and Europe and moves towards closer integration in Europe. For example, Hardt-Mautner (1995) compared how the provisions of the Maastricht treaty were communicated to readers in an article that appeared in The Sun to the precise wording of the treaty itself. She found that the information included in the news article had not only been markedly over-simplified, but that in the process, the journalist had succeeded in distorting its original meaning. The outcome was an inaccurate and biased portrayal of the intended content of the treaty. Hardt-Mautner argues that, in this way, developments in EU politics end up being portrayed in British newspapers (tabloids and broadsheets alike) as too complex for the public to understand and this has led to a "growing chasm between the discourse of elites actively shaping European politics and the lay discourse of the electorate" (Hardt-Mautner, 1995; p.199).

The distortion of facts about integrative policies has meant that the informational content of news reports about Europe has become increasingly impoverished (and this is especially true for the anti-European tabloid press). In addition to this, however, the range of events considered newsworthy has also narrowed (Gavin, 2000; 2002). Newspaper reporting on Europe tends to focus on a number of recurring themes, centred on concerns about the economic consequences of integration, concerns about political issues and concerns about the historical and cultural implications of integration (Anderson and Weymouth, 1998). For example, in their sample of anti-European broadsheet articles about the economic consequences of EMU (selected from coverage of a series of issue-relevant events in the 1990s), Anderson and Weymouth (1998) found that there was a disproportionate focus on the difficulties experienced by countries in the Eurozone in achieving the Maastricht criteria for joining the single currency at the first wave. Similarly, the articles about the political issues associated with EMU were focused mainly on the problem of sovereignty and the impact closer integration would have on this. By comparison, the sample of pro-European newspapers included in the analysis tended to focus more on the positive benefits of integration, such as the perception of the EU as a "provider / facilitator" in international relations.

The eurosceptic discourse of the anti-European press is not only lacking when it comes to conveying information about integration to readers, it is also imbued with historical and cultural concerns about integration (Anderson and Weymouth, 1998). This is evidenced in the use of national stereotyping in news relating to the EU, particularly of the French and the Germans (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). In addition, this aspect of euroscepticism is expressed through a range of more subtle discursive strategies, such as through the use of linguistic devices that create a sense of separation and distance between Britain and Europe. For example, the use of "clusters of dichotomous relationships grouped around a juxtaposition of 'inside' vs 'outside'" (Hardt-Mautner, 1995; p.181), such as 'us' and 'them', or 'in' the euro, or 'out'. Journalists also use metaphors to similar effect. These manifestations of eurosceptic discourse are argued to have the effect of raising the salience of British national identity in news reporting on Europe and, thereby, hindering the development of a European identity.

In addition to these overt expressions of euroscepticism, articles about Europe also employ a "covert level of representation" (Anderson and Weymouth, 1998), which serves to communicate the newspaper's ideological position on European issues. Journalists invoke knowledge and understanding about political issues that are believed to be shared between the newspaper and the reader. Thus, articles about Europe rely on taken-for-granted assumptions about the issues surrounding integration and the various relationships involved in it. For example, Anderson and Weymouth identified some of The Daily Telegraph's key ideological assumptions about the single currency in the sample of texts that they analysed. In the Telegraph, the single currency was viewed variously as a threat to sovereignty, a potential source of social unrest, and as a project being driven forward by Germany, linked historically to German dreams of expansion in Europe. These assumptions had become normalised within the ideology of the newspaper and formed part of a shared repertoire of discourse between the newspaper and reader – an effect which may partially account for differences in public attitudes by newspaper readership.

1.4.2 Summary

The preceding discussion highlights a number of reasons why the media appear to be an important factor in understanding British public opinion about Europe. However, the precise mechanisms by which the media exert an influence on attitudes have not been addressed in these studies. Nevertheless, the pervasiveness of euroscepticism in British newspapers seems likely to be influential in public opinion formation in at least two ways. Firstly, newspapers provide a source of information about the EU. However, the way in which that information is communicated by the print media may provide some explanation as to why British citizens are concerned about their level of factual knowledge about matters relating to European integration being inadequate. The information about the EU that is available tends to be 'dumbed-down' and, as a result, is often factually inaccurate. Secondly, eurosceptic discourse makes liberal use of national stereotypes and linguistic devices that serve to emphasise the difference between Britain and Europe and, thereby, heighten the salience of British national identity. One effect of this may be to hinder the development of a European identity, but the mechanism by which this works has not been explored in any depth in the existing literature. These two sources of influence are investigated further in the present thesis in relation to people's attitudes towards the euro. Specifically, the research addresses the questions of how media information about the euro influences attitudes and what is the effect of heightening the salience of national identity in information about Europe. The next section considers the relationship between national identity and attitudes towards Europe in more detail.

1.5 National identity and attitudes towards EMU

The second area of inquiry investigating variation in support for European integration to be considered here concerns the relationship between attitudes and national identity. As we saw in section 1.2.2, in addition to the high levels of opposition towards integration reported in surveys, British citizens are also among the least willing to identify themselves as 'Europeans', believing instead that in future they will continue to view themselves as British first and, if at all, European second. In 2003, among those who considered their country's membership of the EU to be a good thing, three-quarters of EU citizens saw themselves as their own nationality and European (75%), whereas only 23% of those who saw EU membership as a bad thing identified themselves in this way. Breakwell (1996) analysed the relationship between support for integration and national identity further using data from a Eurobarometer question asking whether respondents thought that the creation of the EU would mean their sense of national identity would disappear and end up being replaced by a sense of European identity. The majority of respondents did not believe that their national identity would disappear and were content that a European identity was *compatible* with their existing national identity. However, there was considerable variation across member states and there were high proportions in some countries that were concerned that their national identity would end up being usurped by a European identity. The highest proportion holding this view was found in the UK, where 38% of respondents feared a loss of national identity compared with an EC average of 23% - a finding which echoed earlier conclusions by Hewstone from the mid-1980s that the British at this time were "still concerned with matters of national sovereignty", and reluctant to "give lasting commitment to the community" (Hewstone, 1986; p.38). Thus, people's feelings about their national identity appear to be an important component of their attitudes towards European integration.

European integration poses a challenge to national identity on a number of different levels. Firstly, the unification of Europe raises fundamental questions about the future sovereignty of nation states, as political and economic decision-making becomes increasingly centralised at a European level. This centralisation of political power – which has motivated the British government's concerns about the European project over the years – is underpinned by the ideological motivation to create a 'supra-national' community, which taken to its logical conclusion (one might argue) would accomplish a 'federal superstate' of European nations. In this sense, the creation of the EU poses a direct challenge to the independence of the nation states of which it is composed and thereby, to the unique sense of identity associated with those independent nation states. Secondly, because the single currency was intended as a symbol of this union of nation states, EMU cannot be viewed as a purely economic endeavour. The euro was intended to provide the citizens of participating countries with "clear proof of the fact that [they] all belong to a continent, which is uniting and asserting itself" (EC documentation, 1997). In this sense, not only does integration involve asking European citizens to accommodate a new supranational identity alongside their existing *national* identity, but also to accept a symbol of that identity to replace their own national currency (Routh and Burgoyne, 1998).

In Britain, both political and popular discussion about Europe and the euro have fused issues surrounding European integration with questions about national identity since the debate began. In the context of political devolution in the United Kingdom and the introduction of the euro towards the end of the 1990s, this feature of the debate became especially prominent. Heightened media attention and a proliferation of writing on the topic (e.g. Paxman, 2001; Weight, 2002) sought to address questions such as how we define British national identity and how Europe challenges this definition. In this context, social psychologists began to investigate the implications of political and economic change in Europe for the way different people experience national identity and how this, in turn, relates to their views about the process of integration (e.g. Breakwell and Lyons, 1996). Before considering the findings of their research, I first consider what is meant by 'national identity' and how different theorists have defined the concept.

1.5.1 Defining nation and identity

Smith (1991) differentiates two ways of conceptualising nation states. According to the standard Western model, the nation is conceived of as an historic community with legal and political equality of its members. By contrast, the 'ethnic model' emphasises the importance of shared genealogy, languages and traditions. Both of these conceptualisations share the notion that "nations are territorially bounded units of population" (Smith, 1991; p.17). In accordance with this definition, the fundamental features of national identity can be identified as the existence of an historical territory, common myths, a common mass public culture, shared legal rights and duties and 'a common economy with territorial mobility for members" (p.14). National identity acts as a 'multi-faceted power' providing citizens with both external functions (e.g. territorial, economic) and internal functions (such as socialisation). These internal functions are underpinned by shared symbols such as flags, anthems, passports and currency that remind members of a nation state of their common heritage and sense of common identity. Thus, national identity is intrinsically tied up with the visible markers of nationhood, which serve to symbolise that shared identity.

In fact, these markers of nationhood are comparatively modern creations (Billig, 1996), and are widely accepted to be social constructions (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). Changes in the geopolitical boundaries of European countries over the past decade or more illustrate the extent to which nations are created and are not naturally predetermined. However, the psychological importance of such markers cannot be overemphasised. National symbols underpin the ideology on which nationalism rests. They serve to 'naturalise' the contemporary world of nation states (Billig, 1996; 185) and make possible the collective act of "imagining the community" (Anderson, 1983) necessary for national identity to exist. Most of the literature in this field subscribes to Anderson's idea, that nation states are no more than 'imagined communities' (1983). Nations provide collective identities that extend beyond people's immediate communities and require people to imagine the boundaries and content of the national community (Hopkins and Reicher, 1996). Thus, countries are not "'natural' or 'given', but produced and reproduced through a series of social practices" (Hopkins and Reicher, 1996; p75). For this reason, national identity is better viewed not as being formed of the external markers of nationhood as in Smith's conceptualisation, but rather as being socially represented through acts of collective imagination.

This conceptualisation of national identity has implications for understanding people's resistance towards Europe and the euro. Currency plays an important symbolic function in enabling citizens to socially represent the community in which they live. According to Burgoyne, Routh and Ellis (1999),

> *"the national currency embodies both symbolic and economic referents in a very concrete way: on one side of the coin (in many cases) we find the value of this particular 'unit of exchange' in economic transactions (one pound, fifty pence, and so on), and on the other, the image of the Head of State, symbolising the authority and legitimacy of the currency, at the same time as national sovereignty" (Burgoyne, Routh and Ellis, 1999; p95).*

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, to find that people's resistance to the euro is bound up in their national identity and their sense of pride in national symbols such as the pound sterling or the image of the Queen's head. At the same time, the notion of an 'imagined community' helps to explain variation in how citizens of different nation states experience a sense of common identity both at the national level and at the supranational, European level. Variation in the *status* of the existing national identity (in terms of the historical basis and strength of that identity) and in the way in which the European identity is socially represented both appear to influence how people think about European integration (Breakwell, 1996; Cinnirella, 1993; 1996).

1.5.2 Aggregate differences in the strength and nature of attachment to nation

Based on the survey findings presented at the start of this section, we might hypothesise that British citizens show more resistance to Europe because they have a *stronger* sense of national identity than their European counterparts, and hold a more negative image of the European identity; in other words, the stronger people's attachment to their national identity, the weaker their support for integration. Yet the relationship between national identity and attitudes is more complex than it first appears. Unfortunately, Eurobarometer data are insufficient when it comes to testing this hypothesis. Some alternative data provide some insight however. For example, Cinnirella also examined differences at the national level in how people felt about their European identity. He found that citizens of Italy and Britain varied not only in the *strength* of their attachments to their national and European identities, but also in the *nature* of their attachments to the two (Cinnirella, 1996). Among the British participants in his research, national identity was found to be stronger than the European identity, and people were more likely to consider the two identities to be mutually incompatible with one another. By contrast, for the Italian participants in the study, the sense of European identity was stronger than their national identity and it was far stronger than that of the British participants. Italians in the study were also more likely to see their national and European identities as "compatible and even mutually reinforcing" (p. 259).

Participants in Cinnirella's research (1993; 1996) also varied in the *nature* of their attachment to their national and European identities. Distinguishing between sentimental and instrumental orientations to nation, he found that Italian participants were more likely to hold instrumental attachments to their national identity, which made it easier for them to accommodate a European identity. By contrast, the British participants in the study held strong sentimental attachments to their national identity and were consequently less keen to integrate the European identity into their self-concept. The British participants were also more likely to express instrumental attachments towards the European identity and there was little evidence of sentimental attachment towards Europe. It is these differences in how people oriented themselves towards their national identity and towards Europe that appeared to account for differences in the willingness to support European integration among Britons and Italians.

Routh and Burgoyne (1998) tested Cinnirella's hypothesis that the nature of attachments to nation and to Europe is an important determinant of how people feel about integration. Using UK data only from a Europe-wide survey of the psychological factors underlying attitudes towards the euro (Mueller-Peters et al., 1998a; 1998b), their analysis showed that only sentimental attachments to Britain seemed to have a direct, negative influence on attitudes to EMU. The influence of attachment on attitudes was mediated, however, by people's evaluation of the potential for the euro to provide participating nations with benefits. People who held sentimental attachments towards Britain were more likely to hold negative evaluations of the benefits of EMU membership, whereas those who held instrumental attachments to Britain tended to hold more favourable views of the benefits of EMU. Thus, the way in which people feel about their country, as well as about Europe, has the capacity to influence attitudes both directly and indirectly (Mueller-Peters, 1998; Van Everdingen and Van Raaij, 1998).

Analyses of cross-cultural variations in attachment to nation are limited to the extent that they assume a degree of homogeneity in the way in which national identity is experienced within different nations. Routh and Burgoyne's analysis demonstrates, however, the extent to which individual variations in attachment to Britain and Europe are associated with varying levels of support for the euro. It is especially important not to assume national identity means the same thing to all citizens in a nation like the UK, itself a union of different countries, each with its own separate identity. Exploring differences between UK identities reveals some interesting variations in what 'Britishness' means to different people and demonstrates the multi-dimensional structure of national identity, which accounts for individual-level differences in the nature and strength of people's attachment to nation.

1.5.3 Variation in the experience of national identity in the UK

Using data from the 1995 British Social Attitudes survey, Dowds and Young (1996) distinguished two dimensions of national identity in order to construct a typology of different ways of "being British" (p.149). The two dimensions differentiated the more positive manifestations of nationalism, such as pride in the nation, its achievements and institutions) from its more negative manifestations (such as xenophobia and discrimination against outsiders). This distinction represents an important focus in the literature on national identity between on the one hand, sentiments associated with 'patriotism' and, on the other, what is commonly associated with nationalism, or 'good' and 'bad' forms of nationalism (Kosterman and Feshbach, 19989; Schatz, Staub and Lavine, 1991; Mueller-Peters, 1998; Memmendey, Klink and Brown, 2001; Hopkins, 2001; Condor, 2001). The first, positive dimension of nationalism is referred to by Dowds and Young as 'inclusive nationalism' and encompasses two distinct elements: pride in national heritage and culture, and pride in the way the nation functions, both at home and abroad. The more negative manifestations of national identity are encapsulated in the second dimension of 'exclusive nationalism'. This comprises attitudes that promote cultural and economic protectionism (such as putting limits on imports to protect the economy or giving preference to British television programmes over American ones) and xenophobic sentiments, such as those based on the idea of exclusion and discrimination against the 'other'. Defining national identity as multi-dimensional in this way reveals some interesting findings about how people vary in their experience of 'Britishness' across the United Kingdom, and in particular, some marked differences between citizens of Northern Ireland and those of Great Britain. It also reveals some interesting systematic relationships between different 'types' of national identity and attitudes towards Europe.

Dowds and Young (1996) constructed a typology of four distinctive versions of British national identity, based on where survey respondents were located on the two dimensions of nationalism described above, and their views about Britain's relationship with Europe. The first group identified by the typology – labelled the 'Supra-nationalists' – were low in both the inclusive and exclusive dimension of national identity and held the most pro-European attitudes (with 28% agreeing there should be a single currency). The second group termed 'Patriots' because of their high national sentiment and low exclusiveness, also tended to be more pro-European than their counterparts, with 16% in favour of a single currency. The other two groups – named the 'Belligerents' and the 'John Bulls' – showed high levels of exclusive nationalism and these sentiments appeared to stand in the way of adopting favourable attitudes towards European integration. Both of these groups held similar views about Europe. They were less likely to believe that Britain benefits from the EU, less likely to support closer links with the EU (in particular, the introduction of a single currency), and were more likely to believe that Britain should leave the EU altogether. Similarly, Mueller-Peters' (1998) analysis, which used the dimensions of 'nationalism' and 'patriotism' in order to capture variation in the way people feel about their country, found that feeling 'patriotic' or proud about one's country had no relationship to attitudes towards the euro, whereas nationalistic sentiments were negatively associated with attitudes towards the euro. Feeling patriotic towards Europe, however, helped to foster positive views of the single currency.

As we shall see in chapter 2, social psychological accounts of the processes underlying social identity – notably, social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hogg and Abrams, 1988) and self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987) – provide a theoretical basis for understanding these findings. In brief, according to social identity theory, people's membership of social groups contributes to their sense of self-esteem (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). For positive benefits to be gained people must engage in inter-group comparisons in order to establish the groups to which they belong (their 'in-groups') as superior to other groups (‘out-groups’). Actively identifying oneself as a member of a group – referred to as self-categorisation (Turner, 1987b) – results in a number of psychological effects. Of particular interest here are a) inter-group bias, in which group members show preference for other members of their in-group and denigrate members of out-groups; and b) the internalisation of the perceived belief structures of the group. These psychological effects of self-categorisation help to explain inclusive and exclusive forms of nationalism and feelings of patriotism, and identify a link between social identity and attitudes (considered in more detail in chapter 2).

A further implication of the social identity and self-categorisation theories is that because people are members of a range of social groups, they hold a collection of different social identities, not all of which will be relevant or ‘salient’ at any given time. Variation in the salience of different social groups at different times means that national identity is not only multi-dimensional, but also situation-specific, in that its significance for a person’s self-concept is not constant, but varies temporally, from one situation to the next. Examples of this abound – such as the power of international sporting events to temporarily arouse strong sentiments linked to nationhood. As particular social categories become more salient, people become more likely to categorise themselves as members of the salient group. This means that the psychological effects of self-categorisation just described are also context-bound, linked inextricably to fluctuations in the salience of social categories from one moment to the next.

1.5.4 Summary

The aim of this section was to highlight some of the ways in which understanding national identity helps to explain variation in public attitudes towards the euro. Citizens of different EU countries have been shown to vary in the strength and nature of their attachment to their nation and to Europe. These variations are, in turn, associated with different levels of support for European integration. In the UK, variations in the way in which different people experience their national identity/ identities are also associated with different attitudinal positions relating to the EU and EMU. Simply put, while nationalist sentiments tend to be associated with more negative views about Europe, feeling patriotic about Britain does not seem to stand in the way of positive attitudes towards membership of the EU and British participation in EMU. In this sense, national identity can be described as multi-dimensional, in that it captures a range of different sentiments relating to a sense of belonging to nation and this multi-dimensionality has implications for understanding attitudes towards European integration.

In addition to the multi-dimensional nature of national identity, however, people's attachment to nation is also experienced differently from one situation to the next. This idea suggests that any analysis of the relationship between identity and attitudes must take salience into account because the basis of the relationship – if indeed there is any – is likely to vary situationally. In other words, like attitudes, the strength and nature of national identity should not be viewed as fixed and stable but as something fluid and ever-changing as a function of salience. As we saw in the previous section, the media appear to play an important role in manipulating the salience of national identity in reports about European integration – a conclusion also drawn by Cinnirella (1996). In this thesis, I consider the implications of this finding for understanding British attitudes towards the euro. The postulates of social identity theory and self-categorisation theory are considered in more detail in chapter 2.

1.6 Issue-relevant knowledge and attitudes towards European integration

The final section of this chapter considers the relationship between public knowledge of the issues surrounding European integration and public opinion. As we have seen, one of the key findings to have emerged from Eurobarometer surveys of attitudes towards Europe and the euro during the period of interest was that UK citizens stood apart from their EU counterparts at the time on a number of different dimensions. Not only did they hold the least favourable attitudes towards closer integration, but they also revealed themselves to be among the least well-informed about the political and economic issues involved (e.g. Mueller-Peters et al., 1998a; Sinnott, 2000; Worcester, 2000). This section considers the relationship between these two findings in more detail and discusses their implication for our understanding of public attitudes towards the euro.

1.6.1 Issue-relevant knowledge and attitude valence

Data from a number of sources suggest there is a positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes among EU citizens. Those who feel more knowledgeable about the European Union also tend to hold more favourable attitudes towards it. This relationship has been observed both at the aggregate level, with countries where knowledge levels are highest showing higher levels of support for integration, and at individual level. For example, looking at Eurobarometer data, Worcester (2000) found that in member states where levels of awareness of EU institutions and policies were highest, levels of support for the EU were, on average, 11% higher. It has also been shown that among those British citizens who rate their knowledge of EU affairs at the higher end of the scale (scoring eight to ten), a significantly higher proportion than at the lower end of the scale believe that their country's membership of the EU is a good thing. In autumn 2003, 72% of UK citizens rating their knowledge at the high end of the scale considered their country's EU membership to be a good thing, compared with 41% of those scoring themselves at the lower end of the scale. By the same token, a higher proportion of respondents with lower knowledge scores considered EU membership to be a bad thing. Of those scoring below eight on the scale, 32% stated that their country's membership of the EU was a bad thing, compared with 15% of those scoring above eight (Eurobarometer 60.1, UK national report, 2003). Similarly, surveys show that those socio-demographic groups who hold more negative attitudes towards Europe (i.e. women, those with lower levels of education and employed in manual occupations), also tend to have lower levels of knowledge about EU politics (Ahrendt, 1999; Evans, 2003).

The conclusion that greater issue-relevant knowledge leads to more favourable attitudes towards integration forms the basis of the cognitive mobilisation theory (e.g. Inglehart, 1970), which proposes that as people become more familiar with the consequences of European integration and the impact of integrative policies on their lives, they develop more favourable attitudes towards it. Inglehart and Rabier (1978) analysed public opinion data from 1950 to 1975 and observed that length of EU membership was a significant predictor of aggregate levels support for the EU. In particular, levels of support were found to be higher among the original six members of the European Coal and Steel Community, than among those joining later (see also Anderson, 1995; Anderson and Kaltenthaler, 1996). One explanation for this is that over time, EU citizens become more aware and knowledgeable of EU affairs and with that, become more familiar with the benefits to be gained from EU membership (Anderson, 1995) – a process that has been referred to as 'cognitive mobilisation' (Inglehart, 1970). As people become more familiar with the issues involved in integration, they are assumed to develop the requisite cognitive skills for understanding the often complex and abstract information they receive about EU affairs. With this, people start to feel less threatened by the integration process, and therefore more likely to look favourably on it (Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991; Janssen, 1991).

The postulates of the cognitive mobilisation theory are also consistent with the interpretations of Mueller-Peters and her colleagues (1998), in their survey of attitudes towards the euro. They argued that low levels of awareness about the economic consequences of introducing a single currency left citizens feeling unable to control the transition to a single currency. By contrast, having knowledge of the issues involved in EMU, or more importantly, *feeling* knowledgeable about them, better equipped people for the changeover, by giving them a sense of 'secondary control' over the transition to the euro (Rothbaum et al., 1982). As a consequence, they were more likely to view EMU favourably.

Further support for the conclusion that low levels of public knowledge about European integration and the issues involved in EMU help to explain opposition to the euro is provided by the results of a deliberative poll conducted by the National Centre for Social Research in 1995. This method of polling involves measuring the attitudes of a nationally representative sample (in this case, towards the future of Britain's relationship with Europe), before and after participation in a weekend event designed to increase participants' factual knowledge and understanding of the polling issue. During the weekend, participants were given the opportunity to learn about and discuss different sides of the debate. The study found participants' attitudes became more favourable towards closer integration as a result of participation in the deliberative event (Curtice and Jowell, 1998). In other words, increasing people's knowledge and involvement in the issues surrounding the EU, helped to increase support for integration among the deliberative poll participants. (A secondary analysis of data from this study is presented in chapter 6.)

Yet there are a number of difficulties with the conclusion that opposition to the euro results from low levels of knowledge about the issue and that simply improving knowledge will lead to more favourable public attitudes. First and foremost, there are some inconsistencies in the research findings relating to knowledge about EMU and attitudes to the euro that have not yet been considered. Much of the research that has found a positive linear relationship between knowledge and attitudes (e.g. Mueller-Peters et al., 1998a; 1998b; Ahrendt, 1999; Worcester, 2000) has focused on aggregate-level effects, whereby countries in which issue-relevant knowledge is highest, tend to show higher levels of support. This aggregate result is not always found when exploring within-country, individual-level variations in attitudes, however. For example, Worcester's (2000) analysis of Eurobarometer data found that it was not always the case in the UK that those with more issue-relevant knowledge held more favourable attitudes towards the EU. He argues that those who are most interested in the issue and most knowledgeable about it tend to be more motivated to seek out information about it, often out of concerns about the *negative* impact EMU might have. This group – which in Worcester's analysis was predominantly made up of older, middle-class, Conservative men who read the Daily Telegraph – held strong values concerning the relationship between Britain and Europe, and this drove not only their interest in the issue and issue-relevant knowledge, but also their opposition towards British participation in the euro (Worcester, 2000).

1.6.2 Issue-relevant knowledge and attitude strength

More recently, the dominant approach in the political science literature on attitudes towards European integration maintains that people structure their attitudes to European integration along utilitarian dimensions, which involves them actively weighing up the costs and benefits of the economic consequences of particular integrative policies (Gabel, 1998a; 1998b). According to Gabel (1998a), the economic consequences of integration influence the welfare of citizens differentially depending on their economic and political interests. These in turn, vary as a function of a person's socio-economic position (hence the relationship observed between socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes towards integration). Accordingly, people are able to evaluate integrative policies in terms of the benefits they stand to derive from them and form their attitudes consistent with these evaluations. Evidence in support of this approach has been found in relation to attitudes towards the euro by Kaltenthaler and Anderson (2001) (see also Banducci and Karp, 2001). They found that Europeans rely on economic indicators such as inflation and unemployment and trade to inform their calculations of the costs and benefits of EMU and other monetary policies.

The utilitarian theory was also partially supported by Mueller-Peters and her colleagues (1998a), whose findings showed that people's expectations about the consequences of the introduction of the euro at the micro- and macro-economic level influenced their attitudes towards their country joining the euro. However, their findings also called into question the extent to which people are *able* to form their attitudes based on their economic expectations (Pepermans and Mueller-Peters, 1999). Indeed, they found that around a quarter of their sample were unable to draw any conclusions about the potential economic consequences of EMU because they felt insufficiently informed about it. In fact, they found strikingly low levels of knowledge and awareness about EMU among their respondents – both when respondents were asked to subjectively rate how well informed they felt, as well as in their performance on a short quiz about the euro. Once again, it was the UK sample that stood out in particular, with a mean score on the six-point scale derived from the quiz, of just 0.78 (findings that are consistent with the results of the Eurobarometer surveys reviewed earlier and with the analyses of others in this field (e.g. Sinnott, 2000; Worcester, 2000)[4].

It is not uncommon in public opinion research to find that the majority of people know and, indeed, care very little about political issues (Delli-Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Concerns about the implications of this for the quality of public opinion about political issues have dominated the field for many years. Political attitudes – and in particular, those relating to foreign policy - are argued not only to lack an adequate knowledge base, but also to be both unstable and unstructured, a finding that has challenged the notion that mass political opinion should be allowed to influence the policy process (Sinnott, 2000). Central to this view is Converse's (1964) analysis of the nature of people's belief systems. According to Converse, few people appear to hold any real opinions at all on many political issues and nor are they always aware of how different issues and different beliefs fit together to form 'constrained' ideological positions. Instead, mass political opinions tend to be largely disorganised and highly labile

[4] Research by economic psychologists (e.g. Lea, Tarpy and Webley 1987; Lewis, Webley and Furnham, 1995) has also questioned the assumption that people are able to make rational assessments of their economic interests and to behave consistently with them.

(meaning that the responses people give to opinion polls change over time, seemingly at random). Converse (1970) concluded that when people are asked their opinion on political issues, rather than acknowledging their uncertainty about a question (e.g. by selecting 'Don't Know' response options), they tend to select responses at random – that is, they express what he termed 'non-attitudes'.

Converse's theory has a number of implications for how to approach the study of people's attitudes towards EMU, given low levels of public knowledge about the issue. Yet if research into attitudes about the euro were measuring nothing more than people's random, uninformed responses, then one might expect to see the following effects in the data: firstly, a relatively low proportion of people would express 'Don't Knows' (because most people would rather randomly select a valid response, than admit to not knowing); secondly, there would be a high level of variability in attitudes over time. In fact, these predictions are not borne out by the evidence. In surveys measuring attitudes to Europe and the euro, a high proportion of British respondents *do* select the 'Don't know' response option and attitudes towards the euro appear to have been relatively stable, in aggregate terms, over time. Furthermore, the 'Waverers' question devised by MORI (Worcester, 2000; Atkinson and Mortimore, 2003), which was described earlier, goes some way towards addressing the possibility that people with lower levels of issue-relevant knowledge may express non-attitudes. Analysis of data from this question shows that people report their attitudes differently depending on how they are asked and the extent to which the question enables them to admit that their views about the euro are not yet 'fully formed'.

Attempts to address the potential problem of non-attitudes methodologically, as in the 'waverers' question, make the assumption that people do indeed hold attitudes on issues about which they are poorly informed, but that standard survey questions are not sophisticated enough to measure them. An alternative to Converse's theory suggests that rather than expressing non-attitudes in political opinion research, a large proportion of people with lower levels of issue-relevant knowledge spontaneously form their opinions actually during questionnaire completion, guided by ideas made salient by particular questions (Zaller and Feldman, 1992; Delli-Carpini and Keeter, 1996). According to this approach, a lack of stability and constraint in public attitudes towards political issues is a function of the way in which people form their attitudes, rather than an outcome of people not holding attitudes at all. In this sense, attitudes can be said to vary in the extent to which they are more or less 'real' or 'random' (Sinnott, 2000), depending on whether they are pre-formed or formed 'on the spot' in a survey interview (Zaller, 1992).

The idea that attitudes towards European foreign policy can be located on a 'real to random' continuum, depending on people's knowledge about European affairs was tested by Sinnott (2000) in an analysis of Eurobarometer data. He found that at higher levels of issue-relevant knowledge, the inter-relationship between people's attitudes towards EU foreign policy showed a more coherent structure, whereas at lower levels of knowledge about EU affairs, attitudes were less consistent and influenced by contextual cues in the questionnaire. He concluded that the "net outcome is that, among four fifths of respondents, and in the area of attitudes to a European foreign and security policy in particular, what is being measured is suspiciously close to the random end of the real-to-random continuum" (Sinnott, 2000; 131).

1.6.3 Summary

Gabel (1998a; 1998b) concludes that evidence in support of the utilitarian approach to understanding variation in attitudes towards integration also makes it possible to dismiss the idea that poor levels of public understanding of European integration lead to non-attitudes. The assumption that people engage in cost-benefit analyses of different EU policies in relation to their own political and economic interests precludes the possibility that existing survey data on which the theory is based consist merely of people's random responses to different questions. Yet, as we have seen, the fact that public opinion about EMU is underpinned by low levels of issue-relevant knowledge among the majority of voters means that many people have limited capacity to engage in utilitarian-based evaluations of different EU policies. This does not mean necessarily that people with lower levels of issue-relevant knowledge are unable to form attitudes towards European issues at all, though it does raise questions about the reliability and validity of survey measures of people's attitudes towards European integration on which previous analysis of variation in attitudes have been based. Rather, an alternative to the conclusion that people express non-attitudes in surveys is the idea that attitudes are formed on the basis of salient contextual cues available during questionnaire completion (Zaller, 1992; Sinnott, 2000).

The implication of this alternative explanation is that people's attitudes towards the euro vary in terms of how strongly-held they are and the basis on which they have been constructed. This conclusion is partially supported by the finding that those who have made up their mind on the euro issue, tend also to be those who are generally more politically engaged with it (Atkinson and Mortimore, 2003). Based on this discussion, it is not possible to conclude that there is a direct positive relationship between levels of knowledge about EMU and the favourability of attitudes. However, there is substantial evidence to support the conclusion that attitudes to the euro vary in *quality,* as a function of variation in the amount of issue-relevant knowledge people hold and the contextual cues available to them during survey participation. The relationship between issue-relevant knowledge and attitudes towards the euro forms a central focus of the empirical research undertaken for this thesis and is considered further in chapter 2.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the substantive focus of the thesis – British attitudes towards European integration, and specifically, British participation in the single currency. I started by presenting opinion poll results from surveys carried out during the 1990s and early 2000s when the debate surrounding the launch of EMU was at its height. During this period, the single currency issue dominated political debate in Britain. Plans to hold a referendum – the first of its kind for over 30 years – focused both elite and popular attention on public attitudes about the euro and people's voting intentions in such a poll. In this context, the impetus to understand variation in public opinion – which would not only determine the outcome of a referendum, but importantly, whether and when such a vote would take place – was overwhelming. People's attitudes at this time were strongly opposed to adopting a single currency, and public support in Britain for closer integration in Europe was at one of its lowest recorded points in history. Notably, British citizens stood apart from their fellow EU citizens on a range of dimensions: support for EU membership, beliefs about the benefits of EU membership, support for the single currency, knowledge and awareness of EU affairs and acceptance of a European identity. In each case, British respondents held the lowest scores across Europe, highlighting further the need to understand in more detail the different factors underlying these trends.

Three areas of inquiry into the factors underlying public opposition to European integration in Britain were reviewed in this chapter. The first consists of research into the influence the media – and in particular, the British print media – have on public attitudes. Prior to the empirical research undertaken here, relatively few studies had explored the impact on public opinion of media reports about Europe, though since then the number of studies in this field has proliferated. Most of the research had focused on the informational role played by the media in communicating the issues and events relating to European integration. Within that, most studies had examined specifically the manifestation of euroscepticism in the press and the possible effects this has on public opinion. One finding suggests that eurosceptic discourse in reports about integration contributes to public opposition to Europe by raising the salience of British national identity and impeding efforts to foster a sense of European identity among British citizens. However, few studies have specified the mechanisms by which people are affected – if indeed, they are at all – by media attention to issues surrounding integration, nor the processes by which information in the press influences public attitudes.

The second area of inquiry concerns the relationship between people's sense of national identity and their attitudes towards European integration. Most of the research in this field prior to the present research suggested that the relationship between national identity and attitudes depends on the strength and nature of people's attachment to nation. Two forms of national identity were highlighted in particular – one comprised of nationalistic sentiments, which typically stand in the way of positive views of integration, and one consisting of patriotic sentiments and pride in one's nation, which by comparison need not entail a rejection of closer integration with other countries. As well as being multi-dimensional in character, social psychological approaches to the study of identity suggest that people's attachment to nation will also vary as a function of the *salience* of national identity in any given situation. This implies that the relationship between national identity and attitudes towards the euro may not be as stable as it appears and few studies of this relationship have taken this into consideration.

The third area of inquiry reviewed here concerns the stability of people's attitudes towards the euro and its relationship with how much knowledge people have about the issue. Despite the apparently smooth trend lines in poll data on people's voting intentions in a referendum on the euro (figure 1.3), a large proportion of British people confess to not knowing their views about British participation. A majority claim they could be persuaded to change their mind about the euro and more than anywhere else in the EU, British citizens feel insufficiently informed about the issues relating to European integration – a perception that has been 'objectively' confirmed in survey quizzes that test people's factual knowledge about the issue. Low levels of issue-relevant knowledge bring into doubt the reliability and validity of survey measures of people's attitudes. Attitudes reported in surveys that are underpinned by low levels of knowledge tend to be highly susceptible to change and sensitive to persuasive cues, as people construct their attitudes 'on the spot' during questionnaire completion. These conclusions call into question the foundation of research into variation in public attitudes towards European integration. If attitudes are unstable, then so too must be their observed relationship with other variables.

The overall aim of this thesis is to try to draw these findings together into a single model for understanding attitudes towards the euro. In particular, I argue that to understand variation in attitudes, it is necessary to study not simply the *relationship* between reported attitudes and covariates, but the *dynamics* of attitude formation and change. Each of the areas of inquiry reviewed concerns a different component of this model: the first concerns the role of *information* in how attitudes are formed and changed, the second concerns how *identity* processes influence this process, and the third concerns the importance of issue-relevant knowledge – or more generally, people's *involvement* in the issue – in determining the processes by which attitudes are formed and changed. The theoretical framework underpinning this model is presented in the following chapter.

2 THE ROLE OF INFORMATION, INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTITY IN ATTITUDE CHANGE

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced the substantive focus of the thesis and reviewed the literature relating to three different fields of inquiry that inform our understanding of variations in public attitudes towards Economic and Monetary Union (EMU): information, involvement and identity. In this chapter, I introduce two social psychological approaches, which together provide the theoretical framework for the thesis. The first of these approaches – the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) – comes from the tradition of persuasion research and consists of a theory of how attitudes are formed and changed based on individual responses to information. The model emphasises the role of 'issue involvement' as a key variable determining a respondent's ability and motivation to process issue-relevant information. The second approach of interest here is Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987), which was developed from Social Identity Theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hogg and Abrams, 1988), and provides a basis for understanding the mechanism by which identity influences attitudes. As the ELM forms the dominant approach in the research undertaken, I focus in some detail on the different elements of the model and the methodological paradigm that underpins it. I discuss the model's relationship with other theories of persuasion and consider some of the key issues and controversies relevant to its application to the study of 'real-world' attitudes. Two of these issues have been informed by research into how the social context – notably group membership – influences persuasion processes: the role of variables outside of the persuasive message (including source identity) in persuasion and the question of what makes arguments persuasive. The social identity approach is introduced in this context. To begin with, I describe the field of social psychological research into persuasion and the context in which the Elaboration Likelihood Model was developed.

2.2 Social psychological theories of persuasion

The study of attitude formation and change and the factors that influence persuasion constitutes one of the largest fields of research in social psychology. Today, four main approaches dominate, the development of which was motivated by the need to account for the diverse findings generated by previous empirical research in the field. In this thesis, I focus on just one of these: the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981; 1986). This section introduces the ELM alongside alternative accounts of the processes underlying attitude change and describes the historical context in which it was first devised.

Petty and Cacioppo (1981) identify seven major approaches to the study of attitude change that preceded their development of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): including conditioning/modelling approaches, the message-learning approach, judgmental approaches, motivational approaches, attributional approaches, combinatory approaches and self-persuasion approaches (pp.35-6). Early approaches emphasised the role of learning processes such as classical and operant conditioning, as well as modelling (e.g. Razran, 1940; Staats and Staats, 1957). Research in the field at this time was mainly exploratory, however, and it was not until the work of Hovland and his colleagues (e.g. Hovland, Janis and Kelley, 1953), carried out as part of the Yale Communication and Attitude Change Program, that the field became more organised from both a theoretical and methodological point of view (Johnson, Maio and Smith-McLallen, 2005). Though their ideas were never fully developed in a formal theory (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981), the 'message learning approach' to the study of persuasion had a lasting impact on how social psychologists thought about and researched attitude change. Their focus was on three main elements of persuasive communications: the source of the message, the message itself and the message recipient; as well as the processes by which persuasion is achieved and the persistence of its effects.

Later, members of the Yale group continued to work in the same field, developing new but related theories of persuasion. For example, McGuire's information processing theory (1968; 1989) focused on three main steps involved in persuasion, including attention to the message, comprehension of the message and yielding, whereas Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues' Social Judgement Model (e.g. Sherif and Hovland, 1961;

Sherif and Sherif, 1967) emphasised the role a person's existing attitudes played in providing an interpretive context for persuasive communications (Johnson et al., 2005). These approaches proved to be particularly influential, through their emphasis on process and the importance of 'involvement' as a mediator of attitude change.

Motivational models e.g. balance theory (Heider, 1946) and cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), emphasised the role of motives as mediators of attitude change, while attributional accounts (e.g. self perception theory – Bem, 1967) focused on the inferences drawn by message recipients about the communicator's or their own behaviour (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). What Petty and Cacioppo (1981) describe as 'combinatory approaches' – including Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action – focused on how people evaluate and integrate (or combine) new information into existing knowledge and attitudes; and finally, self-persuasion approaches focused on people's thoughts about persuasive communications and the message topic and the way in which this self-generated information influences attitudes. Each one of these approaches to the study of persuasion was distinct in that it provided a different explanation of how attitudes can be changed. However, not one satisfactorily accounted for the different empirical findings of the research literature; each applied in some situations, but not in others (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p.255).

The development of self-persuasion approaches and notably, the cognitive response model of persuasion represented a second important turning point in the field of attitude change research (Johnson et al., 2005). Greenwald (1968) first introduced the idea that attitude change is mediated by the thoughts message recipients generate in response to a persuasive message. Two sets of research findings from this tradition appear to have been particularly influential for the authors of the ELM. Firstly, empirical studies had shown that the valence of cognitive responses to a persuasive communication – in other words, whether the message induced favourable thoughts or counter-argumentation – was highly correlated with people's attitudes (Johnson et al., 2005). Secondly, research findings providing evidence of 'anticipatory attitude change' (e.g. Cialdini and Petty, 1981) suggested that people sometimes modified their existing attitudes even in the *absence* of a persuasive message, simply as a result of being told they would be presented with a communication that would be either pro- or counter-attitudinal. In this situation, attitudes tend either to polarise – i.e., become more extreme – or to attenuate and become more moderate, depending on how involved the recipient is in the message topic/ issue. Where the issue is highly important or involving for the message recipient, anticipation of a counter-attitudinal message encourages issue-relevant thinking, so the recipient can prepare to defend their existing attitude. As a result of this issue-relevant thinking, the attitude becomes more extreme. By contrast, where the issue is of low importance and not very involving, motivation to engage in issue-relevant thinking is low and the recipient is motivated more by impression-management concerns, resulting in the expression of more moderate attitudes. Thus, attitude change for recipients with low involvement in the message topic tends to be influenced more by "features of the persuasion situation that are irrelevant to the issue" than by engaging in issue-relevant thinking (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p. 258). Furthermore, the persistence of these attitude change effects also appeared to depend on how cognitively involved the research participants had been in the attitude issue, leading the authors to conclude that "enduring attitude change (...) appears to depend on the likelihood that an issue or argument will be elaborated upon (thought about)" (p. 263).

The 'Elaboration Likelihood Model' was intended to provide an overarching framework for understanding attitude change that would be able to explain the existing empirical findings of persuasion researchers. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1981), these findings seemed to point towards two different ways in which persuasion could be achieved. One way involved relatively careful consideration of information relevant to the target attitude object (typically, arguments contained in a persuasive message), while the other way involved other types of processing that did not require the research participant to think about the issue. These two different 'routes' to attitude change – referred to as the 'central' and 'peripheral' routes – constitute one of the core elements of the ELM.

2.2.1 Contemporary approaches to the study of persuasion

Along with the ELM, three other theories of persuasion currently dominate the field. Developed contemporaneously with the ELM, the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) (Chaiken, 1980; 1987; Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly, 1989) is arguably the most important of these. The two models share many similarities. Importantly, like the

ELM, the HSM similarly emphasises two different processes[5] by which attitude change occurs in response to information, one characterised by systematic thought, the other by simple decision rules or heuristics – such as 'always trust expert sources'. However, they also diverge on a number of points: notably, the HSM places more emphasis on heuristic processing than does the ELM on the peripheral route; it also emphasises different underlying motives for attitude change, and allows for the possibility of parallel or simultaneous heuristic and systematic processing, whereas the central and peripheral routes in the ELM are considered to be mutually exclusive (see Eagly and Chaiken, 1993 for a detailed discussion of how the two models compare). Nevertheless, despite their differences, the ELM and the HSM are often paired because they share the same underlying premise that persuasion can be achieved in two *qualitatively* different ways.

More recently these so-called 'dual process' models (Chaiken and Trope, 1999) have been challenged by two alternative accounts, that offer arguably more parsimonious explanations of the persuasion process. Both similarly make the distinction between 'relatively effortful' modes of processing and modes 'that are much less effortful' (Johnson et al., 2005; p.624). However, the 'Unimodel' (Kruglanski and Thompson, 1999; Kruglanski, Thompson and Spiegel, 1999) maintains that the empirical findings from persuasion research can be accounted for by a *single* mode rather than two qualitatively different ones, while the Cognition in Persuasion Model (CPM) developed by Albarracín (2002) argues that persuasion takes place through a sequence of processes, irrespective of effort (Johnson et al., 2005). However, as relative newcomers to the field, the Unimodel and the CPM are still relatively under-researched and there has so far not been sufficient empirical support for either to reject dual-process accounts of persuasion altogether (Eagley and Chaiken, 2005).

Theories of persuasion all share a common focus on the different variables that are responsible for attitude formation and change – e.g. message source, recipient and contextual factors (Petty and Wegener, 1999). The empirical tradition of research in the field is almost entirely experimental, and typically adopts one of two different research designs (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; Johnson et al., 2005). Both involve examining the effect on attitudes of a specially constructed message consisting of arguments

[5] Although unlike the HSM, which posits two processes, the ELM allows for *multiple* processes that can be categorised as either central or peripheral (Petty and Wegener, 1999; Johnson et al., 2005).

supporting a specific recommendation. The first type of research design involves measuring attitudes both before and after message exposure to see the relative difference in within-subject attitudes, whilst controlling for variables such as the personal relevance to participants of the message topic. The second and more common type of design involves a single measure of attitudes from a control and an experimental group, but for the latter, this measure is taken after message exposure, to assess the relative impact of the message on attitudes. Pre-message attitudes in both groups are assumed to vary randomly, so random allocation to the treatment group assumes that any differences in attitudes observed between groups results from message exposure.

Relatively few studies in the field of persuasion have deviated from this paradigm and relatively few have attempted to apply persuasion theories to study attitude change outside of the laboratory. The research undertaken here represents such an attempt. In this thesis, I have chosen to adopt the ELM as a theoretical framework for understanding British attitudes towards the single currency. The reasons for choosing the ELM over other approaches were as follows. As noted, neither the Unimodel nor the CPM was sufficiently developed at the time the research was undertaken to offer a convincing alternative to either of the dominant dual-process models. Of these, my preference for the ELM was based on two (mainly pragmatic) considerations. Firstly, though in many respects certain features of the HSM arguably make it a more flexible model than the ELM – e.g. it allows for multiple motives behind attitude change and the possibility that heuristic and systematic modes of processing can co-occur (Chen and Chaiken, 1999) – the ELM has proved to be far more popular and has stimulated an enormous amount of research (and far more than any other theory of persuasion, including the HSM). One explanation for this is that the model provides a very concise and comprehensive framework for making predictions about how different variables interact in the persuasion process and a clearly explicated experimental method (see Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) for testing these predictions. These aspects of the model make it equally appealing to my own research. This (ever expanding) empirical base has also ensured its establishment as a leading paradigm for research in this field, and its impact has been far-reaching. For example, the model has found considerable favour in the world of marketing and advertising and it has been applied across a diverse range of fields of research, from health psychology (e.g. Shadel, Niaura and Abrams, 2001) to political psychology (e.g. Kerkhof, 1999; McGraw and Hubbard, 1996). Secondly, as we shall see, certain features of the ELM – particularly its predictions relating to elaboration likelihood – make it particularly suitable to understanding the dynamics of public attitudes towards the euro in Britain, based on our understanding of those attitudes from chapter 1. After describing the key postulates of the model, I will discuss the rationale behind this application in more detail.

2.3 The Elaboration Likelihood Model

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) describe the main postulates underlying their model of attitude change (see also a later description by Petty and Wegener, 1999). The first of these is that people are motivated to hold 'correct' attitudes (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986)[6]. This underlying assumption reflects the idea that optimally, humans will engage in a rational consideration of all available information in order to construct their attitudes. According to Petty and Wegener (1999), 'the correctness of one's attitude is a subjective assessment and can be based on a wide variety of "evidence"' (p.44). It is assumed, however, that this motivation would, under ideal conditions, lead a person to find out about an attitude issue and carefully appraise the evidence on either side of that issue, in order to reach an informed evaluation.

The second postulate of the ELM maintains that the amount and nature of issue-relevant thinking in which people are able or willing to engage in to appraise the information contained in a message varies with both individual and situational factors (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Petty and Wegener, 1999; p.44-45). People are described in the social cognition literature as 'cognitive misers' (Fiske and Taylor, 1984), meaning we typically try to constrain the amount of effort required to make sense of the world around us by using a variety of mental shortcuts. But some people seem to enjoy thinking more than others (Cacioppo and Petty, 1982) and some people are clearly more able to do so than others, depending on their natural abilities and level of education, contextual factors affecting the degree of cognitive burden on the recipient during message processing (e.g. the presence of distraction – see Petty, Wells, and Brock, 1976) and the actual content of the message. Crucially, the ability to elaborate on information varies according to the message topic and the amount of prior knowledge the recipient has about it. Similarly, the motivation to process depends not only on

[6] As noted, the HSM allows for a variety of motives for attitude change (Chen and Chaiken, 1999), including for example impression management and self-defence.

individual differences, but also on contextual factors and the message topic. Issues people consider to be more important or personally relevant will motivate more careful thinking about the message content.

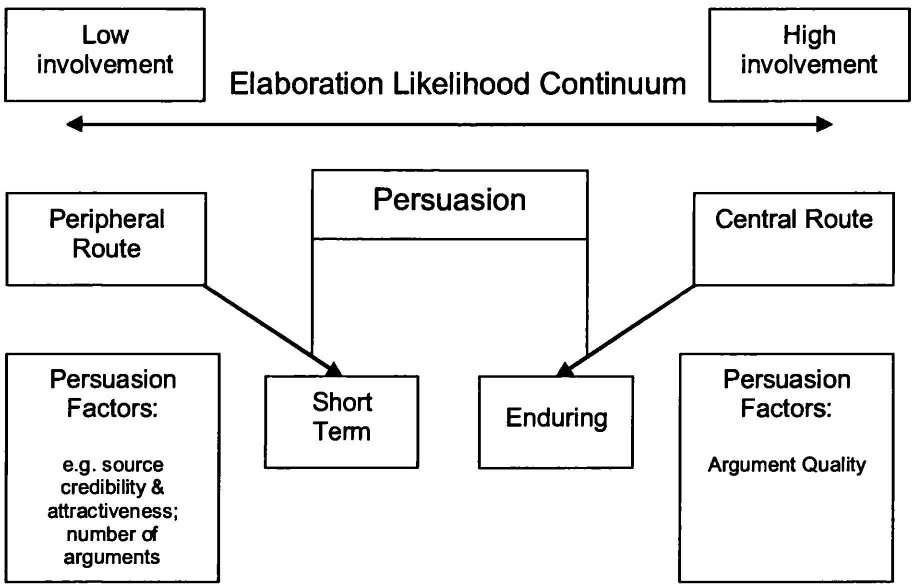
The likelihood of message elaboration can be said to vary along a continuum. At one end, where motivation and ability to elaborate are low, people will be unlikely to expend the effort to think carefully about the issue and the arguments contained in the message. At the other end of the elaboration likelihood continuum, where motivation and ability to process information are high, people will be much more likely to take the time to think carefully about the issue and the message contents. In other words, people will vary along this continuum in terms of the amount of thinking they are likely to engage in for any given message topic. Factors influencing a person's ability and motivation to think will determine their position on the scale. Petty and Cacioppo (1979a; 1986) argue that the most important determining factor is *issue involvement* – or the extent 'to which the attitudinal issue under consideration is of personal importance" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979a, p. 1915). Issue involvement therefore maps directly onto the elaboration likelihood continuum and attitude change can occur anywhere along this scale.

As previously noted, attitude change can be achieved via two different 'routes', each characterised by different types of cognitive process. The central route involves carefully attending to the arguments contained in a persuasive communication, thinking carefully about them and evaluating them (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p255). In this way, new information is integrated into "a coherent and reasoned position" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p.256) and consequently, the effects of persuasion via the central route (which are a result of active thought) tend to be more enduring. By contrast, the peripheral route does not require the individual to engage in thoughtful processing of the various components of a persuasive message. Instead, this persuasion route occurs when the individual reaches his/her position vis-à-vis the attitude object as a result of cues in the persuasive communication which prompt, for example, the use of simple heuristics/ decision rules (Chaiken, 1987), or simple associations such as in a conditioned response (Staats and Staats, 1957). According to Petty and Cacioppo,

> *"These cues (...) allow a person to evaluate a communication or decide what attitudinal position to adopt without engaging in any extensive cognitive work relevant to the issue under consideration." (1981; p. 256).*

Attitude change via the peripheral route is generally only short-lived, although through repeated persuasive attempts, enduring attitude stability can be achieved.

Figure 2.1 The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986)



Where elaboration likelihood is high, central route processing is more likely to occur, whereas where elaboration likelihood is low, it is more likely that persuasion will occur via the peripheral route. Thus, the two extreme points of the elaboration likelihood continuum are broadly associated with each of these two distinct processes of persuasion (see figure 2.1). However, early interpretations of the ELM wrongly assumed that persuasion via the central route could *only* be achieved at the high end of the elaboration likelihood continuum, whereas persuasion via the peripheral route *only* occurred where elaboration likelihood was low. In fact, the assumption that low elaboration likelihood will lead people to default to the 'peripheral route' to form their attitude about the target issue is incorrect, and it is indeed possible for people with low elaboration likelihood to engage in central route processing. Petty and Wegener (1999) distinguish between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' differences in message processing, according to which either the *amount* of processing varies with elaboration likelihood, or the *type* of processing. Thus, the model predicts that the processing of recipients with low elaboration likelihood will differ *quantitatively* from that of recipients with high elaboration likelihood. For example, the recipient might process fewer arguments in the persuasive communication, or during message elaboration, generate fewer favourable thoughts (the cognitive responses assumed to underlie attitude formation and change) than somebody with more issue-involvement (Petty and Wegener, 1999). Peripheral processing, by contrast, is conceptualised as a *qualitatively* different mode altogether, which although not uniquely confined to the low end of the elaboration likelihood continuum, is more likely to occur when ability and motivation to process is low.

2.3.1 Testing the predictions of the ELM

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) describe the experimental method used to test the predictions derived from the model. The method is considered in more detail in chapter 7 of this thesis. This section introduces the reader to its key elements to allow a common understanding important to a later discussion of some of the model's limitations.

Most ELM studies have followed the second of the two types of research designs used in persuasion studies that were described above. Research participants are randomly assigned to the experimental groups and a single measure of attitudes is taken after exposure to a persuasive communication. Differences in post-message attitudes (the main dependent variable) are attributed to the different experimental treatment in each group. Two experimental manipulations are central to the method. Firstly, the extent to which the message topic is personally involving for participants is manipulated to be either high or low in order to control the participants' elaboration likelihood. Secondly, the *quality* of the arguments presented in the persuasive message is manipulated to be either strong or weak. Two persuasive messages are specially prepared, one consisting of strong arguments that have been shown in a pre-test to elicit predominantly favourable thoughts among a panel of judges and one consisting of weak arguments that have been shown to elicit predominantly negative thoughts (or counter-argumentation) among the judges.

The model predicts that participants who are highly involved in the message topic will be more likely to elaborate on the arguments contained in the persuasive message. A message recipient engaging in central route processing will be able to distinguish between arguments that are relatively compelling and arguments that are relatively specious, and consequently, be less likely to be persuaded by weaker arguments. Evidence of central-route processing is provided, therefore, by post-message attitudes that differentiate on the basis of argument quality. By contrast, a recipient engaging in peripheral route processing will be unaware of the quality of the message arguments because persuasion is activated by cues other than the message content. Consequently, evidence of peripheral-route processing is provided by post-message attitudes that fail to differentiate on the basis of argument quality. This basic design makes it possible to test the effect of a third variable on attitude change and on the quantity and quality of message elaboration.

2.3.2 The ELM and attitudes towards the euro

Three characteristics of the ELM make it particularly suitable as a theory for understanding the dynamics of British attitudes towards the euro. Firstly, the model defines the mechanism by which information influences attitudes. Attitude change is mediated by people's thoughts about or cognitive responses to arguments contained in persuasive messages. This provides a framework for understanding one of the ways in which media information influences public opinion. Secondly, according to the model, the quantity and quality of issue-relevant thinking that people engage in when confronted with information about the attitude object depends on their involvement in the issue. This means that in order to understand how media information influences attitudes towards the euro, we need to consider the effect of issue involvement on the way in which and extent to which people think about the attitude object (see below). Thirdly, based on the description of the model provided, it is possible to derive hypotheses about the effect of a third variable on persuasion. This means that the model allows us to investigate how national identity influences public attitudes towards the euro, by examining its effect on how people think about the issue and respond to new information about it. These ideas form the central focus of the empirical work undertaken here.

In this thesis, I have used the term 'involvement' to refer to factors influencing people's ability and motivation to think about the issue of British participation in the single currency. As in Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) definition of the term, perhaps the most significant of these is the extent to which the attitude object is important – i.e. the extent to which people are interested in the issue and consider it personally relevant to them. However, the term 'involvement' has been used elsewhere to refer to different types of relationship people have towards an attitude object (see Johnson and Eagly, 1989; Maio and Olson, 1995). For example, Johnson and Eagly (1989) make the distinction between 'outcome-relevant involvement' (concerned with the outcomes of a particular advocacy for the message recipient) and 'value-relevant involvement' (which occurs where the attitude object is related to a person's important values). Each of these types of involvement appear to be relevant to attitudes towards the euro (recall from chapter 1 that people's attitudes are shaped by expectations about the likely costs and benefits a single currency will bring *and* by values), so the use of the term here is intended to capture these ideas also. As the ELM predicts, when an attitude is psychologically important to someone, they will be more motivated to seek out information about it and become informed about it (see also Krosnick, 1988). In turn, issue-relevant knowledge becomes an important determinant of elaboration likelihood. Based on the postulates of the ELM, therefore, we can predict that being highly involved in the issues surrounding Britain's relationship with Europe – i.e. being interested in them and being more knowledgeable about them – increases the likelihood that a person will think carefully about issue-relevant arguments they are presented with.

2.3.3 Limitations of the ELM

The ELM has been hugely influential in the field of persuasion research for more than two decades. Yet it has not been without its critics and a number of enduring controversies render aspects of the model problematic. Some criticisms that have been directed at the model were addressed briefly earlier: for example, whether the desire to hold 'correct' attitudes is the only motivating factor in attitude change (see Eagly and Chaiken, 1993); whether message recipients can engage in parallel processing using both central and peripheral modes simultaneously (Stiff, 1986; Stiff and Boster, 1987); and whether empirical findings on attitude change can only be explained by two processes, or whether one process is sufficient (e.g. Kruglanski and Thompson, 1999)[7]. These are issues that have become key debates among contributors to the field, but are not immediately relevant to the application of the model in the present thesis. However,

[7] Or indeed, the fact that the ELM actually comprises multiple processes, rather than just two, as in the HSM, making the label 'dual-process model' not strictly appropriate (Johnson et al., 2005).

two issues are more concerning, so I address these in the remainder of the chapter. The first concerns the model's account of how so-called 'extra-message' factors (i.e. variables in the persuasion setting not including the arguments contained in the message) influence persuasion and has implications for understanding the role played by identity in attitude formation and change. The second issue concerns the model's definition of 'argument quality' – or what makes an argument persuasive (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) and has important implications for our understanding of how information affects attitudes in real-world settings.

2.4 The role of identity in persuasion

Early investigations into the role played by identity in persuasion by ELM researchers (and similarly, by those working within the HSM) were focused predominantly on characteristics of the message source – notably, source expertise and source attractiveness (e.g. Petty and Cacioppo, 1984a; DeBono and Harnish, 1988). According to Petty and Cacioppo's earlier accounts of the model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; p.256), variables of this kind, that were separate from the arguments contained in the message, could only influence attitudes by acting as peripheral cues. Because peripheral route persuasion was associated with only short-term effects on attitudes, extra-message variables, including source identity, were deemed to be relatively unimportant factors in persuasion. By contrast, because central-route persuasion resulted from recipients carefully processing the information contained in the message and integrating it into their existing structure of beliefs (with relatively enduring results), extra-message variables were assumed to play no part in central processing. Subjective evaluations of the validity of the message content – assumed to be made by recipients independently of the social context in which the message was communicated (van Knippenberg, 1999) - were deemed to be the most important variables influencing the effectiveness of any persuasion attempt.

These assumptions were challenged, however, because they appeared to be so at odds with research findings elsewhere in social psychology. In fact, the social context in which persuasion attempts are made and the importance of significant others in shaping attitudes and behaviour have been researched extensively for over fifty years in the fields of social influence, conformity and inter-group behaviour (Mackie and Skelly, 1994; Mackie and Queller, 2000). For example, one of the earliest studies which highlighted the influential power of significant others on people's beliefs and attitudes was that of Newcomb (1943), who showed how the political views of students at Bennington College became progressively liberal as a result of interaction with peers during the course of their studies. Similarly, Festinger's studies of attraction (e.g. 1950), from which he developed his theory of social reality testing also highlighted the significant informational influence of similar others for individuals seeking to gain subjective validity for their views (Mackie, Worth and Asuncion, 1990). However, the main impetus behind challenges to social cognition accounts of how identity influences persuasion has come from the field of group processes, and in particular, the social identity paradigm (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The next section provides a brief overview of the central elements of this theoretical approach before we turn more specifically to the critique of the ELM.

2.4.1 Key ideas from the Social Identity paradigm

Two approaches to the study of identity have come to dominate research by social psychologists into group processes during the last three decades: Social Identity Theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hogg and Abrams, 1988) and Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). Because the latter was developed out of the former and can be seen partly as an extension of it, the two approaches are often treated together, forming a single paradigm for understanding how people behave in inter-group contexts.

According to social identity theory, people's membership of social groups is central to their self-concept. People define themselves as much by their membership of different groups (or 'categories') as by their individuality. As such, the groups to which people belong contribute to a sense of positive self-esteem and have psychologically distinctive effects on social behaviour (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; p.11). In order to achieve this positive benefit of group membership, people engage in inter-group comparisons through which they try to establish the groups to which they belong as superior to other groups. Where this is not possible, people typically attempt to redefine the groups to which they belong in order to achieve what is referred to as "positive distinctiveness" for those groups (see Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1982; Turner et al., 1987).

The basic tenets of social identity theory were developed further by Turner and his colleagues (Turner, 1985; Turner, 1987) in Self-Categorisation Theory. According to this approach, self-categorisation (the process by which a person defines him/ herself as a member of a particular group) results in depersonalised perception, which involves a shift from perceiving oneself as an individual to perceiving oneself as a member of a group. This process involves 'self-stereotyping' – i.e. stereotyping oneself as a typical member of a group. In turn, this involves the internalisation of the perceived belief structures of the group and the acceptance of these as one's own. In this sense, self-categorisation can have an important influence on how individuals think and feel about different issues. It also has an important impact on inter-group behaviour. The process of categorisation underpins all inter-group comparisons and depersonalised perception results in the differences between groups being accentuated, while those within groups are minimised. Outgroups (the groups of which we are not members) are, thereby, perceived to be more homogeneous than ingroups (the groups of which we are members). This inter-group bias results in a greater propensity for ingroup favouritism and a tendency towards denigrating outgroups.

Because people are members of a range of social groups, they hold a repertoire of different social identities, not all of which will be salient at any given time. When a social category becomes salient, people are more likely to categorise themselves as members of the salient group and to seek to enhance the evaluation of that group. Thus, in intergroup contexts – i.e. situations in which category salience is enhanced – "group behaviour represents a shift of self-definition to a salient categorisation" (Abrams and Brown, 1989; p. 311). In other words, people cease to perceive themselves as individuals and instead start to view themselves as interchangeable with other members of the shared category. The results of this shift in self-definition are the cognitive psychological effects described above – i.e. depersonalised perception, self-stereotyping and the internalisation of group beliefs.

Variation in the salience of groups at different times operates differently depending on the type of social category and the context in which social-identification occurs. For example, in the home, it is often one's family group, which is the salient social category guiding one's thoughts and behaviour in relation to other groups. At work, social identity is more likely to be tied to occupation. By interacting with other members of these groups, we become familiar with the shared belief structures within them, and these belief structures are easily communicated among group members. As Van Knippenberg (1999; p.317) describes it, "what we deem to be true tends to be determined by what is considered to be true within the groups to which we belong." With large-scale categories such as nation, the mechanisms that influence the salience of the category and the diffusion of group beliefs operate somewhat differently to with smaller groups, with the mass media playing a key role in both (Cinnirella, 1996). The psychological effects of salience operate in the same as with smaller groups, however; both result in the individual categorising and self-stereotyping him/herself as a member of the salient group.

2.4.2 Social identity and persuasion

As van Knippenberg (1999) notes, while research into social influence, conformity and group processes highlights the significance of the social context in shaping attitudes and behaviour, these approaches within social psychology have all tended to neglect the role of information in persuasion. At the same time, the social cognition approaches to attitude formation and change – notably the ELM and the HSM – have over-emphasised the role of information, while neglecting the social context in which persuasive communications take place (see also Mackie and Queller, 2000). To bridge this impasse, a number of researchers began to explore the role of social identification processes in persuasion, using the experimental paradigm provided by the ELM (e.g. Mackie, Worth and Asuncion, 1990; van Knippenberg and Wilke, 1991; 1992; Mackie, Gustardo-Conaco and Skelly, 1992; McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson and Turner, 1994; Platow, Mills and Morrison, 2000). In particular, these researchers looked for evidence of central-route/ systematic processing – such as greater number of issue-relevant thoughts reported in a thought-listing task; close correlation between the favourability of cognitive responses to a message and post-message attitudes; and differentiation of post-message attitudes and cognitive responses on the basis of argument quality (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; van Knippenberg, 1999) among participants presented with messages attributed to ingroup sources compared with participants presented messages from outgroup sources.

Mackie, Worth and Asuncion (1990) were the first to highlight the possibility that information regarding the ingroup-outgroup status of a message source might in fact induce intensive systematic processing, rather than acting simply as a peripheral cue. They conducted two studies to investigate processes mediating the persuasive impact of messages representing ingroup opinions (Mackie et al., 1990). Both studies employed ELM-style methodology, using an argument quality manipulation to establish the relative quantity of attitude change from strong and weak messages, as well as the extent of message processing (i.e. whether central or peripheral). The first study indicated an increased propensity for participants to engage in argument based processing of ingroup messages (strong messages being more persuasive than weak messages). In the second study, the authors introduced a manipulation of the group relevance of the message advocacy. Where group relevance was high, strong ingroup messages were more persuasive than weak ones. However, where group relevance was low, no argument quality effect was established, suggesting that group membership had served as a peripheral cue in the persuasion context. Thus, the authors concluded that attitude change mediated by group membership concerns could not only be systematic, rigorous and even objective, but could also induce powerful long-term persuasive effects (Mackie et al., 1990; p.822).

Van Knippenberg and Wilke (1991; 1992) similarly showed that ingroup sources stimulated central-route processing. Their participants generated more message-related thoughts when presented with an ingroup communication, the favourability of cognitive responses better predicted post-message attitudes for ingroup sources than for outgroup sources, and they recalled more ingroup arguments than outgroup arguments (van Knippenberg, 1999). Participants receiving ingroup messages were also more likely to distinguish between strong and weak arguments. In particular, strong ingroup messages were more persuasive than weak ingroup messages and elicited more favourable cognitive responses. Meanwhile, participants failed to differentiate in the same way between strong and weak arguments from outgroups (van Knippenberg and Wilke, 1991; 1992).

Mackie et al.'s (1990) research was replicated and extended by McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson and Turner (1994), who integrated the findings into a social identity account of the cognitive mediation of attitude change. These authors conducted two studies to explore the ability of group-membership information about a message source to induce thoughtful content-based processing, in conditions of both low and high category salience (McGarty et al., 1994; Haslam, McGarty and Turner, 1996). Their results led the authors to conclude that the dual-process approach to persuasion of the ELM had inadequately accounted for the ability of category membership to induce central-route, systematic processing under conditions of high category salience, but that under conditions of low salience, the group information appeared to function in the manner specified by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), as a cue to a peripheral mode of processing.

In summary, the results of these studies posed a direct challenge to early accounts of the ELM that implied that extra-message variables including source characteristics could only achieve relatively short-lived persuasive effects by acting as peripheral cues. In fact, information about the ingroup/outgroup status of a message source appears to play an integral part in determining the likelihood of message elaboration. People are more likely to centrally-process messages from ingroup sources - assuming the relevant category is salient (McGarty et al., 1994; Haslam, McGarty and Turner, 1996) – particularly when the message topic is relevant to the concerns of the group (Mackie et al., 1990) and where the message is 'group prototypical' – i.e. where it represents ingroup consensus (van Knippenberg and Wilke, 1992; van Knippenberg et al., 1994; van Knippenberg, 1999).

2.4.3 Multiple roles for persuasion variables

Challenges to the ELM concerning the role of extra-message variables such as source characteristics in persuasion prompted the authors of the ELM to clarify the basis of the model in their later descriptions of it (e.g. Petty, 1997; Petty and Wegener, 1999; Fleming and Petty, 2000). These authors argue that early interpretations of the model wrongly assumed that 'non-content variables' (van Knippenberg, 1999) such as source attractiveness, expertise and identity could only affect attitudes by serving as peripheral cues to persuasion (Petty, 1997). In fact, the model maintains that persuasion variables can function in any of four different ways to effect attitude change. To summarise, the so-called 'multiple roles postulate' of the ELM maintains that persuasion variables can act in either of the following ways: (1) by influencing the quantity of central-route processing; (2) by influencing the quality of central-route processing (i.e. producing a bias in elaboration); (3) by serving as a 'cue' for peripheral processing; and (4) by serving as an 'argument' in central processing (Petty and Wegener, 1999).

Clearly, an infinite number of variables exist in any given persuasion context, each with the capacity to exert an influence over how people respond to persuasive messages. In ELM experiments, the number of these variables is restricted so that just one forms the focus of investigation (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). The experimenter seeks to identify the specific effect that this variable has on persuasion under specific conditions. By constraining issue involvement (i.e. elaboration likelihood) to be either high or low, and the quality of the arguments in the persuasive communication to be either 'weak' or 'strong', it is possible to examine the effect of the variable under investigation on attitude change. The model predicts that the role the variable of interest (e.g. source attractiveness; source identity, etc.) will take in persuasion depends on the recipient's elaboration likelihood. Thus, under conditions of low elaboration likelihood (i.e. where issue involvement is low), then it is more likely that the variable will act as a peripheral cue, because the recipient is either unmotivated or unable to systematically process the arguments contained in the message. By contrast, under conditions of high elaboration likelihood (i.e. where issue involvement is high), the recipient is expected to be able and motivated to engage in extensive cognitive work in order to appraise the different arguments in the message and, thereby, the overall merits of the advocated position. Because the recipient is assumed to be systematically evaluating the arguments contained in the message, then other variables in the persuasion context are expected to be evaluated in the same way. The variable of interest is said to act as an argument in its own right, providing issue-relevant information for the high-elaborator to think about in order to decide his/ her attitudinal position (Fleming and Petty, 2000). Processing remains systematic/ central, but the information regarding source attractiveness or identity is also treated as a relevant argument in the appraisal of the message.

This depiction of central-route processing assumes that it is relatively objective. However, under conditions of high elaboration likelihood, it is also possible that the persuasion variable can serve to *bias* issue-relevant thinking – in other words, influence the *quality* of issue-relevant thinking. Under these conditions, the variable influences the favourability of cognitive responses to the arguments contained in the message, or the number of counter-arguments the recipient generates in response to the message. By contrast, between the two opposite ends of the elaboration likelihood continuum, at moderate levels of issue involvement, persuasion variables are predicted to act as an influence on whether or not the persuasive communication is elaborated on in the first place – i.e., to influence the *quantity or likelihood* of elaboration. Thus, any persuasion variable can serve multiple roles in persuasion (Petty and Wegener, 1999), which means the model can indeed accommodate factors that were originally conceptualised as 'peripheral' variables (e.g. source attractiveness or source identity) as equally capable of effecting changes in attitudes via the central route to persuasion.

Critics of the ELM (e.g. Stiff and Boster, 1987) have argued that the multiple roles postulate renders the theory virtually untestable, because it can be used to explain, post-hoc, any possible outcome from a persuasion experiment. Petty and Wegener (1999) maintain, however, that this is not the case, and that the task for persuasion researchers is to determine the various conditions under which different variables act in each of the different roles. As van Knippenberg (1999) notes, because the ELM allows extra-message variables to function in multiple roles in persuasion, the findings of social identity researchers who have studied how source identity affects attitudes do not fundamentally challenge the ELM (p.324). However, van Knippenberg does critique the idea that extra-message variables can only influence the quantity of issue-relevant thinking at *moderate* levels of elaboration likelihood. He argues that to a certain extent this assumption is true of all variables (given that at the extremes of the elaboration likelihood continuum, the routes to persuasion are more predictable), and believes the processing-motivating potential of extra-message variables such as ingroup sources "need not be restricted to a limited set of situations" (1999; p. 323).

2.5 Argument quality in the ELM

The second issue which has stimulated some controversy surrounding the ELM concerns the empirical definition of argument quality used in ELM studies. This section describes Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) method of constructing strong and weak messages for their experiments and discusses some of the reasons why this has been challenged and their implications.

The authors of the ELM developed an empirical method for distinguishing between "arguments that people find compelling and those that are counterarguable" for use in their experiments (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; p.32). Their solution stems from the cognitive response approach in persuasion: arguments that elicit negative thoughts, with which people find it easy to counter-argue, are considered to be less likely to achieve effective persuasion than strong and compelling arguments that elicit positive thoughts (Petty, Ostrom and Brock, 1981). In order to develop strong and weak messages on a particular topic, Petty and Cacioppo's method involves generating a pool of 'intuitively compelling and specious' arguments, which are then rated by 'members of the appropriate subject population'. Arguments with higher persuasiveness ratings are then used to construct a strong message and arguments with lower ratings are combined to form a weak message. These messages are then evaluated by a further group of judges, who are asked to complete a thought-listing task, to ensure that each one elicits an appropriate profile of favourable, unfavourable or neutral cognitive responses (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; p.32). For example, messages are deemed to be strong, if they generate 65% favourable thoughts, whereas messages deemed to be weak generate only 35% favourable thoughts (Mongeau and Williams, 1996).

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) were aware of the problematic nature of the concept of argument quality and that the empirical solution they proposed did not fully address this. In their explication of the ELM methodology, they state that, "one of the least researched and least understood questions in the psychology of persuasion is: What makes an argument persuasive?" (1986; 31). They cite Fishbein and Ajzen (1981; 359), who argue that "the general neglect of the information contained in a message…is probably the most serious problem in communication and persuasion research". Yet because distinguishing between strong and weak arguments formed such a central part of their experimental method, they chose to ignore the conceptual issue in favour of a more pragmatic solution. Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, their method, and their failure to address the question of what distinguishes persuasive arguments from unpersuasive ones, has come under criticism from a number of different sources.

Notably, Johnson and Eagly (1989) conducted a meta-analysis of ELM studies and found that studies conducted by Petty, Cacioppo and their colleagues yielded results that were consistent with the predictions of the ELM, while other researchers produced inconsistent results (Mongeau and Williams, 1996). Petty and Cacioppo's (1990) explanation for this anomaly was that other researchers do not follow precisely the same method for constructing strong and weak arguments for their experiments as they themselves do. Mongeau and Williams (1996) distinguish between 'cognition-based' definitions of argument quality and 'message-based' definitions, in a study that was designed to test the hypothesis that varying definitions of argument quality would produce different results in ELM studies. Their message-based definition focused on two factors: argument relevance (how important the argument is to the recipient) and the expertise of the sources cited as evidence for the argument. The results of studies using *both* kinds of manipulations were found to be inconsistent with the predictions of the ELM, but they showed how varying argument quality manipulations influenced the kind of results generated in persuasion research.

Areni and Lutz (1988) analysed the strong and weak arguments used in one ELM study (Petty et al., 1983) and identified one problem in particular with Petty and Cacioppo's definition of argument quality. The 'message' in question was an advertisement for a disposable razor. The authors found that strong messages included arguments that highlighted positive characteristics of the product, whereas weak messages highlighted negative characteristics of the product. In other words, the definition of argument 'strength' (whether the message was strong or weak) was confounded with argument 'valence' (whether the message was positive or negative). As these authors note, the problem with this is that "there is the potential for 'strong arguments' to come to mean 'anything in a persuasive message that elicits a positive response' and 'weak arguments' to mean 'anything in a persuasive message that elicits a negative response'" (Areni and Lutz, 1988; p.201) – irrespective of the logical features of the arguments themselves. On this basis, Areni and Lutz argued that as an alternative to using recipient-based criteria (i.e. cognitive responses) to determine argument quality, message-based criteria (i.e. some logical feature of the argument) should be used instead for distinguishing between strong and weak arguments. Drawing on McGuire's (1960) work, which analysed persuasive communications in terms of logical syllogisms, and the model of beliefs and attitudes developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), they define argument strength as the likelihood that the 'target belief' or conclusion of the advocacy is accepted. Underlying the target belief are support beliefs or premises, which determine the likelihood of accepting the target belief. Thus, altering argument strength should involve altering the nature of the supporting evidence in an argument (while controlling for how desirable the target belief in the message is portrayed).

Areni and Lutz's work was extended by Boller, Swasy and Munch (1990) who proposed an alternative definition of the structure of arguments as a way of defining argument quality on the basis of message characteristics, rather than recipient responses. Drawing on Toulmin's (1958) model of argument structure (see chapter 5) which identifies six components of arguments, they proposed that arguments be evaluated according to their structural integrity. In particular, they focused on factors such as the evidence used to support an argument claim and the 'warrant' or authority linking the evidence to the claim as important structural elements for understanding variation in argument persuasiveness. They argue that manipulating structural features of arguments to vary quality can be done in different ways, so future analyses need to focus on the question of "'Which component parts of an argument structure manipulation will influence the nature of receivers' elaboration?" (Boller et al., 1990; p.327). They also highlight the importance of the recipients own representation of the arguments they are presented with during message elaboration, stating that "If we are to better understand persuasion and argument elaboration, we need to begin to see the necessary relationships between the logical structure of the argument and the argumentative structure of receivers' processing." (p.327).

A more fundamental challenge to the ELM definition of argument quality based on cognitive responses, which applies equally to message-based definitions of argument strength, came from the same group of researchers who challenged the ELM's treatment of how source identity influences persuasion (e.g. Mackie, Worth and Asuncion, 1990; van Knippenberg and Wilke, 1991; 1992; McGarty et al., 1994). These contributors criticised social cognition approaches to persuasion (including the ELM and the HSM) for failing to address the question of what makes some messages more persuasive than others, arguing that without an adequate account of what confers validity on information they 'fall short of providing a complete theory of persuasion' (Mackie and Skelly, 1994, p. 271; Eagly and Chaiken, 1984). The recipient-based definition of argument quality used in ELM studies is described as inadequate because it ignores the social context in which persuasion attempts are made. As has been shown in a number of studies, the social context (and particularly the ingroup/outgroup status of a message source) provides people with cues that can not only elicit persuasion via peripheral processes, but also act as a powerful determinant of the likelihood of central-route processing. Evidence of central-route processing instigated by source identity manifested itself in these studies in a variety of ways. Notably, participants rated arguments from ingroup sources as more persuasive than arguments from outgroup sources and were more likely to differentiate strong arguments from weak arguments where the message was from an ingroup source than when the message was from an outgroup source. In other words, information about the source of a message was shown to not only influence elaboration likelihood, but to co-determine the subjective validity (or persuasive quality) of the arguments contained within it (van Knippenberg, 1999).

Mackie and Skelly (1994) argue that social consensus is the mechanism underlying the enhanced persuasive influence of ingroups over outgroups. Rather than deriving the validity of information through processing itself (as is implied by the ELM's recipient-based definition of argument quality), recipients look to significant others to decide whether new information should be accepted as valid. Specifically, they argue that in the social world "consensus confers correctness" (Mackie and Skelly, 1994; p.277), because "consensus suggests that what is agreed upon reflects reality" p.276). This idea is extended by McGarty and his colleagues (1994; see also Haslam, McGarty and Turner, 1996), who provide a social identity explanation for the basis of argument quality. They argue that under self-categorisation theory, "the persuasiveness of a person's arguments is a function of the degree of relative consensual support for his or her position with respect to a currently salient frame of reference." (p.272). In other words, what is important is not simply social consensus, but the extent to which the message recipient believes the source is informative about reality (p.286) and importantly, a "more valid source of information than the outgroup" (Haslam, McGarty and Turner, 1996; p.52).

Argument quality constitutes one of the key elaboration likelihood variables, central to the experimental design of ELM research. By manipulating argument quality (along with the research participants' level of involvement in the target issue), it is possible to examine the effect of the specific persuasion variable under investigation. This experimental design relies on the possibility of identifying arguments that can be objectively defined as 'strong' and arguments that can be objectively defined as 'weak', where the former is assumed to have a greater impact on persuasion than the latter when elaboration likelihood is high. If the argument quality manipulation in ELM studies is confounded with other variables in the persuasion context – such as source identity, or even argument valence – then the degree of experimental control required to determine the impact of persuasion variables on attitude change is reduced. The way in which argument quality is operationalised, therefore, is fundamental to determining the validity of the conclusions that can be drawn from persuasion research. However, the implications of these developments of the concept of argument quality extend beyond the reliability of ELM experiments. Defining what makes an argument persuasive also has implications for how attitude change is assumed to function in the real world, and the factors that determine how new information about attitude objects are processed outside of the social psychology laboratory. This is particularly pertinent for how political campaigns persuade voters of the advantages and disadvantage of a particular policy, and especially one with such widespread import that it will be decided in a referendum.

2.6 Conclusions

In chapter 1, I showed how British opposition towards the euro during the 1990s and early 2000s was underpinned by low levels of issue-relevant knowledge and concerns about the threat of European integration to national identity. Information about economic and monetary union circulated by the British print media appeared to play a part in maintaining these sentiments, partly because it was shown to contain factual inaccuracies, but also because eurosceptic discourse in news articles appeared to serve to raise the salience of British national identity instead of helping to foster a shared sense of 'Europeanness' (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995). However, the psychological mechanisms by which media information achieves these effects on public opinion had not been clearly articulated in previous studies. In the present chapter, I introduced two social psychological approaches, which taken together, provide a theoretical framework for understanding these processes.

The ELM describes how attitude formation and change is mediated by individual cognitive responses to information. The way in which information is processed by recipients is said to vary as a function of issue involvement. Where levels of involvement in the issue are low, recipients are less likely to think carefully about the arguments contained in a message and more likely to form their attitudes on the basis of simple cues in the persuasion context. Based on this reading of the ELM, we would predict, therefore, that people with low involvement in the euro issue would be more likely to form their attitudes via peripheral processes, based on factors other than the informational content of the message. Self-categorisation theory describes one such process: when a particular social category is made salient (as is the case with British national identity in eurosceptic media discourse), people start to perceive themselves not as individuals but as interchangeable members of the group. The process of stereotyping oneself as a prototypical member of the ingroup involves the adoption of group beliefs, without the need for careful processing of the information presented.

However, as was shown in this chapter, this interpretation of the ELM and of the role that identity plays in persuasion is overly simplistic. In fact, social identity processes can influence persuasion in a variety of ways. In particular, where information is highly relevant to a person's ingroup or where the source of the information is a member of a person's ingroup, self-categorisation as a member of the salient group can influence both the quantity and quality of elaboration likelihood itself. This means that although people may be uninterested in and lack knowledge about the euro, their motivation to process the information may be derived from the importance of that information to the interests of their ingroup (e.g. the 'British public') or the validity conferred on the information by the identity of its source (e.g. The Sun, The Daily Telegraph). While previous studies have gone far to specify the conditions under which group identity motivates processing and the limiting conditions of this processing-motivating effect (van Knippenberg, 1999), no research has specifically applied these theoretical conclusions to the study of persuasion in the real-world.

The predictions derived from the theoretical approaches presented in this chapter informed the focus of the empirical research conducted for this thesis. In fact, the empirical studies each address different aspects of the topics covered so far. The first two studies (A and B) look at information about the euro circulated by the media, and consider the different ways in which it may influence public opinion. The third and fourth studies concentrate more specifically on testing the predictions of the ELM described above, with respect to the role of involvement and the processing of information (study C) and the role of identity (study D). The following chapter introduces these four studies in more detail, describing their theoretical rationale and the methodological approaches adopted in each.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 introduced the contextual and theoretical background to the research. This chapter provides an introduction to the empirical content of the thesis. The research consists of four separate empirical investigations, addressing different questions about the role of information, involvement and identity in the processes by which people form and change their attitudes towards European integration, and specifically, the single currency. In this chapter, I briefly describe the aim of each study, the research questions and give a brief outline of the design of each investigation. Because each study is methodologically quite distinct, the empirical chapters themselves contain a more detailed description of the methods used, and the theoretical framework underpinning each. The purpose of the present chapter, therefore, is simply to introduce the research, the different approaches that were adopted and the reasons for selecting these approaches.

The studies presented in chapters 4 to 8 bring together a range of empirical evidence from the media and from public opinion and draw on a number of theoretical frameworks. Together, these studies can be seen as an integration of insights from political science, public opinion research and social psychology that may enhance our understanding of the way the debate surrounding the single currency has progressed in Britain. Each study is relatively self contained, however, and can be read as such. The first two studies deal with the media. How much coverage has the public been exposed to and what is the content of this coverage, particularly in relation to forms of persuasive argument employed by press outlets of differing political outlooks? The third study is an analysis of a public opinion field experiment, a Deliberative Poll. Here the main emphasis is on examining the effect that political information has on attitudes and attitude change within a representative sample of the British public. Finally, in chapter 7 and 8, I present results from an online experimental study that builds on the findings of chapters 4 to 6. In this study, I test explicitly the theoretical framework I have proposed in chapter 2, based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

3.2 Study A: Content analysis of the press

The first study explores the media context in which information about the single currency has been communicated to the British public. Focusing on a ten-year period starting in 1991, it aims to chart the course of the debate surrounding British membership of the euro, by looking at the salience of the issue in the press at different points in time. Specifically, it addresses the following 3 questions:

1. How much press coverage did the euro issue attract during this period?
2. What events relating to the issue attracted the most attention?
3. How concerned was the public about the issue during the same period?

In answering these questions, the study aims to establish how salient the issue has been in the public arena over the course of the debate, to identify the pivotal points around which the debate has revolved, and to examine the relationship, if any, between the salience of the issue in the media and public opinion.

The study consists of a content analysis of articles in leading British newspapers representing different sides of the debate. The data were collected using the online search facility FT-Profile, which provides access to press publications for a wide range of titles. The number of articles making reference to the search term 'single currency' was recorded for each month of a ten-year period starting in December 1991, at the time of the Maastricht Summit. The analysis included a range of pro- and anti-European, broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, in order to allow comparisons across different types of publication. On the basis of this analysis, I describe the course of the debate during this period, examining the different events and issues relating to EMU that stimulated the greatest amount of news coverage. These 'intensity data' are then compared with data on the issues considered most important by the public during the same period. The public opinion data were obtained from MORI (now Ipsos-MORI), who, during the period covered by the content analysis, regularly fielded a question asking 'What are the most important issues facing Britain today?' Data show the proportion of respondents who mention Europe and the single currency as one of the most important issues. The purpose of this comparison is to look at the relationship between the salience of the euro issue on the public agenda and its salience on the media agenda.

The study is underpinned by the theoretical framework provided by the agenda-setting approach (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). According to this approach, the media play an important influential role in opinion formation by directing public attention onto different issues at different times. The salience of an issue in the media is said to be directly related to the salience of the issue on the list of concerns of the electorate, which is why the intensity data here are compared with public opinion data on issue salience. One advantage of adopting this approach is that it enhances our understanding of attitudes towards the euro by specifying one of the mechanisms by which the media can influence public opinions. While an agenda-setting influence may be minimal, it is nevertheless important because when issues are salient, public involvement in them is also likely to be enhanced, and with that, the elaboration likelihood of issue-relevant information. Study A also serves an important descriptive function, however, mapping out the 'landscape' of the EMU debate (Bauer et al., 2001) over a significant part of its life course and setting the scene for the later empirical research presented in this thesis.

3.3 Study B: Argumentation analysis of leading articles

The second study examines the content of newspaper coverage of the euro issue in Britain during the same ten-year period analysed in study A. Concentrating on eight different events that were significant milestones in the history of EMU, it aims to explore how the opinion-leading press has portrayed the debate surrounding British membership of the euro to its readers. In particular, the focus of the analysis is on the structure and content of *arguments* used to communicate the editorial position of the newspapers vis-à-vis EMU. By focusing on arguments, the research aims to identify how press outlets on either side of the debate have framed the euro issue, and thereby, gain insight into how the public may have come to think about the issue. A second aim is to examine the persuasive quality of information about the euro circulated by the media, in order to enhance our understanding of the basis on which public attitudes are formed and changed.

The study involves an analysis of leading articles published in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph (and their Sunday equivalents, The Observer and The Sunday Telegraph). The decision to look at broadsheet papers was based on the argument that the quality press play a significant role in terms of leading public opinion (Bauer et al. 2001; p.36). Despite the comparatively limited circulation of broadsheet titles, they are read by opinion-leaders, including policy makers, business leaders and those producing other print and broadcast media. In this way, the stance newspapers take on key political issues and the way in which they represent those issues, is said to eventually filter through to the general public. These specific titles were chosen because they represent two opposing sides of the debate on EMU. The Daily Telegraph is traditionally a right-wing publication, which adopted a firmly '*eurosceptic*' position on the single currency during the period under investigation. By contrast, The Guardian, traditionally a strong supporter of Labour policy, has generally taken a positive stance on matters relating to European integration (though its position on the euro has at times been more ambivalent).

The study draws on the theoretical framework provided by Toulmin's (1958) model of argument and on the work of other social psychologists who have applied his model to analyses of media content (e.g. Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b; van Bavel, 2001). The model identifies six different components of argumentative discourse. For the purposes of the present study, the most important of these argument components are the *claim* (the point being argued) and the *evidence* provided in support of the claim. In addition to claims and evidence, arguments rely on *warrants* – the justification for the relationship between the claim and evidence. In a leading article, the newspaper's editor, a senior journalist or other prominent figure typically develops a single argument or series of arguments about a particular issue or in relation to a particular event. These arguments serve as a vehicle – either explicitly or implicitly - for communicating the overall position of the newspaper with respect to some overarching issue. The principal aim of the analysis undertaken here was to examine in detail how arguments in the selected articles are constructed (by identifying and coding the constituent elements in Toulmin's model), then to see how each argument communicates the main advocacy of the newspaper with respect to EMU. Specifically, the purpose of the analysis was to answer the following:

1. What claims are made by each newspaper about EMU and the single currency over the course of the different events?
2. How have claims about EMU changed over the course of the debate?
3. What evidence is invoked in the articles to support the newspapers' positions on the euro?
4. What are the warrants on which arguments about EMU are founded?

The rationale behind the use of argument analysis in the study is twofold. Firstly, from the point of view of understanding the way in which people form and change their attitudes in response to information, it is appropriate to conceptualise that information as consisting of 'persuasive units' or arguments. This idea is central to cognitive theories of persuasion such as the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986). In order to study the informational content of people's attitudes, it is necessary to identify the arguments about the euro that people have been exposed to. Arguments circulated by the media form one of a range of informational influences on people's attitudes. However, in relation to an issue like EMU, where people have few opportunities to experience the economic and political developments of integration firsthand (Gavin, 2000), the informational role of the media is considered to be especially important. Secondly, Billig (1987) and others researching in the field of social representations theory have argued that in terms of their structure, arguments provide us with a model for human thought processes. According to this approach, studying argumentation in newspapers can provide an insight into the ways in which political issues are constructed and framed by the media and thereby, into how they come to be represented cognitively and socially by the public.

3.4 Study C: Secondary analysis of data from a deliberative poll

Whereas studies A and B look at the information about EMU that has been circulated by the media, studies C and D both focus on the impact of information on attitudes. Study C is a secondary analysis of data from a 'deliberative poll' – a public opinion field experiment looking at attitudes towards the future of Britain's relationship with Europe. The twin aims of the analysis are to test predictions about the effect of information on attitudes and to examine the role of issue involvement in attitude change.

The theoretical framework for this study is provided by the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986), reviewed in the previous chapter. To recap, the model postulates that people form new attitudes and evaluate existing ones in response to information. The amount of effort a person makes to evaluate new information depends on the content of that information and its persuasive quality. If the recipient is highly involved in the issue to which the information relates, he/she will be more likely to make the effort to evaluate the information carefully. By contrast, if the recipient has no involvement in the issue to which the information relates, he/she will be less likely to make the effort to evaluate the information carefully. The amount of effort expended to evaluate issue-relevant information has implications for the strength of attitudes formed and for the cognitive process by which they are formed. Thus, we can differentiate people according to their level of involvement in an issue and test predictions derived from the model about differences in their attitudes and their responses to issue-relevant information.

The concept of 'issue involvement' in this context is closely related to the idea of 'political sophistication' used by political scientists to explain differences in people's political attitudes (e.g. Converse, 1964; Luskin, 1987). The more knowledgeable a person is about politics and the more interested they are in political issues, the more likely it is that they will hold strong political attitudes (Krosnick and Petty, 1994). By contrast, those who are less politically sophisticated, who have little knowledge about political issues and who are not interested in politics, will be more likely to hold weak attitudes (or, indeed, no attitudes at all). Weak attitudes are more labile and susceptible to change; while 'no attitudes' are often expressed as 'non-attitudes' in surveys: the random selection of the first available satisfactory response (Converse, 1964; Krosnick, 1991).

A deliberative poll provides the perfect research setting for testing such predictions. The method, developed by Fishkin (1991), consists of an initial household survey of a random probability sample of the population, to measure people's attitudes on a particular target issue. A representative sub-sample of respondents to the survey then takes part in a weekend event for which they are provided detailed briefing material about the issue to read before taking part. During the weekend, participants are provided with further information about the issue and there are opportunities for debate and discussion with experts and other participants. At the end of the event, the participants complete a second questionnaire to measure their attitudes towards the issue that has formed the focus of the deliberative event. Comparing data from the two time points makes it possible to evaluate the impact of information and deliberation on attitudes.

The data used in this study come from a deliberative poll on the future of Britain's relationship to Europe, carried out in 1995 by the National Centre for Social Research, on behalf of Channel Four Television and The Independent newspaper. The data had not previously been subjected to secondary analysis by any other researcher (the only analysis prior to study C was conducted for the purposes of the television broadcast of the event), so this was a unique opportunity to examine attitude change outside of the context of a conventional persuasion experiment. The questionnaire contained a range of attitudinal measures about the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union. Respondents were also asked about how interested they are in politics and in Europe, and a series of true/false quiz questions designed to test their knowledge of European politics. These latter questions are used in the analysis to construct an 'index of issue involvement', which I use to divide the weekend participants into two groups: those who are highly involved in European integration and those with low levels of involvement. Analysing data from these two sub-samples, I address the following research questions:

1. What are the key socio-demographic differences between low- and high-involvement participants? In other words, what explains involvement in the issue of Britain's relationship with Europe?
2. How do low- and high-involvement participants differ in terms of their opinions about the future of Britain's relationship with Europe, their underlying beliefs about European integration and specifically, their attitudes towards the euro?
3. What is the effect of receiving issue-relevant information on the attitudes of low- and high-involvement participants? How susceptible are the two groups to persuasion and how do their attitudes change as a result of taking part in the event?

As was shown in chapter 1, analyses of public opinion about Europe have tended to assume that people's attitudes are fairly fixed and stable, despite the finding that people are relatively uninformed about political and economic integration. The deliberative poll, however, is an explicit test of the hypothesis that people lack adequate factual information on which to base their views about political issues. The measure of attitudes taken at the end of the weekend event is intended to provide a more accurate reflection of the views of a well-informed public. The analysis undertaken here takes this further. Drawing on social psychological theories of persuasion, it argues that the way in which information is used by people to form and change attitudes and, therefore, the impact information has on attitudes depends on a person's prior level of involvement in the target issue.

3.5 Study D: Design and analysis of an Internet experiment

Study D investigates further the roles of information and involvement in attitude change. However, it goes further than study C by also examining the influence of national identity on attitudes towards the euro and by focusing on the cognitive and social-cognitive processes involved in persuasion. The research undertaken was an experiment developed, designed and conducted by me especially to test the theoretical framework I presented in chapter 2. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the psychological processes by which people's attitudes towards the euro are formed and changed in response to information?
2. How does issue involvement influence these processes?
3. What is the effect of manipulating the salience of national identity in information about the euro on the psychological processes involved in attitude change?

Once again, the theoretical framework for the study is provided by the ELM, according to which individuals evaluate their attitudes in response to issue-relevant information by either central or peripheral processing. The nature of the cognitive process depends on the person's involvement in the target issue, which affects their ability and motivation to think about the information being presented.. Whereas in the political science literature the concept of involvement tends to be considered as part of political sophistication – being knowledgeable about and interested in politics (e.g. Luskin, 1987) – in psychology, involvement also encompasses the notion of how *personally* relevant an issue is (e.g. Johnson and Eagly, 1989; Krosnick, 1990). Critiques of the ELM by social identity theorists (e.g. van Knippenberg, 1999; McGarty et al., 1994) have extended this notion of involvement to incorporate the relevance of an issue to groups of which a person is a member. According to this formulation, group identity plays an important role in influencing a person's motivation to process (along with individual factors such as need for cognition (Cacioppo and Petty, 1992) and need to evaluate

(Jarvis and Petty, 1996) and can be as important a component of involvement as ability. In study D, I explore this idea further by looking at how the strength of people's national identity[8] influences their motivation to centrally process group-relevant information. Based on this, a further aim of the study can be specified as:

4. To what extent does the strength of people's national identity influence the elaboration likelihood of information about the euro?

The experimental design was adapted from the original methodology developed by the authors of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). To recap, in a typical ELM experiment, participants' attitudes towards a target issue are measured after they have been presented with a 'persuasive message' about the issue. Other measures of the participants' cognitive responses to the message are taken to indicate the extent of message elaboration that has taken place during the presentation. The message is especially constructed to be either weak or strong; participants' involvement in the target issue is manipulated to be either high or low. By controlling for these two variables (argument quality and involvement), the effect of a third independent persuasion variable on attitude change can be measured.

The present study was based on the same basic design, but with a number of important modifications. Most importantly, the experiment took the form of a survey questionnaire administered via the Internet. The main reason for this choice of method was to gain access to a widely-distributed sample of British adults, which would not have been possible had the experiment been conducted with students at the London School of Economics. The Internet also offers a highly cost-effective method of collecting data quickly from a large sample and the simple technological means for randomising the data collection instrument in accordance with an experimental design. [The decision to use a web-based survey questionnaire entailed a number of further adaptations to the classical ELM methodology however, and these are described in detail in chapter 7. Notably, it was not possible to directly manipulate involvement in the euro issue, so this was measured by a range of questions tapping its different dimensions and analysed as a covariate.]

[8] The decision to focus on the *strength* of national identity as opposed to looking at the *nature* of attachment to nation is discussed in chapter 7.

The questionnaire contained measures of respondents' attitudes towards the euro and European integration. Because the main dependent variable was attitude change, half the respondents were asked about their attitudes *before* reading the arguments and half were asked about their attitudes *afterwards*. The study was also designed to test the impact on attitude change of *national identity salience* in communications about the euro. Thus, half the sample was randomly allocated to a 'high salience' treatment group, in which the questionnaires included a priming procedure intended to increase the salience of participants' British national identity. The resulting experimental design included 8 treatment groups in total – a 2x2x2x2 design, consisting of an argument quality manipulation (*strong* versus *weak*); a national identity salience manipulation (*high* versus *low*); with half the participants responding to the attitudinal measures before message exposure and half responding afterwards (*pre-* versus *post*-attitude measurement). Low- and high-involvement participants and participants with strong and weak national identity were then compared across each of the experimental conditions, to test hypotheses about attitude change, message elaboration and the effect of identity salience on persuasion.

3.6 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the empirical content of the thesis and describes and introduces the different theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in each of the four studies undertaken. Though they are inter-related, each study is quite distinct, so the empirical chapters can be read as 'stand alone' descriptions of the research undertaken. Each one contains its own description of the rationale and background to the research, the method and results and a discussion of the principal findings. In the following chapter, I begin with Study A.

4 ISSUE SALIENCE AND THE AGENDA-SETTING ROLE OF THE PRESS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present study A – an analysis of the intensity of British newspaper coverage of the single currency issue over a ten-year period from 1991 to 2001, during which the debate surrounding British membership of EMU was at its height. The research has two aims. Firstly, it serves a descriptive purpose, providing an illustration of the salience of the euro issue at different points in time over much of the life-course of the debate, along with a chronological account of the key issue-relevant events that stimulated the greatest amount of press coverage. This helps to set the scene for the rest of the empirical work, by describing the context in which persuasive communication about the euro took place. Secondly, the research aims to examine one of the mechanisms by which media communications influence public opinion, by exploring the so-called 'agenda-setting' function of the media (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). According to the agenda setting approach, the salience of an issue on the media agenda is related to the salience of the issue on the public agenda. Public attention towards particular issues is said to be influenced by the intensity of news coverage those issues receive. Study A explores this mechanism by comparing a measure of the salience of the euro issue on the news agenda with data on the issues that dominated the public agenda during this period.

In chapter 1, it was argued that much of the research into media reports about European integration has focused on the content of news coverage and in particular, on the nature of eurosceptic discourse (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Anderson and Weymouth, 1998), but it has tended to neglect the question of *how* eurosceptic media reports actually influence public attitudes. In this chapter, I attempt to address this neglect by focusing on just one possible mechanism by which the media are hypothesised to play a part in public opinion formation: the capacity of the media to direct public attention towards particular issues at certain times.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the literature on agenda setting, which provides the theoretical rationale for studying variation in issue salience over time. I then review some applications of this model to the study of media communications about European integration (Norris et al., 1999; de Vreese, 2001), before introducing the data that were analysed here. The results are presented along with an account of the key events that stimulated the most press attention over the course of the period of investigation. Measures of the intensity of news coverage of the euro issue are then compared with fluctuations in public perceptions of the importance of the issue and public opinion about Europe and the single currency during the same period.

4.2 Theoretical background

The rationale behind examining the salience of an issue in the news media is drawn primarily from the literature on agenda setting. This field of research focuses on the way in which the importance of different issues is communicated between policymakers, the media and the public. According to the basic agenda-setting hypothesis, the salience of an issue in the news media (i.e. the amount of attention it receives) is indicative of the salience of that issue on the public agenda (i.e. how important people think it is). This hypothesis is of interest here because, by defining the priority of major political issues in this way (Norris et al., 1999), the manipulation of issue salience by the media plays a fundamental role in the process of political communication. As salience increases, so does the quantity of available information, and, with it, public awareness of the problem. As was argued in chapters 1 and 2, the more important people consider an issue to be, the more motivated they will be to process new information about it and to integrate that information into their existing framework of beliefs and attitudes. Thus, heightened salience may ultimately lead to attitude change, especially where it occurs in the context of an electoral or referendum campaign.

The idea that the media shape the way we view the world is not a new one (it can be traced originally to Walter Lippman's (1922) 'Public Opinion'). It became popular during the 1970s when the agenda-setting hypothesis was empirically tested for the first time by McCombs and Shaw (1972) in a study comparing the issue priorities of the mass media and those of voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, during the 1968 presidential campaign. The study built on earlier research, which had investigated learning amongst voters during electoral campaigns (e.g. Trenaman and McQuail, 1961), and had found that people seem to learn in direct proportion to the differential emphasis placed on the campaign issues by the mass media. McCombs and Shaw

(1972) conducted interviews with 100 *undecided* voters (assumed to be more susceptible to influence by the media) in order to establish what they considered to be the most important issues in the campaign. Through a content analysis of the main news publications and television broadcasts that the community relied upon for the bulk of their political information during the campaign, the authors established a correlation between issue emphasis in the media and voter issue emphasis of over 0.95. From this compelling finding, they concluded that people

> *"...learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues – that is, the media may set the "agenda" of the campaign." (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; p.176)*

McCombs and Shaw's study was popular because it proposed an alternative way of looking at the effects of mass media exposure on the public. The mixed findings of research into persuasion (in particular concerning the relationship between attitudes and behaviour) had left many theorists in the field of mass communication frustrated (Kosicki, 1993) and the agenda setting approach offered a promising new alternative for researching media effects. In particular, by moving away from the study of media influence on public attitudes, agenda setting research enabled a shift in emphasis in how the nature of media influence was conceptualised. Agenda setting research focuses on the media's capacity to tell people "what to think *about*", rather than on whether they are influential in "telling people what to think" (Cohen, 1963; p.13). In this sense, whilst agenda setting is interesting because it might indirectly result in attitude change, researchers in the field are concerned primarily with how salience is transmitted between policy, media and public agendas. Agenda setting research is, therefore, focused on the *quantity* of media coverage, rather than on its tone or content (McCombs, 1997; Norris et al., 1999).

The Chapel Hill study (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) was also influential because it prescribed a particular methodological approach for pursuing this new avenue for research. The basic design involved the measurement of the amount of space or time devoted to different issues by the media and an analysis of how this related to public perceptions of the importance of those issues (Kosicki, 1993). A strong correlation between media and public issue agendas was taken as evidence that the salience of issues in the news media had influenced the prominence of those issues in the public mind. It was assumed that with respect to political issues (such as those in an electoral campaign), the fact that people are unlikely to directly participate in the campaign makes it more likely that they will turn to the media for information about which issues are important. The simplicity of the model has inspired an enormous amount of research, and over the course of the past thirty years, the literature has grown into one of the leading contemporary approaches in mass communications research today. As such, it comprises a number of different sub-areas, including both policy and media agenda-setting research (both concerned with how issues come to be defined and selected as significant at the institutional level), and of primary interest here, the literature on public agenda-setting, which is concerned with the link between media content and public issue agendas.

4.3 Contemporary agenda setting research

Agenda setting evidence is complex and the rapid growth of the field led to demands for more sophisticated techniques for exploring the way in which issue salience in the media is communicated to the public (e.g. McQuail, 1987; Kosicki, 1993). Early research had been criticised for failing to provide clear and unambiguous evidence that the news media do, in fact, exert an influence on the salience of issues on the public agenda (e.g. McQuail, 2000), because of the difficulty of interpreting the correlational evidence that had been generated. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) point out in the discussion of the findings of their original study, "the existence of an agenda setting function of the mass media is not *proved* by the correlation reported here" (p. 184). This is because evidence of a correlation between the salience of issues on the media and public agendas is insufficient proof that one is the product of the other. Even if such a causal relationship does exist, the simplicity of the method employed in many agenda setting studies would fail to provide compelling evidence for the direction of such a relationship or rule out the possibility that a third variable independently accounted for the association. More recently, studies have used more innovative methods, such as the use of experimental designs in order to provide stronger evidence of the hypothesised public agenda-setting effect (e.g. Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Norris et al., 1999; de Vreese, 2001).

In addition to the problem of providing convincing evidence that the prominence of an issue on the public agenda is a function of the intensity with which it has been reported in the news media, the emphasis on direct, aggregate level effects represents a further weakness of earlier research, because it allows little opportunity for commenting on the extent to which the public have attended to the media content assumed to influence their perceptions of issue importance in the first place. In order to strengthen the claims for a causal relationship between issue emphasis in the media and public issue emphasis, therefore, it is necessary to provide evidence of the media consumption patterns of the population concerned. As Dearing and Rogers (1996) have argued, in order to study agenda setting in more detail, data need to be disaggregated. This means examining agenda setting effects at the individual level; looking at individual issue concerns and how these relate to individual patterns of media use, as well as the content of the media agenda to which the individual has been exposed.

The wealth of evidence produced by agenda setting research tends to support the idea that the media exert a significant influence on public perceptions of issue importance (McCombs, 1997). However, much of the evidence has been mixed, and this has encouraged researchers to examine the contingent conditions under which agenda setting effects occur. Unsurprisingly, explorations of this kind have revealed a number of significant dimensions along which individuals vary in terms of their susceptibility to media effects such as agenda setting. Examples include individual levels of political sophistication, variation in issue involvement, so-called 'need for orientation' (Weaver, 1977) – i.e. individual habits of seeking information from the media; and interpersonal communications on the subject of political issues. Agenda setting effects have been found to be more likely where individuals are reliant on media information, where involvement and political sophistication are low and where people rely on others for information about which issues are important (as in Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step flow theory of communication).

Different issues are also likely to impose themselves on individual or public agendas in different ways. A key distinction made by Zucker (1978) concerns the level of obtrusiveness of an issue – i.e. the extent to which people have direct experience of it, or are directly affected by some negative aspect of it in their everyday lives. Examples of obtrusive issues include unemployment, healthcare provision, and crime prevention, etc., as well as other issues affecting the local community, all of which may end up becoming salient on the public agenda, without the informational input of the media. By contrast, those issues that are described as 'unobtrusive' are likely to result in greater media orientation by the public. The economic and political developments of European integration provide a prime example of something, with which most people have little direct experience in their everyday lives. This is especially true for the euro 'opt-out' countries of Denmark, Sweden and the UK, where people have not experienced something as fundamental as the transition to a new currency to give the European Union more significance in their lives (Gavin, 2000). On this basis we might expect the agenda setting role of the media with respect to the single currency issue to be relatively potent, particularly for those with low levels of involvement in the issue and lower levels of political sophistication.

4.4 Agenda setting and European integration

Based on the accumulated research evidence, it is appropriate to view agenda setting as a process comprising a number of different subtle and contingent effects (Kosicki, 1993). While there are many examples of the strong correlations between issue salience in media coverage and the salience of issues on the public agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973; Winter and Eyal, 1981), the difficulties of interpreting such across-the-board effects, render them less compelling evidence for a media agenda setting function. By contrast, more sophisticated research designs have produced relatively mixed findings (e.g. Erbing et al., 1980; Roessler, 1999). Thus in examining the relationship between issue salience in the media and public perceptions of issue importance, it is necessary to recognise the complexity of the relationship between the two.

Nevertheless, agenda setting theory seems particularly appropriate to the study of how the media communicate information to the public about European integration. As we have seen, the capacity for the media to influence public perceptions about issue salience is enhanced where that issue is relatively unobtrusive (Zucker, 1978) – that is, where an issue has little direct influence on people's everyday lives. In addition, agenda setting effects are more likely to occur where people orientate themselves towards the media for information on a given issue. There is considerable evidence to suggest that this is the case with respect to matters relating to Europe, and in particular, in relation to the single currency. The public are said to be media dependent with respect to European integration (Gavin, 2000), and Eurobarometer data appear to support this claim. In Spring 2002, for example, 65% of the public preferred to obtain information about the EU from television, 44% from daily newspapers and 31% from radio, compared with just 21% preferring to learn about the EU from discussions with family and friends and 4% using EU information in e.g. libraries and town halls (Source: Eurobarometer 57, Spring 2002). Thus, high levels of media orientation and the unobtrusiveness of European integration as an issue would suggest that the public will be particularly sensitive to fluctuations in the salience of the issue in the media.

Relatively few studies of media reporting on European integration have examined agenda setting, particularly in the British context. The majority have tended to focus on the content of news reports about Europe, in particular, concentrating on the way in which euroscepticism manifests itself in news discourse. This is unfortunate, as it has meant that the relationship between media content and public opinion has been rather weakly specified, with conclusions about the possible effects of anti-European discourse being based mainly on theory. As we have seen, agenda setting research represents a 'first step' in conceptualising the relationship between the media and their audiences in practice.

Two studies that have explored the relationship between media reporting on EMU and public perceptions of the issue's importance are reviewed here. The first, by Norris and her colleagues, formed part of a larger study of agenda setting during the 1997 British general election campaign. Their content analysis of the front pages of the main British daily newspapers found Europe to be the most important substantive issue in The Guardian, The Times, The Sun and the second most important in The Independent and the Daily Mail during the election campaign. However, it was not until halfway through the six week campaign that the issue came to dominate the front pages, after deep divisions in the Conservative Party came to light on the subject of EMU. The timing made it possible for the authors to examine the effects of a sudden increase in the salience of the issue in the media on the campaign issue priorities of the British public. Prior to the escalation in EMU coverage in the media, the issues people considered most important in deciding how they would vote were health and education. Just 2.8% of respondents to the British Election Campaign panel survey identified the EU as the most important issues in deciding how to vote at this point in the election campaign (1-10th

April 1997). Afterwards, health and education remained the two most prominent issues for an even greater proportion of respondents, whereas the percentage identifying the EU as the most important issue had risen to just 3.1%. Thus, there was little evidence in this study that the dominance of Europe in the print media had influenced public perceptions of the issue's importance in determining vote choice in the general election. The evidence suggests that press reporting on the issue had little impact on the overall issue concerns of the public.

One interpretation of this finding offered by the authors of the study is that people were unaffected by the barrage of anti-European press coverage halfway through the campaign because it was generally not uncommon for the Europe issue to periodically come to dominate the headlines in this way. The authors argue that people were somewhat jaded by the way in which the issue was being 'over-reported' in newspapers, and hence, the heightened media attention at this time made little impact on their issue priorities. Furthermore, they conclude that people had their own agenda when it came to deciding how to vote in the election – and in this context, "Europe" remained something of a non-issue (except perhaps indirectly, by highlighting the problems in the Tory party at this time and, thereby, weakening support among traditional Conservative voters).

Given that EMU is a relatively unobtrusive issue, then it is perhaps unsurprising that it failed to influence vote choice during a general election. However, even in the context of the referendum campaign held in Denmark in September 2000, the single currency was still considered by Danish voters to be a less important issue than that of immigration (de Vreese, 2001). This was in spite of the prominence of the euro issue in the Danish media during the referendum campaign. De Vreese (2001) not only found limited support for an agenda setting effect at the aggregate level, but also when disaggregating the euro issue into the various sub-issues it encompasses, he found no evidence that the meaning of the euro issue was the same in the media as that understood by the public. At the individual level, news exposure (especially to television news) did increase the likelihood that participants in the research considered the euro issue to be one of the most important issues facing the country, but this effect was not found across all media types.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these two studies. Firstly, there has so far been little or no evidence of agenda setting effects in relation to the EMU issue, because in the euro opt-out countries, it remains low on people's list of priorities. This means that, in spite of people's apparent reliance on the media for information, they are unlikely to be persuaded of the issue's significance by its dominance in the media per se. Being unobtrusive, the issue appears to be something that people simply do not care about. Secondly, the Norris et al. (1999) study suggests that we should expect little change in public concerns about the issue in response to fluctuations in its salience on the media agenda over a longer period of time, perhaps because people have become jaded by the relatively high levels of attention already given to the issue. Finally, it is not possible to discern the extent to which the weak relationship between public and media agendas results from a 'failure' on behalf of the media to convince the public of the significance of EMU, or from the fact that the debate has so far not demanded much public attention. Both the Conservative government prior to 1997, as well as the Labour government since then have adopted a so-called 'wait-and-see' policy on the euro, which has arguably served to relegate the issue on the public agenda until such point when they are asked to make a decision in a referendum vote.

4.5 The present study

The present study involved an analysis of the intensity of print media coverage about the single currency, over the course of a ten-year period from 1991-2001. This period is significant in terms of the history of the debate, as it was following the Maastricht summit in December 1991 that the concept of Economic and Monetary Union first entered the public arena. The decade spans the period in which the euro was born, from the original plans for monetary union laid out at Maastricht to the launch of the single currency in 1999 – a period in which both Conservative and Labour Governments grappled with the complexities of the question surrounding British membership of EMU. Examining press coverage allows us not only to trace the course of the debate, in terms of establishing which policy-relevant events stimulated the greatest amount of media attention, but also provides some measure of the attention the debate received in the outside world. The media data gathered here were collected for both pro- and anti-EMU publications, as well as for both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, providing some interesting points for comparison.

As well as drawing on the theoretical background of agenda setting research, the analysis presented here follows the method used by Bauer and his colleagues (2001), in their study of how the debate surrounding biotechnology evolved in the elite mass media. The authors present a number of arguments supporting the decision to examine media representations of the issue in the 'elite' press, which are also relevant here. In particular, they argue that while audiences for these publications are relatively small, the elite press play a significant role in opinion-leading, being important sources of information not only for the public, but also for those involved in policy making, for experts and decision-makers, and perhaps more importantly, for other media producers (Bauer et al., 2001). Thus, while the general public may not be the primary audience for these publications, the ideas and interpretations that are reported in them filter down to the public via these other agents. The authors argue that "by analysing the opinion-leading press, we can get a reasonably robust impression of how society processes meaning" (Bauer et al., 2001; p.36)

The analysis presented here was aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What events have marked the changing course of the debate surrounding British membership of EMU and how have the media responded them?
2. Is there variation in the level of coverage across newspaper type (broadsheet and tabloid) and/or the newspaper's explicit stance on Europe (pro- or anti-EMU)?
3. How have the public responded to the debate?
4. To what extent can public response be attributed to media response?
5. What is the relationship between issue salience on the media and public agendas and fluctuations in public opinion about Europe?

4.6 Method

4.6.1 Measuring the salience of the euro on the print media agenda

The data used in the analysis were obtained from two sources. Firstly, as a measure of the salience of the euro issue on the print media agenda, monthly counts of the number of newspaper articles mentioning the term 'single currency' were obtained for a period of ten years, starting in January 1991 and ending in January 2001. Data were collected from six daily London-based newspapers – three 'tabloids' and three 'broadsheets', where possible including their Sunday equivalents. The broadsheets group included The Independent and Independent on Sunday, which has been used elsewhere as a benchmark for measures of issue salience because, along with other broadsheet newspapers, it plays an opinion leading role with respect to other media operators (e.g. Bauer et al., 2001); The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph; and The Guardian and Observer. The tabloids publications included in the analysis were The Sun and News of the World; The Mirror and Sunday Mirror; and The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday.

The newspapers were selected to represent both extremes of the left-right orientation of British daily news publications, as well as to represent both sides of the EMU debate. Among the quality titles, the ethos of The Daily Telegraph (a traditionally Conservative publication) perhaps epitomises the staunchly sceptical, indeed antagonistic position on Europe (in particular on the euro), for which the British press has become renowned. By contrast, the Guardian (a traditionally Labour publication) has adopted a more enthusiastic position on Europe, as has the supposedly unpartisan Independent newspaper. Of the tabloids, the right-wing Mail and the Sun (which was previously a staunch supporter of the Tories, but which switched to support Labour prior to the 1997 General Election) are both ardently anti-European, whilst the left wing 'red-top', the Mirror, represents the pro-European camp among the tabloid titles.

The data were collected using the online search engine 'Lexis Nexis™' which provides access to a number of different news media publications stored online. Unfortunately, because Lexis Nexis™ was a relatively newly developed resource at the time of data collection, not all of the titles included in the analysis were available for the full sample period. Data were available for all the broadsheet newspapers included, but for the tabloids, the database only contained records for more recent years. The Daily Mail and The Mail on Sunday's database was the most comprehensive, starting in January 1992, while that for the Mirror/ Sunday Mirror started in January 1994. That for The Sun/ News of the World, however, only went back as far as January 2000. It is included here because of its significance in the British print media market, being the best selling newspaper in the country, although it is appreciated that the amount of data available limits the comparisons that can be made with other titles. It should be acknowledged that the newspapers included are arguably better described as 'English' newspapers, being all London-based publications. As such, they should not be viewed as being representative of the 'British' press, which includes key Scottish, Welsh and Irish publications, as well as many regional and local titles. Nevertheless, they are among the best selling in the UK, enjoying nationwide circulation. Table 4.1 provides summary information of the newspapers analysed.

Table 4.1 Summary information for newspapers included in the analysis

Title	Average Net Circulation (UK)*	EMU Orientation	Data Availability through Lexis Nexis™
The Independent	187,845	Pro	1991
Independent on Sunday	185,152	Pro	1991
The Guardian	353,907	Pro	1991
The Observer	396,383	Pro	1991
The Daily Telegraph	891,261	Anti	1991
The Sunday Telegraph	685,123	Anti	1991
The Mirror	2,338,620	Pro	January 1994
Sunday Mirror	1,498,621	Pro	January 1994
The Daily Mail	2,321,927	Anti	January 1992
The Mail on Sunday	2,228,605	Anti	January 1992
The Sun	3,348,524	Anti	January 2000
News of the World	3,578,623	Anti	January 2000

*Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations – 28.4.03-25.05.03

For each newspaper the search term utilised was "single currency". A number of alternative search terms were tried out. However, the decision to employ 'single currency' was made so as to minimise the possibility of picking up non-relevant articles (which would have been the case with both 'EMU' and 'euro'), as well as to select a term with fairly consistent usage throughout the ten-year period. The name 'euro' was not adopted until much later, and the acronym EMU is not always employed, especially by the tabloid press. Thus, it should be noted that the findings provide us with a schematic overview of the intensity of coverage and may lack some accuracy as measures of the 'true' coverage of the debate. Lexis Nexis™ yields all references containing any reference to the search term. No information is provided in the present analysis as to the length of articles, or whether the article mentioned the single currency once only, or was entirely devoted to the issue. Equally, the count tells us little about the prominence afforded the issue overall by the newspapers at any point in time, for example, whether the article appeared on the front page or elsewhere in the newspaper, or how much attention it received in terms of the visual layout of the paper (i.e. the use of images and cartoons, the size of headlines, the proportion of the page taken up by the article and so on).

For each newspaper the total number of articles making reference to the term 'single currency' for each calendar month in the ten-year period was recorded (from 1.1.1991 to 31.1.2001). These data were then compiled in order to plot the relative intensity of coverage for each newspaper (using Microsoft Excel). The outcome of this process is displayed in figures 4.1 and 4.2 for the broadsheet press and 4.3 for the tabloids. Plotting intensity of newspaper coverage on a graph makes it possible to quickly identify the periods at which attention on the issue was highest. The events reported during these periods have been labelled on figure 4.1. Table 4.2 provides a record of the events that occurred during peak periods of news coverage.

4.6.2 Measuring salience of the euro on the public agenda

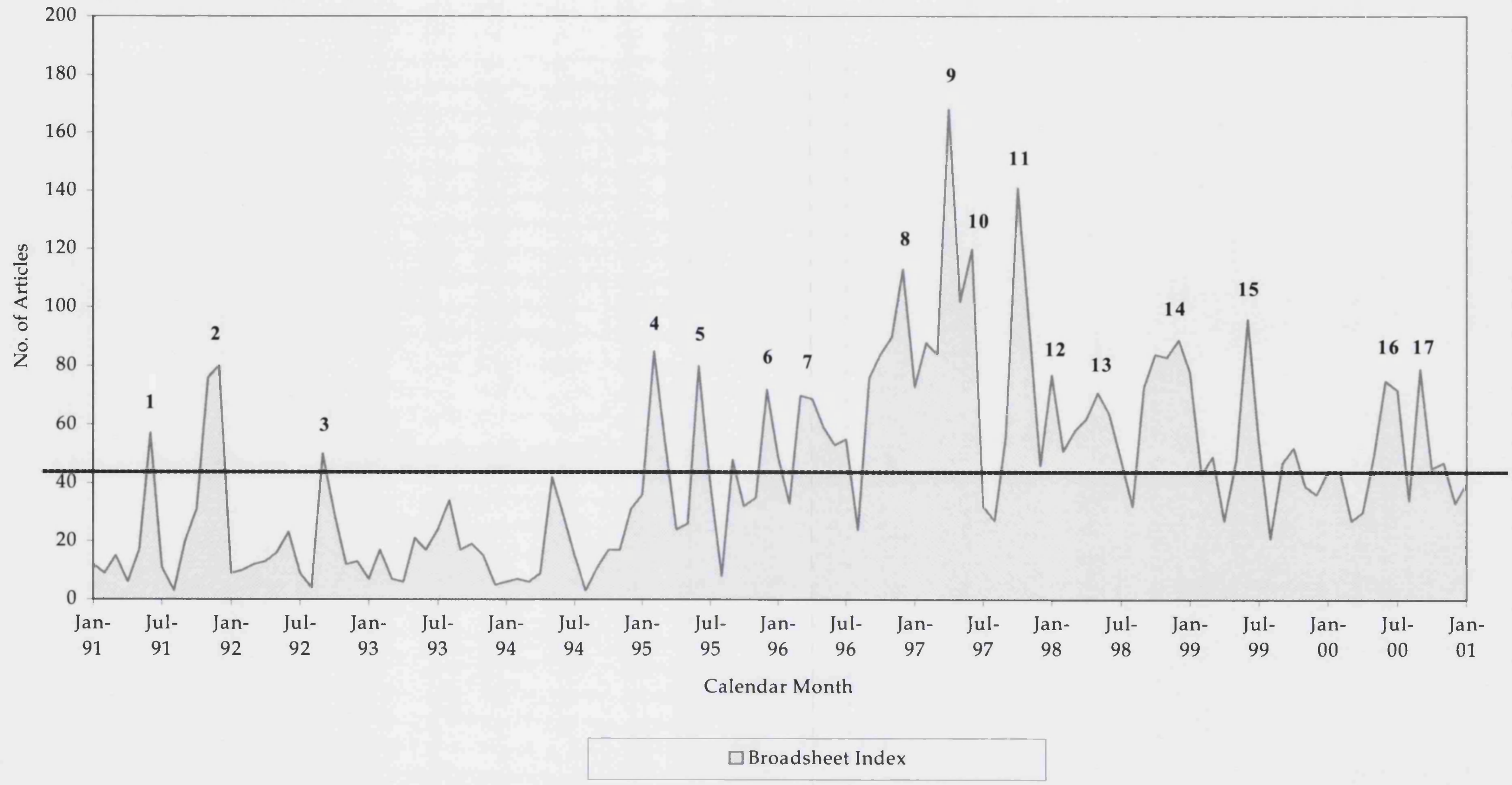
The 'public agenda' data were gathered from published opinion polls conducted by MORI, in which respondents are asked, 'What would you say is the most important issue (MII) facing Britain today?' and a supplementary question, 'What do you see as other important issues facing Britain today?'. These questions have been fielded regularly since 1974, and for the period under investigation, monthly data are available for most years. Where data for a particular month were not available, missing values were imputed using the mean of the figures for the adjacent months. Unprompted responses to the items are coded and combined depending on their similarity, to produce an index of the salience of different issues on the public agenda. Thus, the data represent the percentage of respondents in each survey stating that the Common Market, the EU, Europe, or the Single European Currency (or some other similar term), was the single most important issue facing Britain at that time. Comparison MII figures are provided for issues relating to the NHS/ hospitals; race relations/ immigration/ immigrants; education/ schools; crime/ law and order/ violence/ vandalism; and defence/ foreign affairs/ international terrorism (monthly indices for each of these issue categories are available in Appendix A). Finally, these data are compared with public opinion data from the Eurobarometer showing levels of support for the European Union, in order to provide a point of comparison between issue agendas and the direction and change of attitudes.

4.7 Results

4.7.1 Salience of the single currency issue in the opinion-leading press

The first part of the analysis was aimed at identifying which events, over the course of the period of interest, stimulated the greatest amount of coverage by the press. That is, it was designed to answer the question of how the media have responded to the changing course of the debate surrounding British membership of EMU. Figure 4.1 shows the intensity of coverage of the single currency issue during the ten-year period under investigation (1991-2001). The intensity index here is the mean number of articles containing the search term ('single currency'), published per month in the opinion-leading newspapers included in this analysis (The Independent, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph, and their Sunday equivalents). The large fluctuations in salience across the decade are immediately apparent. Minimum values for the index were recorded for the months of July 1991 and August 1994 (just three articles each) and August 1992 (just four). Throughout the period, the issue was, unsurprisingly, afforded least salience during the summer months, reflecting the fact that political events are less likely to take place during this time, as well as the fact that issues such as EMU are less likely to be covered during the so-called 'silly season' of politics and journalism. The greatest number of articles was published during 1997, in particular, during the General Election campaign and in the aftermath of the election. April 1997 saw a mean of 168 articles published by these broadsheet titles (the greatest number, recorded in the Daily Telegraph was 199), and this high intensity coverage continued after the election throughout May and June. In October 1997, the issue was once again highly prominent in the print media, with a mean of 141 articles mentioning the single currency published in the three newspapers analysed here (The Guardian printed 152 during this month, and The Daily Telegraph, 148).

Figure 4.1 Intensity of news coverage on the single currency in the opinion-leading press



The mean number of articles for the total period of analysis was 44 per month, and this is indicated on figure 4.1 by a horizontal line. The next section provides an account of the key developments in the debate surrounding EMU that developed during the sample period. It focuses on the events that stimulated greater than average news coverage. In order to facilitate interpretation of the fluctuations in issue salience, peak periods referred to in the text have been numbered on figure 4.1. The reader is referred to table 4.2 for a summary of the main issue-relevant events taking place during this period.

4.7.2 The early 1990s

Two key peaks in the salience of the single currency issues occurred in 1991, a year dominated by preparations for the summit in Maastricht and the historical changes that negotiations there resulted in. The first peak occurred in June, when a European Council meeting convened in Luxembourg, focusing on preparations for Maastricht (1). The second peak in press coverage occurred at the time of the Maastricht summit, held in December 1991 (2). The first of three stages for the implementation of Economic and Monetary Union, proposed in 1989 by the then head of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, had already started in 1990, with moves towards greater co-operation between national banks. In October of that year, Britain joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), which had been set up to try to contain fluctuations between participating currencies. In 1991, the drafting of the treaty of the European Union, resulted in the official change from the European Community into the European Union, and with it, committed Members to EMU. A timetable for EMU was established, along with criteria for adopting the single currency. In Britain, the debate centred on Prime Minister John Major's role in the negotiation and his success (applauded by the left and right wing press alike) in securing an opt-out of EMU and the Social Chapter. However, the event re-opened existing divisions over Europe in the Conservative party and established the fault-lines on the subject of integration in the press and popular debate that are still familiar today.

Table 4.2 Key issue-relevant political events during period of analysis (January 1991 – January 2001)

Date	Event
28th-29th June 1991	Luxembourg European Council confirms the need to conduct proceedings of the two Intergovernmental Conferences, centred on Economic and Monetary Union and aspects of political union in parallel on the basis of the draft treaty prepared by the presidency.
9th-10th December 1991	European Council meeting at Maastricht reaches agreement on the draft Treaty of the European Union.
2nd June 1992	Danish referendum results in a vote against ratification of the Treaty of the European Union.
18th June 1992	Irish referendum results in a ratification of the Treaty of the European Union.
September 1992	United Kingdom withdraws from the Exchange Rate Mechanism.
August 1993	United Kingdom ratification of the Treaty of the European Union.
May 1994	Inaugural Conference held in Paris for a stability pact for Central and Eastern Europe.
9-12th June 1993	European Parliament elections.
31st May 1995	Commission adopts green paper on the practical arrangements for the introduction of the single currency.
26th-27th June 1995	European Council meeting in Cannes confirms transition to a single currency by 1st January 1999.
December 1995	A European Council is held in Madrid, Spain. It sets 29th March 1996 as the starting date for the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and confirms the introduction of the single currency ("euro") for January 1st 1999.
27th March 1996	Commission adopts a decision on urgent measures to be taken for protection against BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy). It imposes a worldwide export ban on British beef and beef products.
29th March 1996	IGC held in Turin to revise the Maastricht Treaty.
13th-14th December 1996	A European Council is held in Dublin. It reaches agreement on the various elements necessary for

	introduction of the single currency (legal framework, stability pact, new exchange rate mechanism).
1st May 1997	General Election in United Kingdom results in landslide Labour victory.
16th-17th June 1997	The European Council meets in Amsterdam and reaches a consensus on a draft Treaty. It approves various proposals facilitating a smooth passage to the third phase of the Economic and Monetary Union and adopts a resolution on growth and employment.
2nd October 1997	Ministers for foreign affairs of the Member States of the European Union sign the Treaty of Amsterdam.
20th October 1997	The Commission adopts the final report to the Parliament's temporary committee of inquiry monitoring recommendations on BSE.
1st January 1998	The United Kingdom takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
25th March 1998	The Commission adopts the convergence report and recommends that 11 Member States adopt the euro on 1st January 1999.
3rd May 1998	A special Council decides that 11 Member States satisfy the conditions for adoption of the single currency on 1st January 1999. Following the decision, the Council adopts two regulations on technical specifications of euro coins and the introduction of the euro, the ministers and Central Bank governors of Member States adopting the euro as their single currency. The Commission and the European Monetary Institute set out conditions for determination of the irrevocable conversion rates for the euro.
26th May 1998	The governments of the Member States adopting the single currency appoint by common agreement the president, the vice-president of the other members of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank.
31st December 1998	The Council adopts fixed and irrevocable conversion rates between the national currencies of the 11 participating Member States and the euro.
1st January 1999	The euro is officially launched. Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain adopt the euro as their official currency.

10th June 1999	European Parliamentary elections are held in the United Kingdom.
June 2000	European Council meeting in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal. The broad economic policy guidelines for the Member States and the Community for the year 2000 are adopted; Greece's entry into the euro is approved.
22nd September 2000	The ECB, taking joint action with the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan, intervene in support of the euro.
28th September 2000	Denmark holds a referendum on the euro. The majority rejects joining the single European currency.
June 2001	General Election in the United Kingdom for which Europe and the single currency were once again key campaign issues.

Source: History of the European Union (European Union Online)
http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/index_en.htm

By September 1992 (3), the single currency was once again a hot topic in the British press, after currency speculation on 'Black Wednesday' resulted in Britain having to withdraw from the ERM. The following summer, the ERM was suspended altogether, being replaced by an alternative, more flexible system. The events surrounding Britain's withdrawal were widely deemed by the eurosceptic press as a sign of the failings of EMU, and the knock-on effect on public opinion about Europe was one of the most significant of the last fifteen years. Support for the euro fell from 54% to 30% between March 1991 and September 1992; the percentage of respondents agreeing that British membership of the EU is a "good thing" fell from 54% to 43% between March and September 1992 (Source: Eurobarometer).

4.7.3 The mid-1990s

In January/February 1995 (4), there was another peak in the salience of the EMU issue, followed by a second one in June (5), when the debate focused on practical arrangements for the introduction of the single currency. It was agreed that the currency would be introduced by January 1999, with a three to four year period of transition before the actual introduction of notes and coins. However, it was not until the

December of 1995 (6) that the European heads of state agreed on the name for the single currency, the 'euro', at the European Council meeting held in Madrid. In the following March (7), at the time of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in Turin, which was held in order to make revisions to the Maastricht Treaty, the newspapers were dominated by stories about the EC's decision to impose a worldwide ban on the export on British beef and beef products (as a result of an outbreak of BSE). The events stirred up anti-European sentiment in the press, resulting in the heightened salience of issues relating to integration such as the single currency that is evident during this period. Towards the end of 1996 (8), the single currency was back in the press, when a meeting of the European Council in Dublin was held to agree on economic arrangements for the introduction of the euro, including its legal framework, the stability pact and a new exchange rate mechanism.

As noted, 1997 saw the greatest number of articles making reference to the single currency, in the month preceding the general election held that year (9), and in its immediate aftermath (10). The European Council meetings in Madrid and Dublin had played contributory roles in exacerbating the split within the Conservative party over European issues. They also highlighted their failure to agree on a fixed policy regarding Britain's relationship with the EU and, particularly, with respect to the single currency. By the time of the general election, this problem had still not been resolved, and the issue of the main parties' stance on Europe and the euro once again became the subject of intense media debate.

The landslide Labour victory on May 1st arguably marked the start of a new era in terms of Britain's relationship with the EU, although the New Labour government's policies on Europe were not markedly different to those of the Tories, opting – as their predecessors had – for a 'wait-and-see' policy on EMU. The promise of a referendum on the euro, however, signified a more positive outlook on Europe on behalf of the new Government. This change in outlook was evident at the Council meeting in Amsterdam just one month after the election (10), which stimulated considerable media attention in Britain, although this is likely to be in part due to the Tories' decision to hold their leadership election at the same time.

Later that year, in October (11), the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam led to greater press attention on the single currency issue, when the Labour government announced its policy on the EMU: broadly in favour of Britain joining, provided that five economic tests be passed before the decision could be put to the public in a referendum. Details of this policy were later published in the National Changeover Plan (1998).

4.7.4 The late 1990s

In January 1998 (12), Tony Blair took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and later that year, in May (13), the council decided on which Member States had qualified to proceed to stage three of the single currency. Once again, the newspapers were full of stories about the euro, focusing in particular on the apparent fudging of the convergence criteria to ensure membership for certain countries, and on a row over who would head up the European Central Bank (ECB). These events rekindled concerns in the right-wing press concerning the political motivations for integration and how these might interfere with the economic success of EMU. The single currency issue remained salient through the remainder of 1998, culminating in the fixing of the exchange rates between the euro and the participating national currencies, and the launch of the euro on January 1st 1999 (14). Issue salience was heightened once again in June (15) that year, as the euro struggled against the dollar, and in response to an ongoing crisis in the European Commission resulting in mass resignations following allegations of mismanagement and corruption.

Two further peaks in the intensity of coverage are evident in June 2000 (16) and September 2000 (17). In June, a Council meeting was held in Portugal and Greece's entry to the euro was approved. In September, the ECB, along with the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan intervened to support the single currency, which had lost 30% of its value against the dollar since its January launch. September also saw the first of the planned referenda on joining the euro of the three opt-out countries, taking place in Denmark (Sweden and the UK agreed to hold theirs at a later stage). The Danes voted against joining and the issue, once again, generated considerable attention from the press.

4.7.5 Variations in the level of coverage across newspaper type

Figure 4.2 Intensity of news coverage on the single currency in the broadsheet press

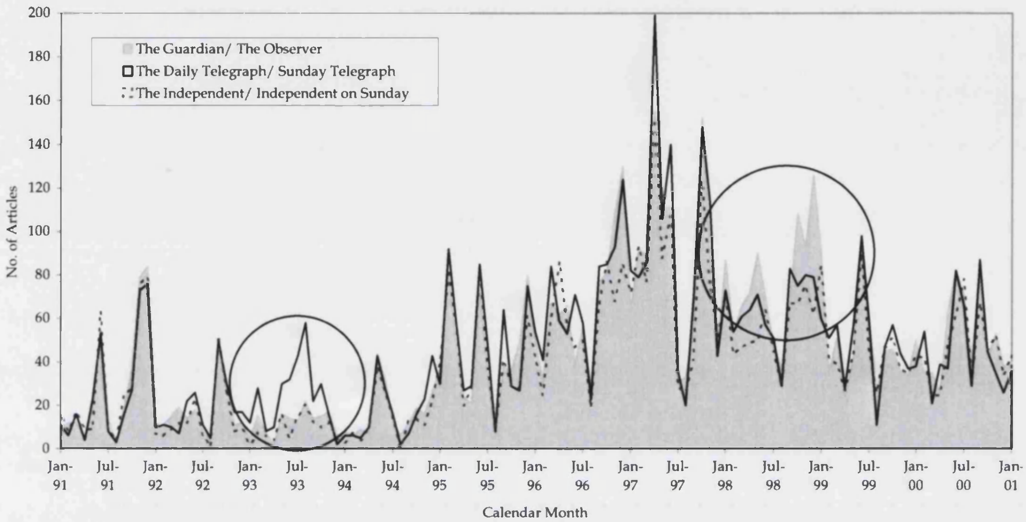
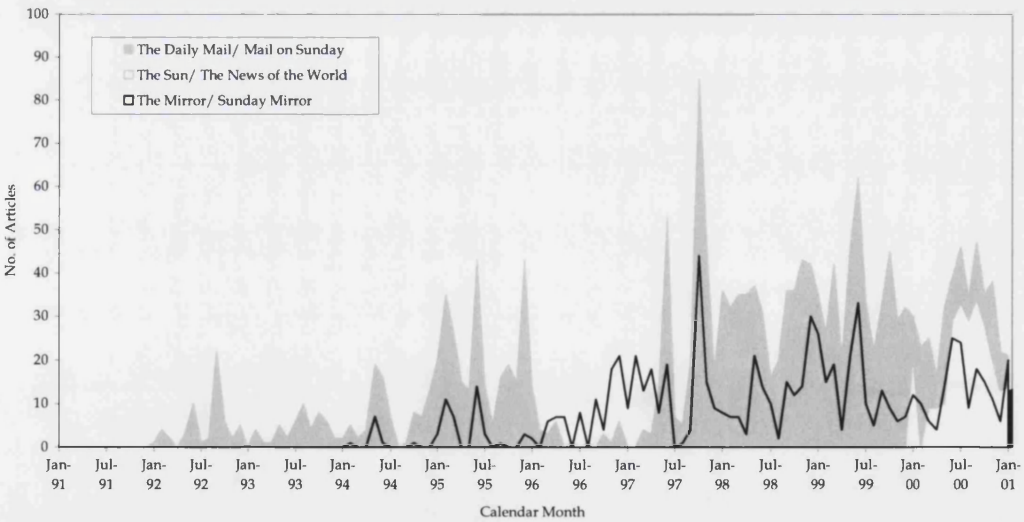


Figure 4.3 Intensity of news coverage on the single currency in the tabloid press



Figures 4.2 and 4.3 respectively chart the intensity of news coverage in the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. The preceding analysis focused on the broadsheet newspapers' agenda jointly, taking the mean number of articles from all three as an index of issue salience in the opinion-leading press as a whole. The chart in figure 4.1 allows us to

examine differences between the broadsheet titles in terms of the prominence afforded the euro issue at different points in time. In general, there was considerable agreement between the three titles. This is evidenced in the bivariate correlations between the three titles (values are for Spearman's rho) shown in table 4.3, which were all over 0.9.

There was a slight tendency for the anti-EMU Daily Telegraph to contain more references to the single currency than either the (broadly pro-European) Independent or Guardian. Three periods where the titles diverged in the salience they afforded the issue are highlighted here. The first, in August 1993, when John Major ratified the Maastricht Treaty, received considerably greater attention in the Telegraph (58 articles, compared with 22 in The Guardian and 20 in the Independent). By contrast, The Guardian gave considerably greater attention to the decision over which Member States qualified for EMU in May '98 (90 articles, compared with 71 for the Telegraph and 50 for the Independent), as well as to events in December '98 (126 articles, compared with 79 for the Telegraph and 62 for the Independent) and in January '99 (90 articles, compared with 60 for the Telegraph and 84 for the Independent).

Table 4.3 Inter-correlations between newspapers' intensity indices (Spearman's rho)

	I	DT	G	M	DM
The Independent (I)					
Daily Telegraph (DT)	0.93				
The Guardian (G)	0.94	0.92			
The Mirror (M)	0.71	0.64	0.74		
The Daily Mail (DM)	0.54	0.48	0.56	0.66	
The Sun	0.86	0.73	0.79	0.61	0.84

The chart for the tabloid papers (figure 4.3) paints a slightly different picture. Most noticeably, there is a considerable difference between the numbers of articles printed in the anti-EMU Daily Mail/ Mail on Sunday compared with the pro-EMU Mirror/ Sunday Mirror. Interpretation of this difference should be cautious, however. Whilst the former is a Eurosceptic publication, the attention it gives to European issues is accounted for more by the fact that it is a more 'middle-market' tabloid than the other two 'red-top' tabloids in the sample, appealing to a different audience and espousing a different set of values. Nevertheless, it is arguable that the level of coverage that The Mail gave to European issues during the period of interest is exaggerated, whilst that of the 'red-top' tabloids is surprisingly low. Inter-correlations between the tabloid newspapers were around 0.6 (see table 4.3) and the correlation between the intensity index of the opinion-leading papers as a whole, and that of the tabloids was 0.66.

Again, there is general agreement between the tabloid publications in terms of the events they considered newsworthy, although a period of about one year from around March 1996 until the general election in 1997 saw the number of articles in the Mirror, far outweigh the number printed in the Mail. It is unclear exactly what the reasons for this may be. However, during this period, in addition to a number of political events of interest in the development of EMU, the worldwide export ban imposed on British beef and beef products by the EC, and the Euro '96, European football championships all captured the attention of the media. All of these could have stimulated discussion of European issues in this pro-European tabloid newspaper, and this may equally explain the Daily Mail's apparent silence on European issues at this time. Clearly, closer analysis of news content during this period would help to shed light on this discrepant finding.

4.7.6 Salience of the euro issue on the public agenda

This section examines how the public has responded to the changing course of the debate surrounding EMU by looking at the salience of the issue on the public agenda and changes in public opinion during this time. Figure 4.4 shows the percentage of the public rating the issues of Europe, crime and disorder, education, unemployment and the National Health Service as the most important issues facing Britain during the 10-year period of interest. It is immediately apparent that throughout the period of inquiry, only a relatively small proportion of the public considered Europe to be a matter of serious concern, compared with the percentage who were concerned about other issues. People were far more likely to rate, unemployment, education and the NHS as 'most important', compared with issues relating to Europe. Only from 1997 onward, did a greater proportion of the public rate Europe as more important than crime. The percentage of the public concerned about Europe has ranged from as little as 3% (in February 1991) to as much as 43% during the general election campaign in April 1997.

By contrast, the percentage choosing unemployment as the most important issue has ranged from as much as 81% in February 1993 to just 7% in December 2000.

According to the public agenda-setting hypothesis, variations in the salience of a particular issue on the public agenda are related to variations in the salience of the issue on the media agenda. Simply eyeballing the data reveals quite a close correspondence between the intensity of newspaper coverage in the opinion-leading press, and fluctuations in the proportion of people who considered Europe to be the most important issue facing Britain during this time. The trend line for 'Europe' closely tracks that of the intensity index and the correlation between the two data series is 0.78, indicating a strong, positive association between the salience of Europe on the public and media agendas over the course of the decade.

4.7.7 Public opinion and issue salience

The final part of the analysis examined the relationship between salience of the euro issue on the media and public agendas and public opinion relating to Europe. Table 4.5 shows the correlation coefficients between the two measures of media and public issue salience used above and measures of opinion about membership of the European Union from the Eurobarometer survey, which was fielded bi-annually during the period under investigation. The last two rows of table 4.5 show that support for the EU and the euro was negatively correlated with issue salience during the period of investigation. This finding is illustrated in figure 4.5. However, the relationship is relatively weak and only at the time of Black Wednesday (September 1992) is there a marked correspondence between the data.

Figure 4.4 Most important issues facing Britain today and intensity of press coverage of euro issue

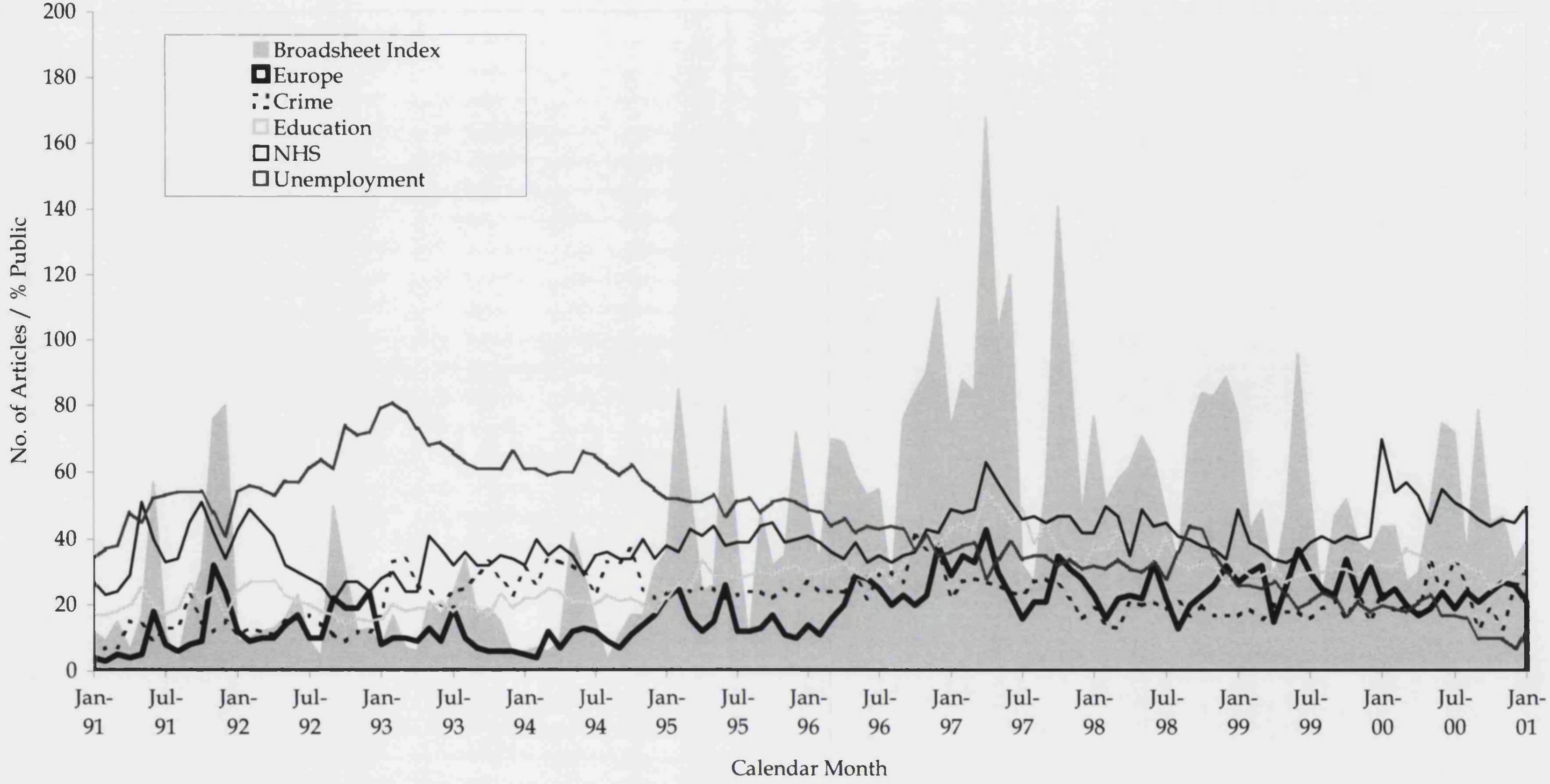
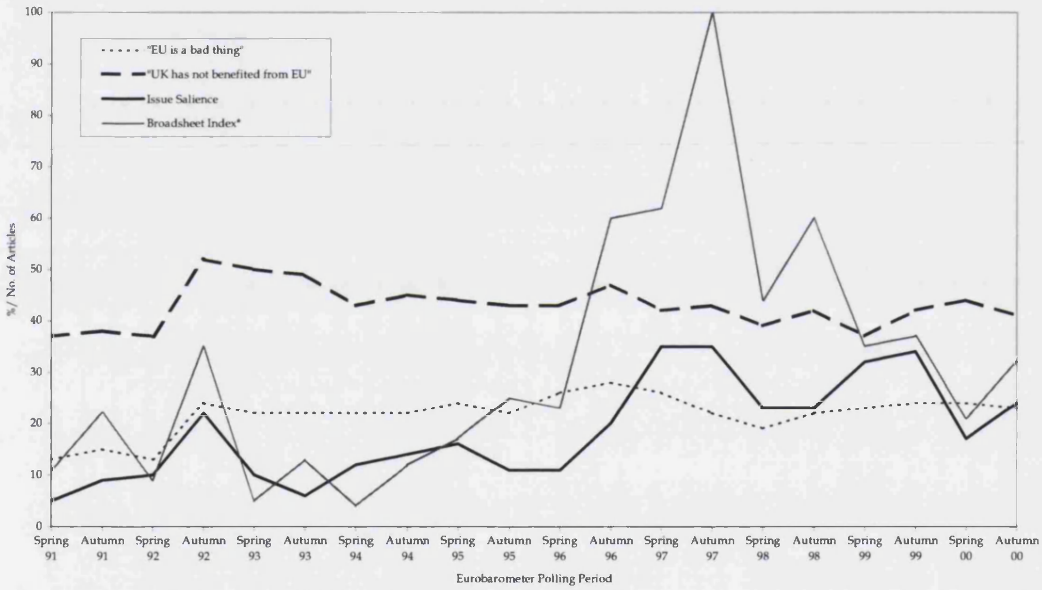


Table 4.4 Inter-correlations between public opinion variables and salience variables

	Support	EU good	EU bad	UK benefits	No benefit	Public salience
Support euro						
EU good thing	0.81					
EU bad thing	-0.69	-0.75				
UK benefits	0.84	0.86	-0.71			
No benefit	-0.35	-0.13	0.58	-0.44		
Public salience	-0.53	-0.66	0.46	-0.52	-0.10	
Media salience	-0.29	-0.41	0.36	-0.24	-0.02	0.78

Figure 4.5 Issue salience and public opinion on the EU



4.8 Discussion

The analysis reported here had two aims. The first was to give an overview of the development of the debate surrounding British membership of the single currency, by looking at fluctuations in the intensity of media coverage it has received over the course of a ten-year period, and looking at the events that have triggered heightened media attention. As such, the analysis helps to 'set the scene' for the later empirical chapters, by describing the media context in which public attitudes to the euro have been formed and transformed over the course of the debate.

The second aim, however, was to begin to explore the relationship between media reporting on the euro and public attitudes by looking at one of the ways in which the media are said to influence people's views. Alongside media coverage of the debate, the analysis looked at variations in the salience of 'Europe' (and issues surrounding integration) on the public agenda, using data from surveys asking people what they consider to be the most important issues facing Britain today. Comparisons of these data with the intensity of news coverage data showed a close correlation between media and public agendas.

While the proportion of the public for whom Europe constituted an important issue was comparatively small (with other issues taking priority for the majority), the data provide clear evidence of a consistent minority for whom the importance of Europe as an issue varied with fluctuations in the issue's salience on the news agenda of the press. This would suggest some limited relationship between public and media issue agendas with respect to Europe, though it cannot of course shed light on the precise nature of that relationship (and the direction of any causative influence, if such an influence exists).

Indeed, the analysis presented here was not intended as an agenda setting study per se. If it were, it would undoubtedly fall short in terms of the methodological requirements for such a piece of work. However, the research builds on other agenda setting studies that have looked at the topic of EMU (e.g. Norris et al., 1999; de Vreese, 2001), lending further support to and extending the conclusions these other theorists have drawn. In particular, it supports the finding that, despite fluctuations in the significance of the euro on the print media agenda (it has frequently been one of the most prominent issues in the press, at least in terms of its dominance of the front pages), the issue of EMU is not generally viewed as important by the public. Other, more 'obtrusive' issues (Zucker, 1978) have remained prominent on the public agenda throughout the period of investigation, despite the media attention the euro has received. Nevertheless, a small proportion of the public does appear to have been sensitive to the ebb and flow of the issue's salience in the press, as is illustrated in the close correlation between the press and opinion data. This agenda setting function of the press with respect to the single currency – albeit only visible for a sub-group of the population – was not observed in these previous studies, so the research extends what was previously known about the impact of media attention to EMU on public attitudes towards the euro.

The analysis further examined the relationship between the salience of the euro issue in the press and on the public agenda and public support for European integration. While attitudes regarding the benefits of EU membership appeared to change at the same time as the salience of EMU was heightened on both the media and public agendas (e.g. at the time of Britain's withdrawal from the ERM), it is not possible to draw conclusions from the data presented here as to the nature of any relationship between the two. Closer investigation of how agenda setting relates to public opinion would require a more sophisticated research design. In particular, a clear limitation of the present data is that they provide us with no information about the other issues that were salient on the media agenda during the period of investigation, only about the *relative* salience of the single currency issue over the ten-year period.

Despite the limitations of the methodology employed here with respect to the agenda setting hypothesis, the analysis makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of British attitudes to the euro in a number of different ways. Firstly, it presents the broader picture of the media context in which communications about the euro take place. Previous studies have tended to focus on the *content* of coverage on European integration with a particular emphasis on anti-European discourse in the press (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995). Bauer et al (2001) have argued, however, that this emphasis has encouraged researchers to adopt a normative position concerning the potential impact of non-objective discourse on public attitudes, and to neglect the broader issue of specifying the precise nature of the relationship between the mass media and public opinion. By drawing on the literature on agenda setting, and by positing a role for the elite press as opinion-leaders (Bauer et al., 2001), the present study represents an attempt to move beyond this impasse.

Secondly, research that has looked at media coverage of European integration has tended to restrict itself to single events or limited periods of media coverage (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Anderson and Weymouth, 1998; Norris et al., 1999). Examining a longer period of time makes it possible to paint a bigger picture and get a clearer idea of what the 'normal' pattern of coverage about European integration might be. If it is indeed the case, as Norris and her colleagues argue, that the public is jaded by a surfeit of European coverage in the press then it is of interest to establish how this public sentiment has come about. The present analysis makes some contribution in this respect. It illustrates how, over the course of the 1990s, the single currency issue gained in overall significance, and reveals periods of rapid escalation in the amount of attention the issue received by the print media.

It is evident that the euro debate has followed its own course during the sampling period, moving between historical EU-level events that have stimulated high levels of news coverage. Thus, the debate has charted the course to a single European currency from the early planning stages at Maastricht, through to the launch of the euro in January 1999 (and since then, of course, to the introduction of euro notes and coins in January 2002). Yet the fervour with which the issue has at times been covered in the press, demonstrates the extent to which the debate has developed a life of its own within the media. This is perhaps most evident at those points where there has been greatest discrepancy in the intensity of coverage between the pro- and anti-EMU press, with positive events such as the launch of the single currency demanding considerable attention from the pro-EMU Guardian and the more negative events (such as Major's ratification of the Maastricht treaty after Black Wednesday) being the focus of attention in the anti-EMU Daily Telegraph. The present analysis does not provide us with information about the extent of coverage of the euro issue in relation to *other* issues during the same period, but it is noteworthy that during the 1997 general election campaign the issue was found to be the most intensively-reported campaign issue (Norris et al., 1999). Whilst we might expect the number of articles on a range of issues to be elevated during this period, this example illustrates the way in which the debate about the single currency came to dominate the British print media at a number of points in time throughout the period of interest.

Examining the quantity of newspaper coverage and its correlation with the issue concerns of the public provides us with only a crude measure of the potential power of media effects. The present study sought not to make exaggerated claims about how the media influences public opinion, but rather to highlight its potential to do so, by providing what might be interpreted as evidence of media effects. At a minimum, examining changes in the intensity of media reporting provides us with a schematic overview of the life course of a public debate (Bauer et al., 2000). By identifying those periods in which the issue has been most salient in the public arena, it is possible to isolate the times at which people's attention is most likely to have been oriented to that issue. In the study of attitude formation and change, it is precisely these moments of heightened salience that are of interest, as these are the times at which – from a psychological point of view – people are more likely to engage in the cognitive work required to formulate and adjust their attitudes and beliefs in response to new information. It is for this reason that an examination of the agenda setting capacity of the media is of interest from a social psychological perspective; for it is in the context of heightened issue salience that elaboration likelihood (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) is raised, and attitudes are made and changed.

5 ARGUMENT AND PERSUASION: AN ARGUMENTATION ANALYSIS OF LEADING ARTICLES ABOUT THE EURO

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of the history of the debate surrounding British membership of EMU by identifying the events that have received the greatest amount of attention in the British print media. It explored the relationship between media attention and public concerns about European integration, in order to gain insight into the capacity for the media to direct public attention on to certain issues at certain times. It was hypothesised that at times of heightened issue salience, public involvement in an issue also tends to be high, and with it, the likelihood that people will engage with information about that issue and in so-doing, form and transform their attitudes towards it. In fact, it was found that only a minority of the British public appeared to be influenced by variation in the salience of the single currency issue during the period of investigation. For the majority, other issues were more important at the time than those relating to European integration and the single currency. While study A investigated the relationship between the salience of the issue on the media and public agendas, the present study looked at the content of media reporting on EMU during times of heightened issue salience. This time, the aim was to gain some insight into how the media influence *what* people actually think about the euro.

In chapter 1, I reviewed the literature on how the print and broadcast media have reported on issues relating to European integration (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Anderson and Weymouth, 1998; Wilkes and Wring, 1998). Research in this field has led to a number of conclusions about the ways in which the content and style of news reports might relate to public opposition to the EU, although few contributors have turned to theoretical accounts from the field of media and communications or social psychological theories of persuasion to explain how media information might influence public attitudes. According to Hardt-Mautner (1995), the 'dumbing down' of information about Europe in the popular press and on television may partially explain the public's lack of knowledge about the issues involved in EMU, while the use of eurosceptic discourse in news reports (such as negative national stereotypes about other European countries) has been linked to public opposition because it serves to highlight people's concerns about the threat of integration to British national identity. Anderson and Weymouth (1998) argue that news reports contain an 'ideological component' embedded in the discourse of newspapers, which consists of implicit assumptions about the world that are derived by readers through their history of engagement with a particular newspaper title. People are said to rely on this component in order to interpret the information they are presented with and to draw meaning from the text, making it particularly influential in the formation of attitudes. Through repeated reading people come to understand the world-view of the newspaper and integrate its ideology into their own attitudes. It is in this way that eurosceptic discourse is said to influence how people think about integration. Thus, in order to understand the content and provenance of people's attitudes, it is necessary to identify this ideological component in the news discourse to which they are exposed.

In the present study, I look to theoretical accounts of media effects and social psychological theories of attitude formation and change to provide an explanation for how information in the press influences public opinion. In particular, I focus on how the media 'frame' information for audiences, making certain aspects of issues more salient than others, and thereby influencing how people think about those issues (the concept of framing is introduced in the next section). To investigate how the print media framed the single currency issue over the course of the debate surrounding British membership of EMU, I analysed arguments about EMU found in leading articles in two broadsheet newspapers (The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian). The analysis was aimed at identifying how the two publications (which are characterised by opposing stances on the issue of Britain joining the euro) have used their editorials to advocate their positions throughout the course of the debate and the way in which arguments in leading articles have framed the issue for their readers.

As well as serving a descriptive purpose, the focus on arguments was also motivated by a different goal: namely, to identify the persuasive quality of persuasive messages on either side of the debate surrounding British membership of EMU. As we saw in chapter 2, arguments form the basic building blocks of persuasive communication, providing the means by which information effects changes in attitudes. There is considerable disagreement about the way in which arguments achieve persuasion and about what makes some arguments more persuasive than others. Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) empirical method of developing strong and weak messages for their experiments has been criticised for failing to distinguish different dimensions of argument quality and critics have advocated analysing the structure of arguments to disentangle persuasive strength from argument valence (its emphasis on positive or negative attributes of the target object) (e.g. Areni and Lutz, 1988; Boller, Swasy and Munch, 1990). In the present study, I used a structural analysis of argumentation (based on Boller et al., 1990) to evaluate the 'persuasiveness' of pro- and anti-EMU messages, based on the quantity and quality of evidence presented in support of an argument claim. The approach to argumentation analysis used (described in section 5.2.1) also provided a way of identifying the shared knowledge and assumptions between the message source and recipient (in this case, newspapers and readers), enabling me to explore the significance of the ideological component of news discourse in public opinion formation highlighted in Anderson and Weymouth's (1998) research.

5.1.1 Framing

The previous chapter looked at 'agenda-setting' – the process by which the media influence 'what people think about' (Cohen, 1963) through fluctuations in the salience of different issues or objects in news media coverage. The field of 'framing' research has sought to examine the media's influence on *how* people think about different issues, by looking at the way in which issues or objects are represented by the media. Like agenda setting, it has been argued (e.g. by McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997) that the process of representing an object involves the communication of salience – not simply about the significance of the object, but about the significance of different attributes of that object. By making certain object or issue attributes more salient than others, the media direct public attention in certain ways, and by so-doing, influence the way in which people come to think about the object or issue in question. For this reason, these authors have argued that framing should be viewed as an extension of the agenda setting paradigm. Others have argued, however, that it is inappropriate to lump the two approaches together, and that framing research has grown up into a paradigm in its own right (e.g. Scheufele, 1999). This section is intended as a brief introduction to the framing approach.

The notion of framing refers to the 'frames of reference' an audience uses to interpret and discuss issues and events (Tuchman, 1978). These are influenced not only by the personal experiences of the individual and their interaction with others, but significantly, also by the mass media. A distinction is drawn in the literature, therefore (e.g. by Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; de Vreese, 2002), between 'media frames' and 'audience frames'. Entman (1993) describes the former in the following way:

> *"To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and /or treatment recommendation for the item described." (p.52)*

In this way, the framing of events and issues in the news influences how news audiences come to understand those events and issues. By contrast, audience or 'individual' frames refer to the cognitive meaning structures (e.g. schema, categories, scripts, stereotypes, representations, etc.) that people use to interpret new information. Research in the field of framing has explored both framing by the media, as well as the way in which the public frame different issues. The present research is concerned with the way in which the opinion-leading press in the UK have come to frame the issue of the single currency.

Media frames are significant because of their capacity to influence how the public come to think about an issue. Entman (1993) identifies four specific functions of frames: they define problems, diagnose causes of problems, make moral judgements about those causes and suggest remedies for them. Frames may be specific to a particular event or issue ("issue-specific news frames"), but they might also be more 'universal', in as much as journalists across the world come to rely on particular ways of portraying events in the news in similar ways ("generic news frames" – de Vreese et al., 2001). For example, research in the US (e.g. by Gamson, 1992; Neuman et al., 1992) has found that news about economic and political events or issues tends to be rely on generic frames, such as a focus on conflict, or on the economic consequences of an event (which is said to make an event more relevant to the audience). De Vreese, Peter and Semetko (2001)'s study in four European countries found that general economic and political news tended to be framed more often in terms of conflict, while issue-specific coverage of the launch of the single currency in January 1999 was framed more in terms of economic consequences. The way in which frames manipulate the salience of 'object attributes' in this way is argued to influence the "probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory" (Entman, 1993; p.53). In short, framing has the power to influence the public's elaboration likelihood.

In the present study, I used a method of argumentation analysis to identify the way in which different 'attributes' of the euro issue have been made salient in different newspapers. Arguments frame information in both direct and indirect ways. Firstly, the explicit claims made in arguments have the capacity to directly communicate to readers how they should think about a particular issue. Secondly, the way in which arguments in editorials appeal to ideological assumptions shared between the newspaper and the reader provides an indirect means of emphasising the significance of certain issue attributes over others.

5.1.2 The significance of argumentation for understanding public opinion

Social psychological theories of persuasion have emphasised how people form and adapt their attitudes in response to persuasive communications, yet little attention has been given to how persuasive communications are produced in the first place (van Eemeren et al., 1997) and what exactly renders them persuasive (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1981; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Historically, however, such issues have been a central concern of philosophers studying logic and rhetoric, who have focused on the function of argument structure and content to convince others of a particular standpoint, and the degree to which some arguments achieve this while others do not. The turn towards language and discourse in critical approaches in social psychology has led to a recent revival of interest in ancient studies of rhetoric (e.g. Billig, 1987; Leach, 2000), and in philosophical theories of the structure and function of argumentation. In particular, a number of social psychologists have looked to these fields in order to challenge mainstream approaches to the study of attitudes and attitude change. Their work provides a valuable theoretical justification for the study of argument presented here. This section introduces Billig's (e.g. 1987; 1993) rhetorical approach to social psychology, and the work of social psychologists who have sought to apply Toulmin's (1958) model of argument to the study of social representations (Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b; van Bavel, 2001).

Billig's approach argues that we should be looking to ancient theories of rhetoric to learn more about cognition and psychology. He maintains that argument provides us with a model of human thinking. Argumentative discourse is dialectic. It is characterised by arguments that are implicitly opposed by counter-arguments. According to Billig (1987), this dialectic represents the opposing cognitive processes of 'categorisation' and 'particularisation'. Categorisation is assumed to be one of the basic building blocks of human thought. It is the process by which we come to understand and recognise objects or entities – by classifying them into pre-existing categories with other similar objects. But to understand the process of categorisation we need also to consider its opposite process, which Billig calls 'particularisation'. Through particularisation, we are able to re-categorise objects as being *different* from other existing category members, or to choose not to categorise objects, recognising instead their unique attributes. Just as every argument implicitly carries with it a counter-argument, to categorise an object implicitly involves a decision *not* to particularise it, or to recognise its separateness.

Billig (1993) relates his rhetorical approach to social psychology to Moscovici's theory of social representations (e.g. Moscovici, 1981; 1984). According to Moscovici (1984), representations consist in knowledge that has been negotiated through ordinary communication and have a structure that corresponds to the form of that communication. For Billig (1993), the form of that communication is argumentation, for it is through argumentative forms of discourse that socially-shared knowledge and representations are counter-opposed to one another, allowing the individual to renegotiate their attitudes and views.

Social representation involves two key processes: anchoring and objectification (Moscovici, 1984). The process of anchoring refers to the way in which new and unfamiliar objects (such as the single currency) are made familiar. Billig (1993) believes that this is achieved through argument through processes of categorisation. A new and unfamiliar object is a "focus of controversy", about which there will be arguments about "how anchors should be dropped" (p.50) – i.e. about how the object will be categorised. Through argumentative discourse, decisions are made about categorisations, with counter-arguments suggesting alternative categorisations. Thus, it is precisely through the dialectics of argumentation that unfamiliar objects become anchored in existing knowledge and social representations come into being. By contrast, the process of objectification involved in social representation refers to the way in which the representation comes to take on a specific and recognisable form. According to Liakopoulos (2000a; 2000b) the analysis of argumentation provides insight into how representations come to be objectified -

> *"Argumentation is the elaboration of thought in a way that is easily understood by everyone. If argumentation is the elaboration of thought, and thought consists of dominant representations, then the argument can be seen as a vehicle for the process of objectification."* (Liakopoulos, 2000a; p. 93)

Based on this, he proposes that argument be brought to "the foreground of social research on public debates" (p.152) because analysing argumentation allows us to better understand those factors which influence how debates develop.

Thus, it is through argumentative discourse that people come to form new knowledge and views about different issues, because it is in the context of controversy over new and unfamiliar ideas that understanding is negotiated via the processes of anchoring and objectification involved in social representation. In addition, Billig (1997) has argued that "the rhetorical analysis of argumentation can be used to investigate patterns of ideology, for it can reveal what is being taken for granted as common sense" (p.51). This allows the analyst to observe "not merely what issues are being overtly challenged by speakers and how these challenges are being discursively effected; the analyst can also note what is being left unchallenged or what is being presented as if unchallengeable." (p.51). This means that the study of argumentation in the press should provide some access to the ideological component of newspaper discourse discussed earlier in relation to Anderson and Weymouth's (1998) research. Indeed, this idea is supported by van Bavel (2001), who maintains that the study of argumentation provides the researcher with access to social representations, precisely because arguments appeal to people's taken-for-granted knowledge and understanding of the world to validate them. In this sense, it is neither the structure nor content of argumentation that is important; rather what is implicit within the argument, because it is this that reveals people's understanding of the issue under debate.

5.1.3 The present study

Billig (1993) argues that in the context of controversy and public debate (a context he refers to as the 'oratorical situation') the 'orators' express different stances on issues, yet "call upon common traditions as they appeal to the common sense of a common audience" (1993; p.56). Amidst such controversy, people's attitudes should be viewed as having both socially-shared elements, as well as non-shared aspects, being expressions of an "implicit, or explicit opposition to a counter viewpoint" (p.57). He therefore, advocates the study of attitudes in their "argumentative context", as this enables the researcher to recognise their fluidity through the evolving context of controversy, for it is in this respect, that "the complexity of modern social representation might be revealed" (Billig, 1993; 59).

The present study draws on this idea by studying arguments relating to the single currency expressed in the print media within the forum of a leading article or editorial. At times of high issue salience, different newspapers (in this case, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph (and their Sunday equivalents, The Observer and The Sunday Telegraph), with publicly acknowledged opposing stances on the issue of European integration, articulate their different viewpoints in their leaders so that a 'naturally occurring' argumentative context is created. The study of arguments in their natural context provides further insight into the role of the media in informing and shaping public attitudes and public opinion social representations (Jodelet, 1984).

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Argumentation analysis: Toulmin's (1958) model of argument

In order to analyse the arguments about the single currency employed in the leading articles of the two newspapers, a method of 'argumentation analysis' was employed. The method adopted here is based on Toulmin's (1958) model of argument, a theory that has been applied by a number of different authors in a range of social scientific research contexts (e.g. Boller, Swasy and Munch, 1990; Ball, 1994; Chambliss, 1995; Chambliss and Garner, 1996; Brockriede and Ehninger, 1960; Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b; van Bavel, 2001). The method involves reproducing the structure of the main argument in each of the leading articles, by identifying each of the argument features described in Toulmin's model (see below), and coding the text accordingly. The precise analytical approach adopted here is derived from a number of different interpretations of Toulmin's work, but draws mainly on Liakopoulos's (2000b) description of a method for argumentation analysis, which is based on Toulmin's model.

Toulmin's (1958) analysis of argument is best understood in the context the history of the study of argumentation, which has a tradition of over 2000 years, dating to the writings of the ancient Greeks – particularly those of Aristotle (van Eemeren et al. 1997; Leach, 2000). Argumentation refers to the use of language to "justify or refute a standpoint, with the aim of securing agreement in views", whether that be in interactions between two or more people, in legal proceedings or in the context of texts such as newspaper editorials where the writer formulates a formal line of reasoning (van Eemeren et al. 1997; 208). Historically, the aim of the study of argumentation was to discover the structural properties of arguments in order to evaluate their 'soundness' in terms of their internal logic and thereby, their persuasiveness. By uncovering the process of argumentation, it is possible to discover not only the way in which arguments are structured (typically, they comprise assertions or claims, inferred from data supplied as evidence for these), but also, to identify those argument forms that are more successful (or 'valid') than others. Thus, the concern of argumentation analysis has, typically, been with 'logic' and with the identification of different *forms* of argument, independent of the content of those arguments. By establishing where internal coherency is lost in argumentation, it is possible to identify invalid, or structurally weak, forms of arguments.

This kind of work is an ongoing concern of those still working within the tradition of logic who maintain that argument is the primary means of discovering truth and learning to think freely. For example, consider Shand's (2000) opening statement in his book on argument logic–

> *"... arguing is an indispensable way of getting to the truth and avoiding the false. If we do not use argument well and when we should, the likelihood is that we will acquire large numbers of false and quite probably dangerous beliefs on which we then base our actions." (Shand, 2000; p.1)*

However, the logician's approach has been criticised because it denies the reality of how argumentative discourse is used in the modern world. Arguments, as we know and recognise them, rarely take the form of the logical syllogisms that are the concern of philosophers. On the contrary, everyday discourse is made up of informal arguments of a wide range of forms, and comprises a complex interactive process between the 'arguer' (the person seeking to persuade) and the 'audience' (the target of the persuasive attempt). This idea represents a shift in focus, away from the strictly linear linguistic approach adopted by formal logicians, in which the communicative event is conceptualised in the form of a message sent from a sender to a naïve receiver (who duly responds with an appropriate shift in attitude or behaviour). Instead,

> *"the central theoretical questions are how opposing views come to be reconciled through the use of language and how actual audiences may be brought through rhetoric itself to more closely approximate the stance of an ideally rational audience" (van Eemeren et al., 1997; p. 215).*

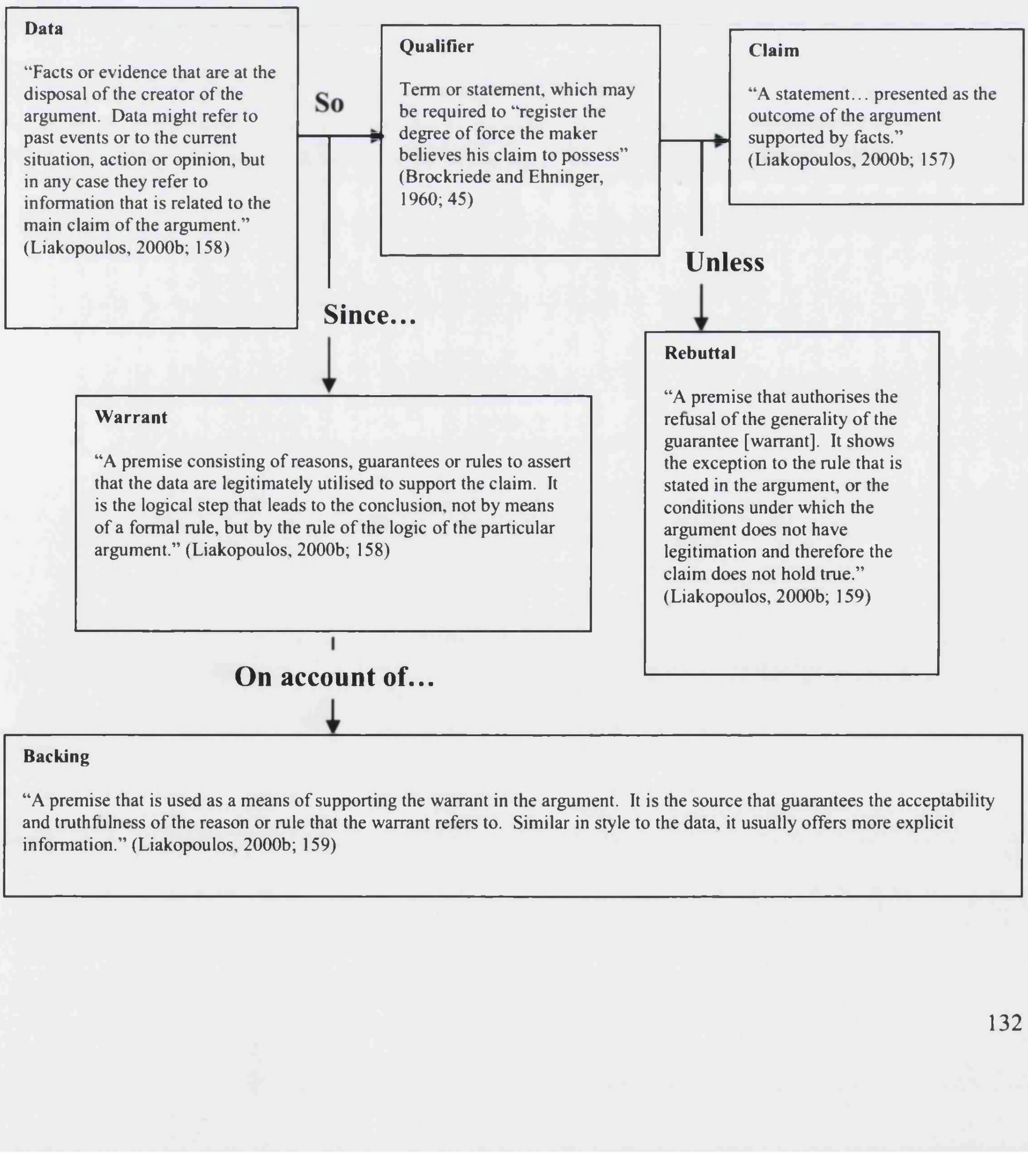
Thus, the activity of argument is dialectical in nature, and the relationship between arguer and audience is dialogic.

It was in this context that Toulmin (1958) made his contribution to argumentation theory. His approach broke away from that of formal logic by emphasising the importance of "persuasiveness and convincingness" (Liakopoulos, 2000b; 153) instead of formal validity, making the theory far better at accommodating contemporary examples of argumentative discourse. It is this that makes his approach a useful basis for contemporary research into argumentation.

According to Toulmin (1958) an argument is conceived as a structure comprising six key elements. Firstly, the core statement of an argument is referred to as its 'claim' or conclusion, and in order to support this claim, the arguer draws on the other structural elements of the argument. These include the 'data' or evidence offered in support of the claim and the 'authority' of the argument – i.e. the underlying premises that endorse the leap from data to claim. In Toulmin's terms, the authority comprises the 'warrant' and the warrant's 'backing'. In addition, the argument may also require 'qualifiers' and 'rebuttals', in order to "register the degree of force the maker believes his claim to possess" (Brockriede and Ehninger, 1960; 45). The aim of argument analysis, therefore, is to "make clear the functions of the different propositions invoked in the course of an argument" (Toulmin, 1958; p. 8-9).

This focus on structure makes argument analysis suitable for analysing the persuasive quality of information and its potential to effect changes in people's attitudes. It also sets it apart from other forms of linguistic analysis, which might be viewed as incompatible with social cognitive accounts of persuasion. For example, discourse analysis takes a much broader approach, focusing on multiple dimensions of discursive interaction (making it particularly well-suited to analysing persuasion as it occurs in natural speech acts), in order to make explicit the social context in which persuasive communication takes place. Similarly, the analysis of rhetoric takes into consideration not only the logical features of argument structure (logos), but also how persuasion is achieved through appeals to the emotions (through the use of pathos) and the credibility of the source of a persuasive communication (ethos). The narrower focus of argumentation analysis makes it possible to focus purely on the characteristics of messages that mediate persuasion, independent of recipient responses to those characteristics and the relationship between message source and recipient.

Figure 5.1 Schematic depiction of Toulmin's (1958) model of argument structure



Most contributors to this field have followed the traditional approach of formal logicians by attempting to schematise arguments to represent their underlying structure. Figure 5.1 depicts the argument schema implied by Toulmin's model. The diagram includes definitions of each argument element provided by Liakopolous's (2000b) account of argumentation analysis as a method for the social sciences.

5.2.2 Sample of leading articles

A corpus of leading articles (editorials) published in The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph and The Guardian/ Observer was constructed using the online search engine Lexis-Nexis™. As in the previous study, the decision to focus on these broadsheet titles was based on their significant opinion-leading role amongst the public, policy makers and media producers alike (Bauer et al., 2001). It is assumed that arguments in favour and against British membership of EMU that appear in these publications 'filter down' to the popular level, as they are interpreted and communicated to the wider public by others in opinion-leading roles (e.g. Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). As in the previous study, articles were extracted using the search term 'single currency', and the search was restricted to the ten-year period from 1.1.1991 to 31.1.2001. For each newspaper, a sampling frame was created comprising the headlines of all articles containing the search term, which were designated as 'leading articles' or 'leaders' in the FT-Profile database, listed according to their date of publication. A sample of articles was selected from each list, on the basis of publication date, the criterion for sampling being that the article had appeared in the newspaper during a period of approximately two-weeks either side of an event deemed to be of particular relevance to the euro debate.

In total, eight events were selected for inclusion in the study, and all the leading articles from an approximate two-week period surrounding the event were included in the argumentation analysis[9]. The events selected are shown in table 5.1, together with the dates on which the first and last articles in each subset were published, and the total number of articles containing the search term for each newspaper per event. The rationale behind the choice of events was either that the event had stimulated a high level of press coverage (as established in the analysis of issue salience in study A), or

[9] This sampling period was not adhered to strictly as it was considered important to retain the flexibility to include as many relevant texts as possible.

that the event was important in terms of the history of the single currency, both in terms of European politics, as well as in terms of the British debate surrounding EMU (Usherwood, personal communication). The headlines of the leading articles contained in the sample are available in Appendix B.

There were two main reasons for the decision to sample in this way. Firstly, selecting articles published during periods of high intensity coverage means explicitly sampling periods when the issue was highly salient on the media agenda. Study A provided some evidence to suggest that during such periods, the salience of the issue is also raised on the public agenda (albeit perhaps only for a subset of the population). When issue salience is high on the public agenda, then people will be more likely to become involved in an issue, and be more motivated to process information about the issue. Secondly, periods of high issue salience provide examples of naturally occurring 'argumentative contexts', which according to Billig (1987) provide insight into the processes by which public attitudes and representations are formed. Readers should refer to chapter 4 for information regarding the significance of the events in terms of their contribution to the historical development of EMU, and the British debate surrounding it.

Table 5.1 Events from which leading articles were sampled for argumentation analysis

Event	**Date(s) of event**	**Time period selected**	**Number of leading articles analysed**	
			Telegraph	**Guardian/ Observer**
Maastricht Summit	9-10.12.1991	03.12.91 – 15.12.91	4	4
Madrid European Council	15-16.12.1995	02.12.95 – 20.12.95	5	3
Dublin European Council	13-14.12.1996	02.12.96 – 31.12.96	6	5
General Election (1997)	01.05.1997	17.04.97 – 30.05.97	3	4
Amsterdam European Council	16-17.6.1997	03.06.97 – 18.06.97	3	3
Decision on 11 euro-zone members	03.05.1998	24.04.98 – 28.05.98	5	4
Launch of stage 3	01.01.1999	29.12.98 – 13.01.99	1	0
Danish Referendum on the euro	28.09.2000	04.09.00 – 23.10.00	1	2

The total number of articles analysed altogether was 53 (out of a total of 75 containing the search term that were initially sampled), of which 28 appeared in The Daily Telegraph/ Sunday Telegraph and 25 appeared in The Guardian/Observer. Only those leaders that were wholly or partly concerned with the issue of EMU or Britain's relationship with the EU (and/or events related to these) were retained in the analysis. Articles merely making reference to the search term ('single currency'), where the remaining content was not of direct relevance to the debate surrounding EMU were excluded from the analysis. For The Daily/Sunday Telegraph the number of articles from the sampling periods that were excluded on these grounds was 34, and the equivalent figure for The Guardian/ Observer was 16. It is noteworthy that there was a slight discrepancy in the sample sizes for each newspaper. However, this was not considered problematic, as the samples were not selected to be representative of all possible leading articles published in these papers. Rather, they were intended to capture the way in which the debate surrounding EMU had been framed by the two publications through their use of argumentation in their editorials. In this sense, any differences between the two newspapers in the quantity of articles referring to the single currency is of academic interest because it highlights the relative level of attention each of the titles gave to each of the events.

5.2.3 Procedure

The procedure for analysing arguments used here is based on the method described by Liakopoulos (2000b), which is based on identifying the constituent elements of argument structure identified by Toulmin's model. The analysis involved two key stages. These were developed to ensure the coding of the articles was as systematic (and transparent) as possible. The purpose of the exercise, however, was primarily descriptive, the intention being to characterise the issue positioning of the two publications with respect to EMU, rather than to make inferences about arguments appearing outside the events recorded.

The first stage of the argumentation analysis involved coding the arguments in each of the leading articles. Each article developed what is termed here an 'event-specific' argument – i.e. one which was specific to the events being reported on, and consequently, to the EMU debate at that time. This stage of the analysis involved reading through the articles and identifying the role played by each unit of text in the argumentative structure of the article. A 'unit' of text in most cases consisted of a single sentence or phrase. Each unit was identified and coded according to Toulmin's model, using a method of 'Framework' analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994), which involves using spreadsheets to organise the data coding process in Microsoft Excel. An alternative method for managing the textual data might have been provided by qualitative analysis packages such as Atlas TI or QSR Nudist. Such computer-assisted analytic approaches, however, are particularly well suited to the analysis of large quantities of text data, especially where there is a large quantity of codes to manage. However, because the present analysis was restricted to just six 'codes' (corresponding to the six argument parts specified in Toulmin's model), the Framework approach provided a more pragmatic solution.

As stated, the six codes were derived from Toulmin's model of argument and the aim was, primarily, to identify the key claims made in each article and the data presented to support them. In addition, where appropriate, text units could be coded as 'qualifier', 'backing' or a 'rebuttal', depending on the purpose they served in the argument as a whole. Because the focus of the analysis was on identifying arguments that were generic to the issue of EMU, rather than on the 'event-specific' arguments developed in each of the articles, the identification of these 'supporting' argument features was not of primary importance. Furthermore, the warrants underlying the event-specific arguments were rarely explicitly articulated, and so it was not usually appropriate to identify text units that served this purpose in the articles. Again, because the purpose of the analysis was to identify arguments generic to the euro debate, the analysis of warrants was not carried out at the initial stage of the argumentation analysis, but was conducted, instead, at the second stage, which focused on the 'EMU-specific' arguments developed in the four newspapers.

After the analysis of 'event-specific' arguments conducted at stage one, the coded argument parts were re-analysed and coded, in order to identify argument structures specifically relating to EMU and the single currency, so as to deconstruct the way in which newspapers communicated their positions on the issue. The aim was to identify argumentation that concerned the EMU issue – what have been termed here as 'EMU-specific' arguments. These arguments were rarely developed explicitly within a single leading article. Rather, they emerged over the course of time as articulations of the newspapers' stance on the issue.

The procedure for this stage of the analysis involved, firstly, identifying claims specifically related to EMU and the single currency. Secondly, 'evidence' was identified as text providing 'reasons' for adhering to the position on the euro advocated by the newspapers. Thus, unlike in stage 1 of the analysis, where the aim was to identify text acting as data in support of the event-specific claims in the articles, in stage 2, the analysis involved identifying data which could be interpreted as support for either a pro- or anti-EMU position, independent of the role that information may have played in the event-specific arguments. Once the EMU-specific claims had been identified, these were then subjected to 'thematic analysis' aimed at categorising the different types of claims being made about EMU, and the different types of evidence used to support the newspapers' positions on the issue. Claims and evidence were, therefore, coded and categorised according to their central theme.

Thirdly, the analysis sought to make explicit the implicit authority appealed to in the arguments – i.e. to identify the warrants underlying the relationship between evidence and claims. To do this, the EMU-specific arguments were 'reconstructed' from the text units that were coded as 'claims' and 'evidence' and were presented schematically along with the inferred warrants assumed to underpin them. Additionally, where appropriate, 'supportive' argument parts were identified (i.e. where the argument made use of qualifiers, rebuttals, or backing). The schematic reconstruction of the EMU-specific arguments is intended to provide a depiction of the newspapers' 'prototypical' positions on the euro.

5.2.4 Inter-coder reliability

In order to provide a means of evaluating the reliability of the method, two independent coders (including the author) conducted the analysis – the second coder analysing a sub-sample of the total number (about one quarter of the total). As described above, the analysis involved two main stages of coding. The first stage involved analysing – article-by-article – the event-specific arguments developed in the leading articles. The second stage involved the analysis of argument claims and evidence specifically relating to EMU, from across the sample of leading articles. Analysis of inter-coder reliability was carried out only for the first stage of the process. Because it was not always possible to code all the text units (sentences) according to Toulmin's schema, it was not straightforward to identify a finite number of units in each article and simply assess how each coder allocated the codes to each unit. In practice, the analysis was much more interpretive and so it did not lend itself easily to a formal test of reliability. A somewhat crude measure is provided by an analysis of the level of agreement between the two coders in the identification of claims and evidence in the event-specific arguments. Of the claims and evidence identified and coded by the author, the second coder identified and coded text units in the same way 72% of the time (further details are available in Appendix B). This provides some reassurance regarding the reliability of the analytic method, but the level of disagreement raises some cause for concern (discussed further below). The second stage of the analysis (identification of the EMU-specific claims and evidence) and the thematic analysis of EMU-specific claims and evidence were not subjected to reliability analysis and it should be emphasised that the summary of findings reported here represents the author's interpretation.

5.2.5 Research questions

The main purpose of the argumentation analysis was to explore how the different publications communicated their positions on the EMU issue through argumentative discourse appearing in their leading articles. Specifically, the analysis addressed the following research questions:

1. What claims are made about EMU and the single currency over the course of the different events?
2. How have claims about EMU changed over the course of time?
3. What evidence is invoked in the articles to support the newspapers' positions on the euro?
4. What warrants are appealed to, to justify the link between evidence and claims?
5. How can the newspapers' issue-positioning be schematically represented?

5.3 Results

Leading articles published in both the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph were structured similarly with the majority of articles consisting of a succession of explicit claims relating to the issue or event of interest, along with data in support of those claims. These 'micro-arguments' either worked in parallel or in series to support the overall argument presented in the leading article. Whilst the majority of articles were only partially concerned with the issue of the single currency and whether or not the UK should join EMU, the event-specific argument in each article acted as a vehicle for the editor to articulate the newspaper's position on the euro issue. For this reason, the results reported here focus on the second stage of argumentation analysis that was conducted, aimed at identifying the arguments relating to EMU and the single currency.

5.3.1 EMU-specific claims in The Guardian and The Observer

The analysis of claims relating to EMU identified two ways in which the newspapers communicated their position on the issue. For the most part, issue-positioning revealed itself implicitly through the claims made about EMU; through the valence of those claims (i.e. whether they were positive or negative towards EMU), or through the warrant underpinning those claims. Additionally, however, the newspapers occasionally made explicit their issue positioning by either stating clearly what that positioning was, or by implying it through the use of the pronoun 'we'.

In the case of The Guardian and The Observer, the clearest example of this in the articles analysed here, appeared in a leader in the Guardian printed in the run-up to the 1997 General Election -

> *"There is hardly an institution in the country that is not split on the issue. The Observer favours the wait-and-see policy, with a predisposition towards joining – but we are keenly aware of the economic and political risks." (27.4.97).*

Thus, it would be inappropriate to describe the Guardian and Observer's position on EMU during the period under investigation as being strongly in favour of the single currency. Indeed, whilst the publication claims to be broadly pro-European, its position on the euro issue remained somewhat 'agnostic' throughout the 1990s. It is also evident from this quotation that the editorial position of the Guardian was different from that of the Observer newspaper, although, for the remainder of the analysis, I have chosen to examine both publications together.

The nature of these positions is manifest in the EMU-related claims made by the two newspapers, none of which firmly commit the publications to a strongly pro-EMU stance and many of which could be described as ambiguous with respect to Britain's relationship with Europe. Table 5.2 summarises the findings of the thematic coding of the EMU-specific claims identified in the argumentation analysis, in the order in which they appeared in the articles during the events analysed. All the claims that were coded (29 in total) are available in Appendix B.

Table 5.2 Euro-specific claims identified in The Guardian and The Observer

	Main Claim
1	*Britain's future must lie with Europe (Maastrict)*
2	*EMU has massive implications for Britain (Qualifier: whether we join or not) (Maastrict)*
3	*Britain should work with Europe to create a different future for the EU (Madrid)*
4	*We must make the euro work (Dublin)*
5	*The single currency is one of the most important issues facing the country (Election '97)*
6	*Britain's policy must be to wait and see (Election '97)*
7	*Europe is political (Euro Launch)*

Of the claims shown in table 5.2, the most frequently articulated argued that the single currency has significant implications for Britain, often with an appended qualifier such as "EMU may fail", or "whether or not Britain joins". The claim first appeared during the Maastricht coverage, and then, throughout the period of investigation. Some examples of this claim are given below. It is noteworthy, that 'implications' is used to refer to both the positive and negative impact of the single currency and in this sense, can be seen as being related to the 'economic and political risks' that form The Guardian's central concern, although it often appeared to be supported by evidence relating to the benefits of the single currency.

Examples:

"The implications of the agreement on EMU are huge." (Maastricht - 15.12.91)

"A single currency will have immense implications for Britain, whatever the terms on which it is finally agreed and whether or not Britain joins it." (Dublin – 9.12.96)

"Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain." (Dublin – 14.12.96)

"even though Britain is not joining European Monetary Union in the first wave, we will nevertheless be faced with the prospect of the euro starting to circulate in Britain of its own accord." (Euro-11 Decision – 29.4.98)

These claims appeared against the 'background' of the broadly pro-European position of the two publications, which urged readers that it was in Britain's interests to be part of the European project and to work alongside European partners to achieve a future for Europe of mutual benefit to all. These claims were somewhat ambiguous vis-à-vis the single currency, often implying that Britain should be participating in closer union with its European partners but that Europe should not be making the single currency its priority. Once again, these were claims that appeared in the texts throughout the period of investigation.

Examples:

"Britain cannot afford to be left on its own if the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency" (Maastricht – 15.12.91)

"A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe not to stand apart from it. That does not mean becoming a passive partner. But it does mean promoting the benefits of engagement in Europe." (Dublin – 7.12.96)

"Europe's blinkered dash for a single currency, instead of co-ordinating economic policy, is putting the cart before the horse. (...) The era of 'ever closer' institutional union in Europe must close. The new priority must be to deliver popular and practical benefits to Europe's people." (Election 97 – 10.6.97)

By the time of the decision as to which EU Member States would join the single currency in the first wave (May 1998), such appeals had evolved into a concern that Britain should be working with its partners to ensure the success of the single currency.

e.g.

"Although we have deep worries about the viability of monetary union – both as a project for the 11 founder members and for Britain if she joins later – it is vital to mitigate the chances of failure." (Euro-11 Decision – 2.5.98)

It was apparent that The Guardian/ Observer's consolidated position on the single currency, as articulated through all of the EMU-specific claims identified in the articles, was that, given the scale of project and the political and economic difficulties associated with it, the government's decision to 'wait and see' was the right one. Interestingly, this position was mainly based on the conception that EMU was primarily an economic decision. However, by 1998, concerns about "political fixing" fuelled the newspapers' caution about the single currency. During the Danish referendum, the prior claim that "no *economic* decision (...) is more important than the single currency" (appearing during the coverage of the summit in Amsterdam – 27.5.97), had evolved into the following claim:

> *"Forget Gordon Brown's mantra about five economic tests (...) the euro is not and can never be an 'economic' issue." (Danish Referendum - 25.9.00)*

Again, this claim clearly echoes the previous concern expressed in The Guardian about the economic and political risks carried by the EMU project, justifying the overall determination to put the decision on hold for the time being.

5.3.2 EMU-specific claims in The Daily and Sunday Telegraph

While The Guardian's position was characterised by agnosticism towards the single currency project, The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph consistently revealed its opposition towards EMU throughout the period of investigation. As with The Guardian/ Observer, this issue-positioning is evident in a number of explicit claims made in the leading articles.

Examples:

> *"We do not want closer political or monetary union at present; we have enough to be going on with." (Maastricht – 9.12.91)*

> *"This newspaper has always warned that, under the pressures of an election campaign, the Cabinet's wait-and-see policy on the single currency was unlikely to hold." 17.4.97*

> *"Conceived as a political fantasy, it seems destined to end as an economic failure. Britain must stay out of it." (Euro-11 Decision – 4.5.98)*

This opposition was perhaps more a reflection of the strongly partisan support of the newspaper for the Conservative Party, and the way it evolved over the course of the decade reflected the position that the Tories took on the issue during this time. During the early part of the decade, the newspapers' claims about the euro strongly supported John Major, applauding the opt-out of the single currency secured at Maastricht by the then Prime Minister, and generally supporting the 'wait-and-see' policy on EMU advocated by the Government at that time. Two examples from leaders published at the time of the Maastricht summit illustrate this position:

> *"There is every reason to believe that the public will continue to see the sense of what is essentially a 'wait and see' position by the Government on one of the most far-reaching and hazardous decisions the Community has contemplated in decades." (Maastricht – 3.12.91)*

> *"A postponement of such a critical decision would damage nothing." (Maastricht – 9.12.91)*

Table 5.3 Euro-specific claims identified in The Daily and Sunday Telegraph

	Main Claim
1	*We should 'wait-and-see' (Maastricht)*
2	*EMU is a threat to independence (Maastricht)*
3	*EMU is dangerous/ damaging (Maastricht)*
4	*EMU is a political project (Madrid)*
5	*EMU carries implications for Britain (whether we join or not) (Madrid)*
6	*The Government must decide its position on EMU (Madrid)*
7	*No country will achieve the Maastricht convergence criteria (Dublin)*
8	*We must make EMU work (Dublin)*
9	*EMU means scrapping the pound (Election '97)*
10	*The euro will be a weak currency (Election '97))*
11	*EMU is a French and German project (Amsterdam)*
12	*EMU carries economic risks (Euro-11 decision)*
13	*The euro is an intrusion on our national life (Euro Launch)*
14	*It is possible to be pro-EU but anti-EMU (Danish Referendum)*

As divisions in the Conservative Party over Europe deepened, however, the Telegraph adopted a more firmly anti-EMU position, although like the Guardian, it was set against a broadly pro-European Union outlook, favouring co-operation with European partners, but rejecting economic and political union. However, by May 1998, political interference in the decision over which Member States qualified to join EMU at the first wave led the newspaper to a more determined rejection of the single currency project. Thus, unlike The Guardian's position on EMU, which appeared to remain relatively stable over the course of the decade, The Telegraph's stance on EMU evolved from a wait-and-see position into one which was firmly antagonistic towards a single currency.

This opposition to the euro also found expression *implicitly* in the other EMU-specific claims identified in the argumentation analysis. The most common themes identified in the thematic coding of the claims are shown in table 5.3 (for each one, the event at which the claims first emerged is shown in parentheses). All text units coded as EMU-specific claims are shown in Appendix B.

Unlike in The Guardian, the EMU-specific arguments found in The Telegraph were considerably more varied and a greater number of them were recorded in the argumentation analysis (a total of 55 from the 27 articles analysed, compared with 28 from The Guardian/Observer). Because of the evolution of the Telegraph's position, the themes that summarise those claims (in table 5.3) are listed in the order in which they first appeared in the analysis, although it is noteworthy that many of these reappeared in articles published later (see below). Some of the claims made echoed those found in the Guardian leaders – for example, support for the 'wait-and-see' position during the Maastricht negotiations and concerns about the implications of EMU for Britain, irrespective of whether or not the decision was made to join. Similarly, there was agreement that EMU represented one of the most important issues facing the country and support for the project in as much as "it is not in Britain's interests for the euro to be a disaster" (Dublin – 15.12.96). However, in spite of these points of convergence between the two publications and the fact that there was greater variety in the arguments found in The Daily Telegraph, the majority of claims expressed the newspaper's negative position on this issue. Four main themes recurred during the period of investigation communicating the newspaper's position in this way. The first appeared at the time of Maastricht. Despite the support shown for the Conservative Government's wait-and-see policy on EMU, the dominant theme at this time described the single currency project as 'dangerous' and 'damaging':

Examples:

> *"This newspaper believes that the lurch to a single currency is potentially damaging to the cause of European co-operation." (Maastricht – 3.12.91)*
>
> *it is "one of the most far-reaching and hazardous decisions the Community has contemplated in decades." (Maastricht – 3.12.91)*
>
> *"It may be argued that the outcome of this EC summit is more important for perils and disasters averted than for the positive benefits it confers" (Maastricht – 15.12.91)*

By the time of the Euro-11 decision, this had evolved into a second theme, more specifically concerned with the economic risks associated with the euro. This theme is illustrated in the following examples:

> *"The euro system is one that can work properly only in good weather. As soon as the European economy hits turbulence, the engines are going to jam." (Euro-11 Decision – 30.4.98)*
>
> *"There is no common interest rate that suits all Europe's different economies." (Euro-11 Decision – 28.5.98)*
>
> *"The danger of EMU is that, if one nation in the currency zone finds itself suffering hardship that it could have avoided with the freedom to manage its own currency, there will be nothing that the politicians will be able to tell their angry electors." (Euro-11 Decision – 28.5.98)*

Thirdly, at the time of the Madrid summit in 1995, concerns about political involvement in and the political implications of the EMU project first emerged, and came to form a central concern in the argumentative claims of the two newspapers, which, as the examples shown below demonstrate, recurred throughout the decade:

> *To achieve EMU "the currency must be managed for political rather than economic ends" (Madrid – 2.12.95)*
>
> *"In the minds of most, EMU is so clearly a political rather than an economic question that they believe the failure to converge is almost irrelevant." (Dublin – 2.12.96)*
>
> *"The Commission's evident readiness to elevate political over economic considerations has robbed the euro's supporters in this country of their last remaining argument. The EU is clearly less interested in monetary stability than in including as many states as possible in the next stage of European construction." (Election 97 - 28.4.97)*
>
> *"the launching of the single currency is essentially a political undertaking." (Euro-11 Decision – 24.4.98)*
>
> *"The single currency has always been an explicitly political project." (Euro-11 Decision – 28.5.98)*
>
> *"EMU has been consciously developed by Europe's political elites as an instrument for achieving full economic and political union, and will therefore lead necessarily to the evisceration of Parliament." (Euro Launch – 29.12.98)*

The fourth main eurosceptic claim emerging during this period portrayed EMU as a threat to our independence and sovereignty. Again, this theme reappeared throughout the decade as illustrated in the following examples:

"we are not merely engaged in protecting our independence, but limiting the injury that could be suffered by others if the Europe of the philosophers runs so far ahead of itself down the federalist road that it falls over its own peoples." (Maastricht – 9.12.91)

"there may still come a day when Britain faces a straight choice between staying outside a single currency at serious cost to our economy, or opting in at the price of our financial independence." (Maastricht – 15.12.91)

"The abolition of the pound means the end of British national independence." (Election '97 – 21.4.97)

"The single currency has serious implications for national sovereignty" (Euro Launch – 29.12.98)

5.3.3 Descriptions of EMU

The arguments about EMU developed by the newspapers were articulated not only in the context of the event-specific arguments that were the central concern of the leading articles analysed, but also in the discursive context that typified the different publications. Both papers used a mixture of formal and informal styles, but The Daily Telegraph was far more likely than The Guardian to embellish their arguments with emotive rhetoric, which arguably lent additional weight to the force of the claims being made. Appendix B contains descriptions of the single currency and the EMU project that appeared in the articles subjected to argumentation analysis. Often, these descriptions arose 'outside' of the main argument claims and evidence, so they were not always included in the argumentation analysis. However, although they have not been coded here as explicitly contributing to the structure of the arguments presented, it can be argued that a description of an object can, nevertheless in itself, implicitly make claims about the nature of that object.

For example, the earliest descriptions of EMU recorded in the analysis of The Guardian articles from Maastricht identified the move towards a single currency as "a German thing because the Germany economy dominates". Equally, a frequently occurring theme in the Daily Telegraph articles was the description of EMU as part of a federalist project. During the Madrid summit, EMU was variously described as:

"the cornerstone of a federal Europe"
"the headlong rush to federalism"
"the federal menace"

"the ratchet of federalism"

Table 5.4 Descriptions of EMU and the single currency

The Guardian/ Observer	**The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph**
"a German thing"	"damaging"
"a kind of monetary Esperanto"	"politically precarious"
"an altogether more serious animal"	"out of kilter"
"that fateful project"	"federalist"
"in principle a desirable thing"	"over-rigid"
"a complex and hugely important question"	"unnatural"
"the tortuous road to monetary union"	"unhealthy"
"a question of unprecedented magnitude...with unpredictable, convulsive implications"	"rigid"
"irreversible"	"mess"
"a matter of national destiny"	"disaster"
	"the cornerstone of federal Europe"
	"the headlong rush to federalism"
	"the federal menace"
	"the ratchet of federalism"
	"the Euro juggernaut"
	"sinking ship"
	"housewife's headache"
	"ill-starred plan"
	"hideous"
	"funny money"
	"constitutionally weak"
	"inflationary 'camembert' currency"
	"inflationary disaster"
	"risky"

Inevitably, there is considerable overlap between the EMU-specific claims that appear in the newspapers and the way in which EMU is talked about in the articles. It is not always possible to detach what is explicitly being claimed about the single currency from what is implicitly conveyed in this way. Clearly a detailed analysis of the content of arguments and the use of rhetoric is beyond the scope of the present study, which focuses on a comparatively large range of articles published over a long period of time. However, what is important here is to note the way in which claims and evidence are backed by the discursive and rhetorical tools used in the arguments (what Aristotle described as 'artistic proofs' – see Leach, 2000). For The Daily Telegraph, these descriptions of the single currency and EMU were almost entirely negative, whilst those for The Guardian and Observer were both positive and negative, expressing the ambivalence of the publications' positioning on the issue. Table 5.4 shows some of the adjectives and descriptions of the euro/ EMU identified in the analysis (note that considerably fewer rhetorical descriptions were present in the Guardian and the Observer).

5.3.4 EMU-relevant evidence

As with the analysis of euro-specific claims, units of text in the leading articles coded as euro-relevant 'evidence' in the argumentation analysis were also subjected to thematic coding. The purpose of this was to a) categorise the content of the evidence; and b) to identify the valence of the evidence - i.e. whether the data supported a generally pro- or anti-EMU stance. As with the descriptions of EMU discussed earlier, there was a clear distinction between evidence invoked in the Guardian/ Observer and that employed in The Telegraph arguments. Table 5.5 shows the themes identified in the evidence employed in the Guardian/Observer arguments. Immediately apparent is the finding that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the ambivalent position of these publications on EMU is supported by a range of multi-valenced evidence, which supported arguments both in favour and against the single currency project. Over 70 units of text were identified as 'EMU-specific' evidence, of which over 40 were identified as reasons for adopting a pro-EMU stance.

Thematic coding of the evidence resulted in the list of themes shown in table 5.5 (listed in order of the frequency with which they recurred in the texts)[10]. The range of evidence presented is represented by a relatively small number of themes. It is noteworthy that of the pro-EMU evidence presented, the majority of data concerned the economic implications of the single currency, with just two main political arguments invoked in favour of joining EMU. These concerned the ideological goals of the EU, of deterring conflict by binding European states and providing a collective European identity, and the need for Britain to retain a central role in EU negotiations (which would be diminished by staying out of EMU). Of the economic data presented, the newspapers relied on the concept of 'Eurocreep', the idea that even if we stay out of

[10] It should be noted that the frequency of occurrence of each theme is not provided here as it was felt that such information would not be appropriate in a qualitative analysis of this kind. Tables containing the evidence extracts identified in the argumentation analysis are shown in Appendix B.

EMU, the euro will enter 'by the back door' and be used by businesses and individual consumers regardless.

Table 5.5 Themes identified in evidence invoked in The Guardian/ Observer

	Reasons for being pro-EMU		Reasons for being anti-EMU
1	*'Eurocreep' – Britain will start using the euro anyway*	1	*EMU carries economic costs*
2	*Europe's economy is strong/ like the US economy*	2	*EMU implies loss of control of economy*
3	*There are economic risks if we stay out*	3	*EMU is imperfect/ needs modification*
4	*Businesses will want to use the euro*	4	*EMU could entail too much political unification*
5	*EMU will remove transaction costs*	5	*There is too much political interference in EMU*
6	*EMU 'binds' European states*	6	*The millennium bug may make changing to the euro problematic*
7	*Britain should have a central role in EU negotiations*	7	*There is little popular support for the project*
8	*Lists of economic reasons*	8	*EMU carries political risks*
9	*EMU can bring greater prosperity*	9	*Joining EMU may mean loss of sovereignty*
10	*EMU will attract overseas investors*	10	*The British economy is different from the euro economy*
11	*EMU allows price transparency*		

A range of macro and micro economic advantages of participation in a single currency are presented in the articles in support of a pro-EMU position, however, these were juxtaposed against the reasons provided in support of an anti-EMU position. As with the pro-EMU arguments, the data used in the anti-EMU arguments were also more likely to be economic in nature, focusing on the economic costs associated with EMU and the economic disadvantages of EMU. However, the authors were more likely to invoke political reasons for opposing the single currency. In particular, concerns about excessive political unification, political interference in the project, and the implications for British sovereignty were the country to join. These themes were largely echoed in the leading articles published in the Daily/Sunday Telegraph, as is evident in table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Themes identified in evidence invoked in The Daily/Sunday Telegraph

Reasons for being anti-EMU	
1	*Problems associated with the Maastricht convergence criteria*
2	*EMU is a political project*
3	*EMU carries economic costs*
4	*EMU is a French and German project*
5	*There is little or no support for EMU*
6	*The euro will be 'weak' or inflationary*
7	*There are economic risks involved (especially due to 'one-size-fits-all' economic policy)*
8	*EMU could be 'damaging' or 'dangerous'*
9	*Joining EMU would mean loss of sovereignty/ independence*
10	*EMU is part of a federalist project*
11	*EMU will/ has cause(d) social unrest*
12	*The euro will be confusing*
13	*It is possible to be pro-Europe but anti-EMU*
14	*There is no such thing as a collective European identity*
15	*The euro is not yet a reality*
16	*The euro means 'scrapping' the pound*
17	*EMU is associated with fudging*
18	*Labour is pro-EMU*
19	*There are more important issues to focus on*
20	*EMU may fail*

As we have seen, unlike the arguments found in The Guardian/ Observer, those found in the Daily Telegraph were exclusively anti-EMU, and the evidence presented in support of this position was entirely negatively-valenced, stressing the negative aspects of the EMU project and of what British membership would entail. A total of 124 text units were coded as evidence in the Telegraph articles, and these are represented by just 20 themes (shown in table 5.6). Units were coded as data if they provided support for the overall position of the newspaper (i.e. the implicit 'claim' that Britain should not join EMU), rather than simply where the text was specifically used to support an explicit claim in the article. For this reason, there was less of a clear distinction in the Telegraph articles between claims and evidence, and there was a tendency for the claims themselves to implicitly provide support for the overall stance of the publication towards the issue, acting as reasons why Britain should not join the euro.

5.3.5 Prototypical Arguments and Warrants

Prototypical arguments about EMU were reconstructed for each newspaper from the claims and evidence identified in the argumentation analysis. These are shown in figure 5.2 and 5.3. Only the most frequently occurring claims and data that best-captured the stance of the publications on EMU over the course of the events analysed were included. It should be noted that the models represent the author's interpretation of the data – the schematic representation of the arguments shown in the figures are intended to illustrate that interpretation.

Because the warrants for the arguments were not articulated in the articles analysed – most warrants are usually implicit in an argument (Chambliss and Garner, 1996) – the warrants presented in the diagrams represent inferences on the basis of the claims and evidence analysed. As discussed previously, the study of warrants in argumentation analysis is rendered problematic by the fact that warrants are seldom explicit in the argument. For this reason, in order to identify the warrants that authorise a particular argument, it is necessary to infer it from our common sense understandings of the issues addressed in the argument. An additional complexity here, however, is that the different newspapers appeal to different sets of warrants inferred from the evidence and claims about EMU found in The Guardian/ Observer (following the method used by Chambliss and Garner, 1996). To illustrate, the first warrants relate to the claim that EMU carries economic and political risks (which was a dominant theme in The Guardian), which is supported by evidence to suggest EMU might lead to political unification or have a negative impact on the British economy. The warrant enables the 'leap' from evidence to claim (Liakopoulos, 2000b), but in turn, depends upon shared assumptions between source and audience about how political unification might be undesirable. Thus, to understand fully the warrants underlying arguments, it is necessary to investigate the ideological component to news discourse whose comprehension relies upon taken-for-granted representations of how the world works. To facilitate the reader's understanding of the warrants appealed to in the EMU-specific arguments of the newspapers analysed here, table 5.7 shows the "covert ideological positions" of the two newspapers identified by Anderson and Weymouth (1998) in their analysis of press reporting on EMU. It is this ideological position that is assumed by these authors to play a significant role in public opinion formation.

Figure 5.2 Prototypical argument about EMU from The Guardian/ Observer

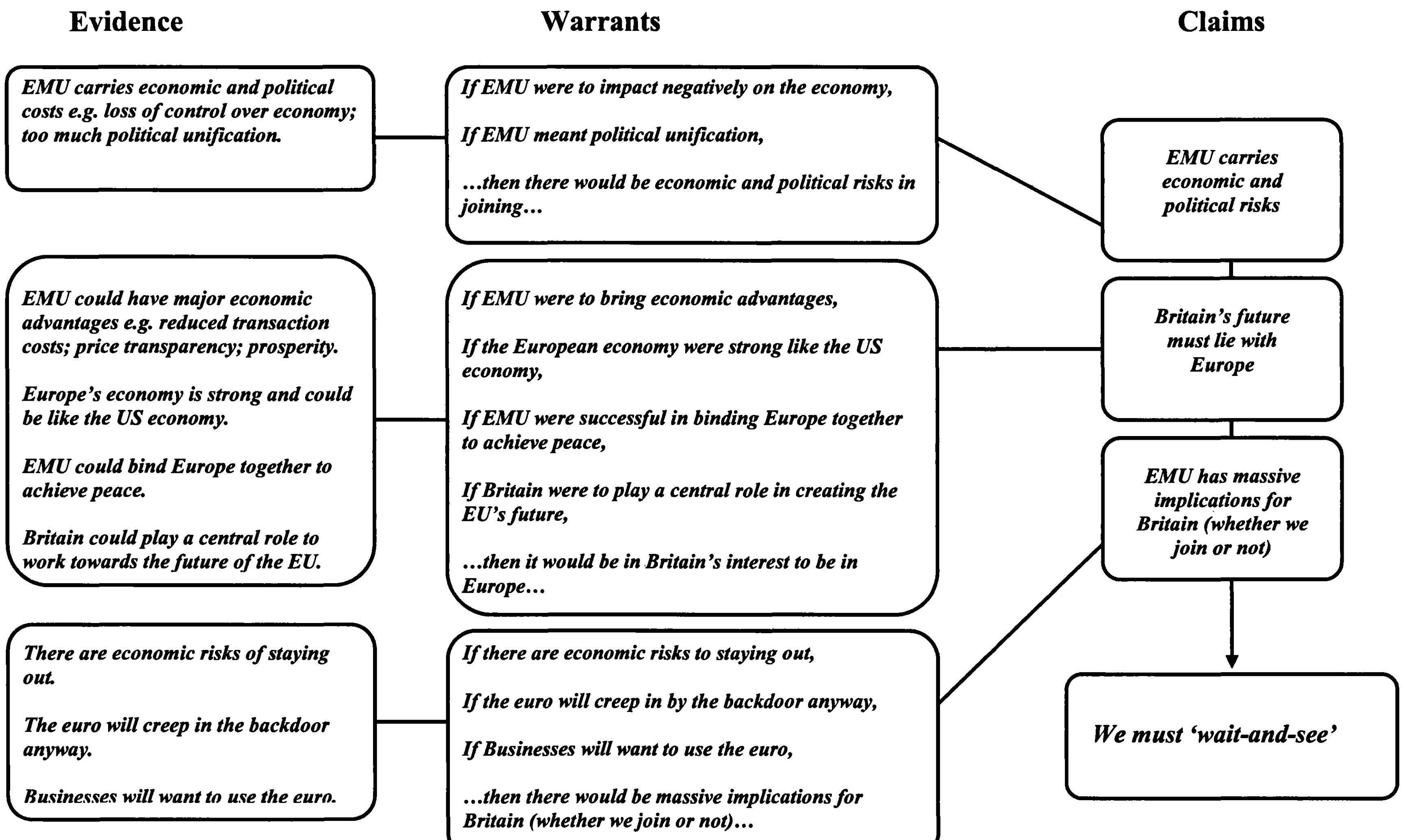


Figure 5.3 Prototypical argument about EMU from The Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph

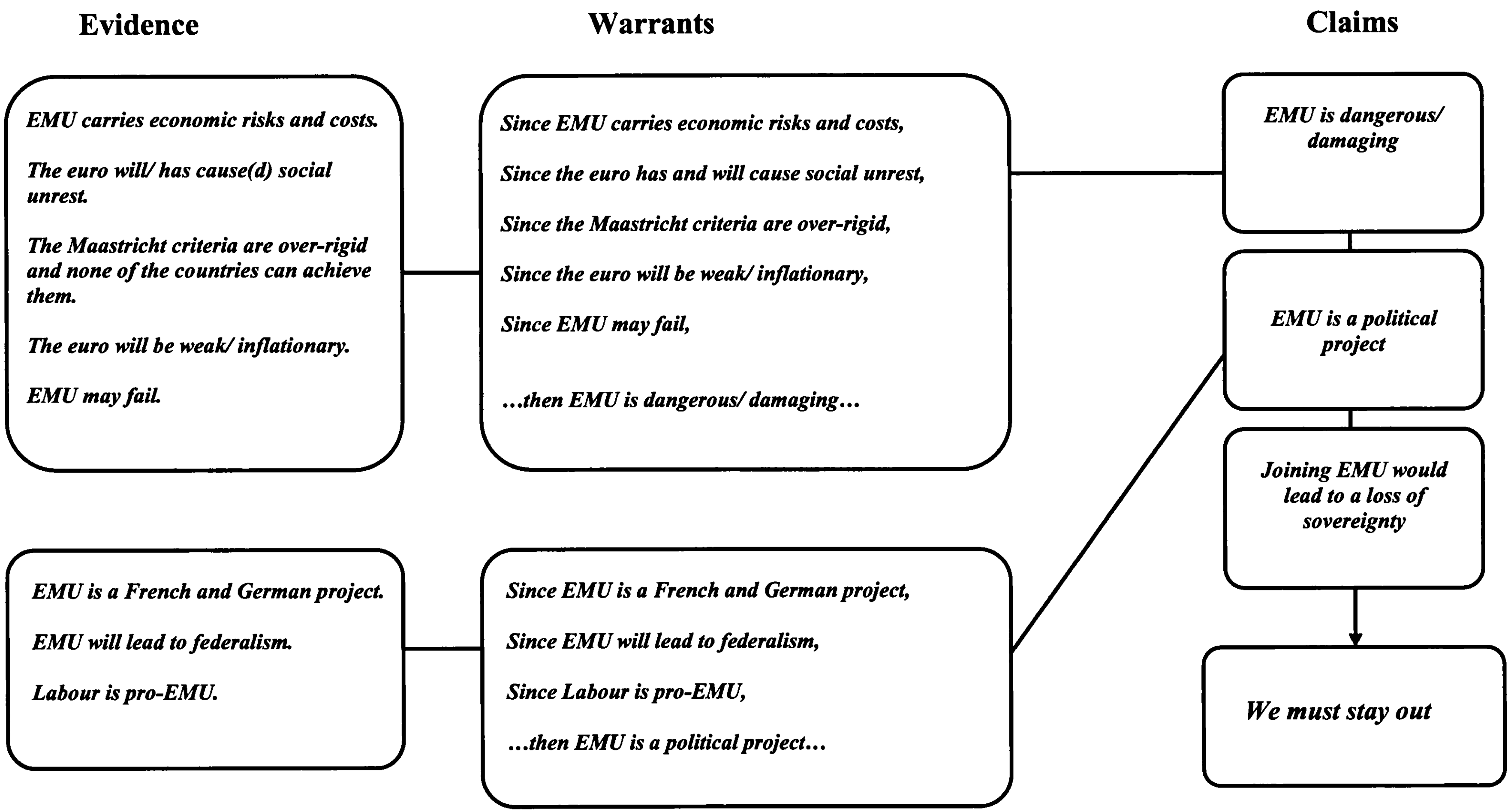


Table 5.7 Covert ideological positions on Europe of The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian

	The Guardian	**The Daily Telegraph**
1	*The European Union is an efficient provider and facilitator working acceptably well in Britain's interests.*	*The single currency is potentially a source of social unrest.*
2	*The economic and social pressures on other member states in the run-up to qualifying for EMU signal caution as Britain negotiates on the single currency.*	*The single currency is a threat to sovereignty.*
3	*The single currency is (properly) being resisted by organised labour.*	*The Social Chapter will hamper British manufacturing.*
4	*Britain should be prepared to investigate further unspecified acts of political integration.*	*The EU is more disunited than united on matters of foreign policy and security.*
5	*The single currency is an unnecessary diversion of the EU from other more pressing issues such as the completion of the single market.*	*Britain needs the EU less than the EU needs Britain.*
6	*Britain should not enter in the first round of the single currency.*	*Germany is the driving force behind the single currency and this is linked to its historical attachment to its dreams of expansion in Europe.*
7	*Britain should be prepared boldly to investigate further political integration, not ignoring certain federal options.*	*Germany and France remain rivals rather than partners in Europe.*
8	*Europe is the most important geo-political/ economic and social space in which Britain must become a permanent and major player.*	*The pro-Europeans [New Labour] are to be associated with 'treason' and will abandon the veto, surrender the pound, sign away British rights.*

Source: Anderson and Weymouth (1998; pp. 76 and 108)

5.4 Discussion and Conclusion

5.4.1 Summary of findings

Over the course of the events from which the leading articles analysed here were sampled, it was possible to characterise the positions on EMU of the newspapers by examining the use of argumentative discourse relating to the issue. Whilst the articles were structured so as to present arguments specific to the event or debate being covered at that time, argumentation specifically concerned with EMU and the single currency recurred throughout the articles and represented one of the primary means through which the newspapers' issue positioning was communicated. For The Daily/Sunday Telegraph, this positioning was a function of partisan support for the Conservatives and, therefore, showed evidence of having evolved over the course of the decade, from a position of support for John Major's 'wait-and-see' position at the time of Maastricht, through appeals to the Tory Party to make its position clear on the issue of UK membership of EMU during the run up to the 1997 general election, to support for Tory opposition to the single currency project following the election. Overall, their stance was characterised by negativity towards closer European integration throughout the period, although downright opposition to EMU emerged only gradually as the debate evolved.

By contrast, the position of The Guardian and The Observer was essentially one of 'wait-and-see' throughout the period under investigation (also a function of its pro-Labour partisanship). It was perhaps inappropriate to study the two 'sister publications' together, given the explicit statement in one of the articles that they held different stances on the issue of EMU (The Guardian being the more ambivalent of the two with its concern for the economic and political risks involved). Nevertheless, given that both publications shared a generally pro-European perspective, it seemed reasonable to interpret this statement about The Guardian's position as *implicitly* communicating a 'wait-and-see' strategy on EMU. Thus, it was possible to characterise the stance of the two papers as being essentially in favour of closer European integration, and of Britain's direct involvement in that process, but with distinct reservations with respect to a single currency.

The way in which the newspapers positioned themselves on the single currency issue manifested itself through what were termed here 'micro-arguments' – EMU-relevant arguments that emerged over the course of events (independent of the issue-specific arguments developed in each of the articles), which communicated the overall stance of the publications. For the Telegraph, three key micro-arguments underpinned their overall view that "We must stay out" (of EMU). Firstly, claims repeatedly expressed the notion that EMU is somehow dangerous and/or damaging; secondly, they highlighted the idea that EMU is an essentially political project rather than an economic one; and thirdly, they highlighted the threat to British independence and sovereignty represented by EMU. These micro-arguments were additionally supported by the use of negative adjectives used to refer to the process of EMU and the single currency.

By contrast, for The Guardian/ Observer, the main three micro-arguments that underpinned the overall 'wait-and-see' position of the publications referred firstly, to the economic and political risks presented by the single currency; secondly, to the need for Britain's future to be a part of Europe; and thirdly, to the idea that EMU carries serious implications for Britain, regardless of whether we join now or later. Unlike the Telegraph, these newspapers were considerably less likely to use rhetorical embellishment in their descriptions of EMU and the euro, negative or otherwise. Similarly, whereas the micro-arguments found in The Telegraph were either unsupported by explicit evidence, or were supported by only negatively-valenced evidence, those found in The Guardian/Observer were supported by both negative and positive reasons for and against joining the single currency.

Warrants were rarely, if ever, explicitly articulated in either newspaper and it was clear that the arguments appealed to socio-cultural information (Chambliss, 1995) assumed to be shared amongst the readers of the different publications. Our understanding of this ideological component of the newspapers' argumentative discourse is informed by, and supports, Anderson and Weymouth's (1998) analysis. There was evidence to show that arguments about the euro used to communicate and support the overall stance of the newspapers on the EMU issue *recurred* throughout the period of investigation. This meant that the arguments tended to build on each other cumulatively, such that once articulated, they formed part of a rhetorical resource, to which the author could appeal when building new arguments in later articles. Claims were repeated, but, in turn, these claims acted both as evidence for the implicit position of the publication, as well as acting as warrants for later arguments. The warrants appealed to in the arguments, therefore, not only drew on wider knowledge assumed to be shared by the readership of the different publications, but also on quite specific shared knowledge that came from past readings of the newspapers' leaders. As such, the arguments entered into the shared knowledge of the writer and reader, and became available to be inserted into later arguments, facilitating the readers' interpretation of the overall stance of the paper.

The analysis of arguments presented here had twin aims: firstly, to reveal the persuasive quality of arguments on either side of the EMU debate and secondly, to identify how information about the euro was framed by the media. In terms of the former, a clear conclusion to be drawn from the research findings is that the eurosceptic voice in the opinion-leading press during the course of the debate surrounding EMU was far 'stronger' in communicating its position than the pro-European press. Arguments in The Telegraph were consistent in their opposition towards the euro, presenting a 'united front', with no attempt made to present readers with any of the arguments in favour of a single currency. By contrast, the more 'balanced' position of The Guardian/Observer, which presented evidence for and against EMU, arguably succeeded in communicating uncertainty and ambivalence about the single currency project. Whilst it was clearly the intention of these newspapers to provide support for the position that we should not rush into a single currency without seeing how it functions in reality (which was essentially, the Labour position on the issue at the time), the net result was that there was no clear articulation of the pro-EMU case as there was for the anti-EMU case and this 'covert scepticism' about EMU in the pro-European press may have been responsible in some way for public opposition to the euro. Of course, other publications may have been successful at this time in communicating unambiguously the arguments in favour of EMU (e.g. The Financial Times), so the conclusions drawn here must be made with this reservation in mind.

The use of argumentation analysis represented a relatively new approach to the study of argument quality, and the question of what makes an argument persuasive – an issue that lies at the heart of research into persuasion. As was discussed in chapter 2, there has been considerable debate surrounding the question of whether the persuasiveness of an argument constitutes a characteristic of the argument itself or some characteristic of the receiver's response to the argument. According to Boller, Swasy and Munch (1990) analysing arguments according to Toulmin's model can provide a means of determining their relative strength in terms of their 'structural integrity', without the need to refer to recipient cognitive responses. On this basis, one conclusion to be drawn from the present analysis is that the multi-valenced nature of The Guardian/Observer arguments rendered them structurally weaker and, consequently, less persuasive than the anti-EMU arguments circulated by The Telegraph newspapers. Further research would be necessary, however, to determine whether these appraisals of argument strength correspond with readers' judgements about their persuasiveness.

In terms of the second aim of the research (to study media frames through the analysis of argumentation), the findings point towards the following conclusions. On the one hand, the event-specific arguments developed in each of the leading articles seemed to provide readers with 'issue-specific news frames' (de Vreese et al., 2001), highlighting particular attributes of the issue depending on the nature of the events being reported. But over time, the editorial writers came to rely on generic news frames (Gamson, 1992: Neuman et al., 1992) to structure their representation of the debate surrounding EMU and these frames revealed themselves in the claims of the 'micro-arguments' described above. While The Telegraph's arguments came to frame the issue in terms of conflict (e.g. between Britain and Europe), The Guardian / Observer tended to frame the issue in terms of the political and economic consequences of joining EMU. These findings differ slightly from those of de Vreese et al.'s (2001) study, which found that coverage of the single currency tended to be framed in terms of economic consequences, suggesting that the issue positioning of the journalist and publication is a crucial variable in determining the choice of news frame.

As well as building on previous studies of framing in news about European integration, the findings of the research provid further support for the conclusions of other researchers who have analysed the content of news reports about Europe. In particular, Hardt-Mautner's (1995) research similarly revealed a reliance on negative stereotypes in the eurosceptic press and the absence of a clearly articulated pro-European voice in British newspapers. The analysis presented here also identified a set of ideological assumptions underlying the pro- and anti-EMU arguments in The Guardian/Observer and The Daily/Sunday Telegraph that were similar to those identified in Anderson and Weymouth's (1998) study. The research extends the scope of these studies, however, by specifying some of the mechanisms by which these characteristics of anti-European press coverage might influence public attitudes. Notably, the findings suggest that the frames used in news reports are likely to reveal themselves in the way people think about the EMU issue, and that the more compelling anti-EMU arguments of the right-wing media are likely to have greater persuasive impact than those of the more ambivalent centre-left publications. More research is needed, however, to test these hypotheses empirically.

5.4.2 Limitations of the research

As a method for the social sciences, argumentation analysis provides a number of advantages to the researcher. As well as providing a tool for extending our understanding of theoretical approaches such as social representations theory (e.g. see Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b and van Bavel, 2001), on a practical level, it also provides a powerful tool for qualitative data reduction. In the present study, the Toulmin model provided a means of isolating what was being said about the euro in newspaper articles that were not only explicitly concerned with the EMU issue. As a result, the method made it possible to identify the evolution of the newspapers' positions over the course of time and the way in which they framed the EMU issue, while remaining 'true' to the text, and with minimal loss of information, as is often a limitation of approaches based on classical content analysis (more commonly used in framing research). The approach adopted here also incorporated thematic coding, aimed at categorising the claims made about EMU and the evidence invoked in their support. These methods add value to classical approaches because they make it possible to examine the process by which framing is achieved in the first place, rather than focusing solely on frames as the end-product. As I argued in the introduction, the theoretical justification for this is drawn from the work of social psychologists who have explored the relationship between argumentation, human thought and social representation (e.g. Billig, 1987; 1993; Liakopoulos, 2000 and 2000b; van Bavel, 2001). If, as Billig (1987; 1993) argues, argumentative discourse mirrors thought processes, then studying the structure of that discourse in the context of an evolving social debate, can show us not only how media frames come to be constructed, but also how individuals and audiences frame issues themselves.

Nevertheless, a number of limitations of the method of argumentation analysis adopted here do raise concerns, regarding the validity of the findings, and more generally, about the reliability of the method as a whole. One methodological limitation in particular deserves special attention. The method of argumentation analysis based on Toulmin's model relies considerably on the interpretive skills of the researcher, a) to be able to identify the argument parts in the first place (something many readers have been shown to have difficulty with – Chambliss, 1995); and b) to make inferences where argument parts are missing or implicit. As van Bavel (2001) has argued,

> *"Toulmin's framework needs to be understood as a model for a complete argument, including those elements which might be implied and not explicitly stated. The researcher must infer the missing elements, the pieces of the puzzle which are missing. (...) In order to successfully analyse arguments and identify their hidden elements, therefore, the researcher has to take the wider context into account, which contains this taken-for-granted knowledge" (p. 94-95)*

The position of the newspaper on EMU was rarely explicitly articulated, yet it was implicit in the micro-claims made about the single currency. Because of this, identifying the argument parts was not always straightforward, because 'micro-claims' could equally have been coded as evidence for the implicit 'macro-claim' about EMU being made by the newspaper. In this sense, argument parts were interchangeable, depending on the level of argumentation (e.g. statements identified as evidence in the event-specific arguments coded at the first stage of analysis, may have served as claims later on in the analysis of EMU-specific arguments). As a consequence, it is possible that other researchers would reach different conclusions, a prospect that raises considerable concerns about reliability – and the findings of the assessment of inter-coder reliability conducted here provides some evidence of this.

Perhaps one of the most problematic aspects of Toulmin's model for social scientists trying to analyse naturally occurring arguments, concerns the identification of 'warrants'. A warrant is the 'authority' that justifies the relationship between evidence and claim. It is the "underlying reason offered for accepting or rejecting evidence as support for the claim" (Chambliss, 1995; p.781). However, the concept is problematic because the warrant is usually implicit in the argument – that is, it is seldom explicitly articulated. Rather –

> *"the arguer presents the evidence and claim and assumes that the relationship between the two (warrant) is obvious ("Everybody knows that... ")"*
> *(Chambliss and Garner, 1996; p. 296)*

This means that the argumentation analyst must infer the warrant from the evidence and claims relying on an understanding of the assumptions shared between arguer and audience. This not only raises concerns about the reliability of such an analytic procedure, but also perhaps more importantly, presents a problem in terms of the universality of the argument. If an argument appeals to taken-for-granted assumptions about the world, then by its very nature it must be culturally specific. Arguments found in The Guardian and The Telegraph, therefore, may only 'make sense' to readers of those publications, and the validity of the argument will depend not on its structural integrity, but rather on the ideological component underpinning the relationship between claims and data and accessible only to those who share the relevant cultural understanding appealed to by the arguer. Both researcher and audience alike are, therefore, constrained by their access to the socio-cultural information required to comprehend argument warrants (Chambliss, 1995). If the way in which a reader interprets an argument depends up on their ability to access to socio-cultural information assumed on behalf of the arguer, then perceptions of the validity of the argument will also depend upon that access. Argument quality, therefore, can only be judged by readers familiar with the taken-for-granted assumptions upon which an argument is warranted. In other words, the validity of information depends not simply on the structural integrity of arguments, but on the message recipient's acceptance that the message source is authoritative on the message-topic.

I return to the issue of argument quality and what makes an argument persuasive in Study D and discuss the findings of Study B further in chapter 9. In the next chapter, I present Study C, which tests predictions from the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) using data from a public opinion field experiment.

6 ISSUE-INVOLVEMENT AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

6.1 Introduction

Studies A and B were concerned with the role of information circulated by the media in public opinion formation and change. The research focused on two different mechanisms by which media information influence public attitudes: a) its capacity to influence public perceptions of the importance of an issue through the communication of salience (agenda-setting) and b) its capacity to influence how people think about an issue by emphasising particular features of it (framing). In study A, it was shown that only a minority of British people considered matters relating to European integration to be important over the course of the debate surrounding the single currency, but that for this minority concerns about the issue were relatively sensitive to fluctuations in the salience of the issue in the print media. The analysis of argumentation in the pro- and anti-EMU press conducted for study B showed how arguments about the euro were restricted to a limited number of claims about the nature of the single currency and the EMU process, which typically emphasised the negative consequences of a single currency rather than highlighting the potential benefits. Whereas the anti-European press has consistently presented the arguments *against* Britain joining the euro, the pro-European press has failed to unambiguously present the arguments in favour. Rather, arguments about the euro developed over the course of the debate in the pro-European camp tended to present both positive and negative aspects of the issue, rendering arguments structurally weak and potentially unpersuasive.

In studies C and D, I switch focus away from the role of information in public attitudes to the question of how variation in public issue involvement determines how people respond to the information they are presented with. Both studies draw on the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986), which was described in detail in chapter 2. Whereas study D involved a purposely-designed study to test the predictions of the ELM with respect to the role of involvement and identity in persuasion, study C makes use of existing data from a public opinion field experiment – a 'Deliberative Poll' – designed to assess the effect of information and deliberation on attitudes. Analysing persuasion in the context of a deliberative poll is particularly illuminating because the research setting is said to simulate the conditions of high issue salience that might be expected to occur in a real-life referendum campaign. The data provide an opportunity to explore how public attitudes might be influenced in such a context, as well as a chance to test the applicability of the ELM for understanding persuasion outside of the social psychological research laboratory. The chapter begins with a brief review of the central tenets of the ELM and the significance of issue involvement in persuasion. I then describe the deliberative polling method and the unique opportunities for secondary analysis provided by the data used in this study. Next, I present the predictions derived from the ELM about variation in attitudes as a function of involvement, which guided the analysis of the deliberative poll data undertaken for this research. The remainder of the chapter presents the results of the analysis and discusses their implications for understanding persuasion processes under conditions of heightened issue salience, at varying levels of public issue involvement.

6.1.1 The role of involvement in how people respond to information

In chapter 2, I introduced the key postulates of the ELM and highlighted the importance of 'involvement' as a predictor of elaboration likelihood. To recap, the model posits two 'routes to persuasion' (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981): a *central* route, involving systematic processing of arguments contained in the persuasive message; and a *peripheral* route, whereby the message recipient bases their attitudinal judgement on heuristics triggered by some element of the persuasive context (typically, extraneous to the arguments presented in the message). The route to persuasion taken depends upon a person's motivation and ability to think about new information and to integrate that information into their existing structure of beliefs about a given issue. Both motivation and ability are assumed to be influenced by issue involvement.

People can be located at different points along a continuum of involvement, which correspond to different predictions regarding the likelihood of information or message elaboration. At high levels of involvement (e.g. where the target issue is of direct personal relevance, or where the issue is one they are particularly interested in or knowledgeable about), people will be more motivated and able to systematically process the different arguments contained in a message compared with those located at the lower end of the continuum. When information is systematically processed and integrated into an individual's existing system of beliefs, any resultant attitude change is assumed to have taken place via the 'central route' to persuasion. By contrast, where involvement is low, the likelihood of elaboration is correspondingly low, so attitude change is more likely to be effected via the peripheral route. Thus, the two routes to persuasion anchor the two end-points of the involvement (or elaboration likelihood) continuum.

As we have seen, it is not uncommon to find that the public is relatively uninvolved in political issues. This has certainly been shown to be the case in relation to the issue of European integration and in particular, for the British people, who are among the least informed and most apathetic in the European Union, especially about Economic and Monetary Union. In chapter 1, I introduced the literature relating to the public's lack of issue-relevant knowledge and discussed the implications this has for measuring attitudes. In particular, people with low levels of knowledge about political issues tend to hold weaker and more labile attitudes or to respond seemingly at random to questionnaires designed to measure their attitudes (Converse, 1964). As a result, they tend to switch their views about issues over time and also tend to hold apparently inconsistent views about issues that might be seen to be related among the political elite Thus, the more politically sophisticated an individual is, the more likely it is that they will hold stronger and more 'fully-formed' attitudes about political issues and the more likely it is that their attitudes will exhibit 'constraint' (Converse, 1964) – i.e. will be more consistent with sets of related beliefs (Fishkin, 1991). Similarly, the more important an issue or attitude is for an individual, the stronger the attitude is likely to be and the more resistant it is to persuasion (Krosnick, 1990). These ideas are consistent with the ELM, whereby those individuals that are highly involved in particular issues are more motivated and able to systematically integrate new information into their attitude and belief systems, leading to stronger, more coherent and more long-lasting attitudinal positions that are resistant to change.

6.1.2 Deliberative Polling – rationale and method

The implications of a lack of political sophistication among the public gave rise to concerns among political scientists about the validity and reliability of attitude measures used in opinion polls and surveys. The willingness of respondents to express so-called 'non-attitudes' (Converse, 1964) raised questions about how 'true' public opinion about political issues (that is, the opinions of an informed electorate) could ever be estimated.

One response to this challenge was the development of the 'deliberative polling' methodology by Fishkin (1991; 1995; Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002).

A deliberative poll typically involves three stages. The first stage involves a household survey of a random probability sample, in order to establish the views of the public on the polling issue. At the second stage, a sub-sample of respondents to the survey (representative both in terms of demographic characteristics, as well as in terms of the attitudes of the initial survey sample) are invited to attend a weekend event designed to immerse participants in the issue, providing opportunities for reading balanced material, small focus group discussion and question-and-answer sessions with politicians and experts from both sides of the debate. At the end of the weekend event, a third stage involves respondents completing the same questionnaire used at stage 1, so as to provide a measure of attitudes 'post-deliberation' (i.e. after the persuasion attempt). The findings of the second survey are assumed to represent the views of a better-informed public, because the participants have taken time to explore the different issues relating to the debate in detail. Unlike most polling procedures, therefore, the deliberative poll is said to measure not simply what the public thinks but also, "what the public would think, had it a better opportunity to consider the questions at issue" (Fishkin, 1995, p.162). In this respect, deliberative polls are descriptive in nature, as well as predictive of how people's attitudes might change during a period of high issue-salience, such as one might expect during a referendum campaign (Curtice and Jowell, 1998).

In the present study, I make use of data from a deliberative poll on the subject of the future of Britain's role in the European Union, conducted in June 1995 by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen; then the Social and Community Planning Bureau), on behalf of Channel Four Television and The Independent newspaper. The European Union study was the second of five deliberative polls carried out in Britain between 1994 and 1998 (indeed, only the second study ever to use the deliberative polling method) – the others UK polls were about crime policy, the future of the monarchy, the May 1997 General Election and the future of the NHS (Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002; p. 461). Each poll followed the same basic format – face-to-face interviews with a random sample of British adults, followed by a two-day event held in Manchester to which a representative sub-sample was invited to participate (the Europe study took place at the University of Salford). Each of the events was filmed and televised as part of a Channel 4 series called 'Power and the People'. All the British deliberative polls carried out by NatCen during this period were designed and conducted under the guidance of James Fishkin and Robert Luskin (both of whom were based at this time at the University of Texas) and Roger Jowell (then director of NatCen).

The main aim of the analysis conducted at the time of the poll by the principal investigators was to estimate the extent of attitude change among participants as a function of their participation in the weekend event. The results had to be analysed quickly in order to feed into the television programme broadcast at the end of the deliberative weekend and none of the researchers involved in the coordination of the poll ever subjected the data to more detailed analysis after the event of the kind undertaken here[11] (this is not true for all of the British deliberative polls, however – see for example, Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002; Luskin, Fishkin, Jowell and Park, 2004; Park, Jowell and McPherson, 2004; Sturgis, 2001; List, Luskin, Fishkin and McLean, 2007). The data have not so far been made freely available to be exploited by secondary analysts, so the opportunity for me to make use of them here was truly unique and a considerable privilege[12]. At the time the present analysis was conducted (Roberts, 2001), the data from the European Union poll had not been subjected to secondary analysis by any other researchers. However, since then, the data have been included in a meta-analysis of all five British deliberative polls (see Sturgis, Roberts and Allum, 2003), which looked at differences in attitude constraint before and after participation in the deliberative weekend, at different levels of political sophistication (measured by responses to knowledge quizzes in each survey – described in more detail below). In study C, which had a broader focus on involvement as it is conceptualised in the social psychological literature on persuasion, I was interested in using the data to explore the applicability of the ELM as a theoretical account of the way in which people form attitudes in response to information.

6.1.3 Predictions

Because of the design of the deliberative poll, the data provide an unusual opportunity to examine the effects of information on attitudes. As stated previously, the aim of the

[11] At least they had not done so prior to my undertaking the present study.
[12] I am indebted to Roger Jowell, James Fishkin, and Robert Luskin for permitting me to make use of the data for this research, as well as to the National Centre for Social Research for providing access.

analysis undertaken here was to test a number of predictions about how people form and change their attitudes in response to the information they are presented with or encounter via the mass media, and in particular, about how different people will respond to information depending on their issue involvement. These assumptions are specified below:

1. Individuals vary according to their levels of interest in and knowledge about European integration and EMU, both of which can be regarded as indicators of issue involvement[13]. In ELM terms, this means they can be located on a continuum ranging from very low to very high involvement, with corresponding implications for the likelihood with which they will elaborate on information about Europe and the euro.
2. Individuals with higher levels of involvement will be more motivated and able to systematically process information about Europe and the euro and consequently, they will hold stronger attitudes about European integration, compared with individuals with lower levels of involvement, who may still be undecided in their views.
3. Individuals with lower issue involvement will be less motivated and able to systematically process information about Europe and the euro, and consequently, will tend to have weaker and more labile attitudes. They will be more likely to be persuaded by cues peripheral to the information they are presented with.
4. Thus, individuals will differ systematically in their responses to persuasive communications on the basis of their level of involvement in the issue. This will manifest itself:
    a. in the extent to which individuals are open to persuasion in the first place – i.e. relating to the strength of their prior attitudes;
    b. in the extent to which their attitudes towards Europe and the euro are consistent with each other – i.e. in terms of attitude constraint (Converse, 1964; 2000);
    c. in the nature and extent of attitude change resulting from exposure to persuasive information about the euro.

[13] The concept of 'issue involvement' has been used in a number of different ways in the persuasion literature (see Johnson and Eagly, 1989); on pages 65-66 of this volume I describe the definition of the term that guided the research undertaken in this thesis.

After describing the questionnaire used in the Europe poll, I present the results of the secondary analysis that tested these predictions.

6.1.4 Questionnaires

The deliberative poll makes use of two questionnaires: one administered at phase 1, in the initial household survey and the other administered at the end of the deliberation event. The second questionnaire only includes a subset of those questions asked at phase 1. The questionnaires used in the present study consisted of three main types of questions:

1) Items aimed at establishing respondents' level of interest and involvement in politics and the topic of European integration. These included measures of attitudes towards Britain and being British and attitudes towards other countries (i.e. broadly, they provided a measure of patriotism and of openness towards other cultures).
2) A range of attitudinal measures relating to different aspects of UK membership of the European Union, including 'agree-disagree' statements concerning the advantages and disadvantages of European integration.
3) Socio-demographic measures (e.g. employment status and level of education) providing background variables for the analysis.

The analyses presented here focus on (2), the attitude measures, which formed the core of the questionnaires. These items were administered to respondents both at phase 1, as well as after the weekend event, thus providing a measure of attitudes before and after deliberation.

6.1.5 Participants

The data analysed here were from those respondents who attended the deliberative poll weekend (n=224). Table 6.1 shows the sample composition, and compares it with that of the initial household survey (n=900). There were no significant differences between the weekend sample and the overall survey sample, either in terms of demographics, or in terms of their self-rated interest in politics and European issues, and knowledge about European integration. This highlights a key strength of the deliberative poll technique – the opportunity to draw inferences to the wider population through the use of random probability sampling.

6.1.6 Index of issue involvement

In order to test the predictions of the ELM (that attitudes and processes of attitude change vary as a function of prior involvement in the target issue), the weekend sample was divided into low, medium and high involvement groups. A 'continuum of involvement' was constructed based on people's responses to three items administered in the phase 1 questionnaire (table 6.2), which taken together provide a measure of respondents' interest in the polling issue, and their scores on a 5-item quiz in the core questionnaire (table 6.3), which provide an indication of their knowledge about the polling issue.

As I have argued, both interest in and knowledge about a polling issue are seen to be key components of issue involvement, because they relate to people's motivation and ability to process issue-relevant information.

Table 6.1 Socio-demographic composition of deliberative poll samples

	Weekend Sample (n=224) % (unless otherwise specified)	Survey Sample (n=900) % (unless otherwise specified)	Non-Weekend Sample (n=676) % (unless otherwise specified)
Sex			
Male	100 (46%)	426 (47%)	323 (48%)
Female	121 (54%)	474 (53%)	353 (52%)
Age			
Mean	45.9 years	47.5 years	48 years
Minimum	18 years	18 years	19 years
Maximum	81 years	93 years	93 years
18-30	22.0	20.0	20.0
31-40	22.0	18.0	17.0
41-50	18.0	21.0	22.0
51-64	23.0	20.0	19.0
65+	17.0	21.0	22.0
Region			
South	42.0	41.0	40.0
North	43.0	44.0	44.0
Scotland	9.0	9.0	9.0
Wales	6.0	6.0	7.0
Education			
No qualifications	34.0	38.0	39.0
GCSE-level or equivalent	36.0	33.0	32.0
A-level or equivalent	12.0	11.0	11.0
Degree-level or equivalent	19.0	19.0	19.0
Party Allegiance			
None/ DK/ Refused	19.0	20.0	20.0
Conservative	28.0	29.0	29.0
Labour	38.0	37.0	37.0
Liberal Democrat	11.0	11.0	11.0
Other	4.0	3.0	3.0
Interest in Politics			
Very interested	12.0	10.0	10.0
Fairly interested	46.0	42.0	41.0
Not very interested	30.0	32.0	34.0
Not at all interested	13.0	15.0	16.0
Interest in future of Britain in Europe			
Very interested	26.0	22.0	20.0
Fairly interested	49.0	50.0	50.0
Not very interested	18.0	20.0	21.0
Not at all interested	6.0	7.0	8.0
Can't say	1.0	1.0	2.0
Self-rated knowledge about European integration			
Very knowledgeable	5.0	3.0	3.0
Fairly knowledgeable	36.0	37.0	38.0
Not very knowledgeable	53.0	49.0	48.0
Not at all knowledgeable	6.0	9.0	10.0
Can't say	1.0	1.0	1.0

Table 6.2 Measures of interest in polling issue

Item Wording	Response Categories
(a6) How interested would you say you are in politics?	(Very interested, Fairly interested, Not very interested, Not at all interested, Can't say)
(a7) And how interested would you say you are in the future of Britain in Europe?	(Very interested, Fairly interested, Not very interested, Not at all interested, Can't say)
(a8b) How knowledgeable would you say you are personally about creating stronger links with Europe?	(Very knowledgeable, Fairly knowledgeable, Not very knowledgeable, Not at all knowledgeable, Can't Say)

Table 6.3 Measures of knowledge about polling issue

Item Wording	Response Categories
(a) The European Union has recently expanded to 15 members (True)	True, False, Don't Know
(b) Switzerland is to join the European Union (False)	True, False, Don't Know
(c) Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels (False)	True, False, Don't Know
(d) Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years (True)	True, False, Don't Know
(e) Of the three major British parties, the Liberal Democrats are the least in favour of the European Union (False)	True, False, Don't Know

The items in table 6.2 were coded so that a high score on each variable constituted a high level of interest or self-rated level of knowledge in the polling issue. Respondents scored one point for each correct response to the items in the knowledge quiz (table 6.3). Mean scores across all the items in tables 6.2 and 6.3 were computed, in order to obtain an overall measure of issue involvement. Involvement scores were then used to categorise respondents into three equal-sized groups constituting those with low, medium and high scores on the involvement index (n=77 for low and high involvement groups and n=70 for the 'medium-involvement' group).

Table 6.4 Inter-correlations between items in the involvement index

	Score on Knowledge Quiz	Interest in Politics	Interest in Europe	Self-rated Knowledge
Score on Knowledge Quiz		.359	.277	.310
Interest in Politics			.478	.424
Interest in Europe				.360
Self-rated Knowledge				

The inter-correlations between items included in the involvement index are shown in table 6.4. All were statistically significant at the 5% level. Reliability analysis of the items in the knowledge 'quiz' yielded an alpha of 0.56, which increased to 0.67 after the weekend event when quiz performance had significantly improved. In order to strengthen the justification for basing the involvement index on this set of items, a Principal Component Analysis was carried out, to ascertain whether the items appeared to be measuring the same underlying construct. The analysis yielded a model with a single principal component with an eigenvalue greater than 2, which explained over half (52%) of the variance in the data. On the basis of these considerations, therefore, the division of the sample on the basis of this involvement index was considered justifiable and satisfactory.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Predictors of low involvement in the polling issue

In order to explore socio-demographic variation in the sample as a function of issue involvement, binary logistic regression analysis was used to discover the most important predictors of involvement. Those with the lowest levels of involvement in Europe formed the focus of the analysis because of their significance in terms of their potential influence in a referendum on the euro (the proportion of undecided voters at this time could have influenced the outcome of the vote). Thus, the dependent variable in the model was membership of the low involvement group (i.e. the third of the sample with lowest scores on the involvement index) and the analysis predicted the likelihood of respondents being included in this low involvement category. The best-fitting model included the following covariates: sex of participant, political orientation (coded

'Conservative' vs. other), strength of party allegiance (which can also be viewed as a proxy measure of how involved people are in politics), ethnicity (coded 'white' vs. other), education (a categorical variable based on the nature of qualifications gained) and two additional variables, which broadly measured people's 'openness' to Europe. These were a) whether the respondent had travelled to other European countries in the past year and b) whether they could speak, either fluently or a little, another foreign language. All covariates were retained in the model as controls, despite the fact that not all were significantly associated with issue involvement. Model statistics are shown in table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Logistic regression statistics

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex of participant	-1.27	.35	13.24	1	.000	.28
Party affiliation	-.45	.39	1.32	1	.25	.64
Strength of party affiliation	-.24	.25	.91	1	.34	.79
Employment status	.15	.34	.20	1	.65	1.16
Ethnicity	.25	.64	.16	1	.69	1.29
Recent travel experience	-.94	.34	7.55	1	.01	.39
Education level			.52	3	.92	
Level 1 – Basic qualifications	-.13	.39	.11	1	.74	.88
Level 2 – Advanced	.07	.63	.01	1	.92	1.07
Level 3 – Degree level	-.31	.50	.38	1	.54	.73
Other language spoken	-.69	.37	3.50	1	.06	.50
Constant	1.13	.62	3.33	1	.07	3.08

Table 6.5 indicates that participants' sex, and their score on the two 'openness to Europe' variables are statistically significant (at or approaching the 5% level) predictors of the degree to which a person is involved in the polling issue. All three variables were associated with reduced odds of being in the low involvement group. In the case of the

participant's sex (which was coded 0 for women and 1 for men), being a male participant decreased the odds of being in the low invovlement group by nearly three-quarters, when all of the other variables were held constant. In other words, women were more likely than men to have low levels of issue involvement.

The two 'openness' variables – which were both concerned with having had recent and direct experience of other European cultures – were significant predictors of low involvement, even when holding education and political affiliation constant. In the case of recent travel abroad, participants who had travelled to European destinations during the past year were significantly more likely to be interested in and knowledgeable about European issues. The odds of these participants being in the low involvement group were 60% lower than for the others. Similarly, speaking at least one other language – even just a little – was also associated with increased involvement in the polling issue. Speaking a foreign language reduced the odds of a participant being in the low involvement group by half. Thus, those who had recently travelled to other European countries and who spoke a second language were less likely to be in the low involvement group.

6.2.2 Issue involvement and opinions about European integration

Differences in attitudes towards European integration and Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were explored on the basis of participants' position on the 'involvement continuum' (i.e. their score on the 'involvement index'). As described above, scores on this continuum were divided into three categories, so that comparisons could be made between those scoring highest on the index (i.e. those with high involvement) and those with the lowest scores on the index (i.e. those with low involvement). The core questionnaire contained a large number of different attitudinal items, with which respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed. Broadly, these were of three different types:

1. Statements asserting opinions about specific aspects of European integration, expressing views about the future of Britain's relationship with Europe;

   e.g. *"As a member state, would you say that Britain's relationship with the European Union should be ... much closer, a little closer, a little less close, much less close, or is it about right?"*

2. Statements or questions asking respondents to evaluate the potential impact for Britain of closer integration with Europe;

   e.g. *"How much more or less influence in the world do you think that closer links with the European Union would give Britain?"*

3. Attitudinal statements asserting the advantages and disadvantages of EU membership and its implications for British national identity.

   e.g. *"All things considered, Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it"*
   e.g. *"Only the Germans have anything to gain from a single currency"*

The analyses reported here focus predominantly on the opinion items (1) and the attitudinal statements (3) and the relationship between these sets of items.

Table 6.6 shows the key opinion measures relating to Britain's role in Europe that were analysed, with a summary of responses for those deliberative poll participants in the low and high issue involvement groups. The first item asked respondents whether Britain's relationship with the EU should be closer or less close – in other words, the extent to which respondents supported further UK integration with Europe. Overall, low involvement participants were less likely than high involvement participants to endorse a closer relationship between Britain and the EU (48% of low involvement respondents compared with 61% in the high involvement group). Those in the low involvement group were also more likely to select the 'Don't Know' response (22% of low involvement respondents compared with 4% of those in the high involvement group, making the former group seven times less likely to express an opinion than the latter group). The association between responses to this item on the basis of issue involvement yielded a significant chi-square measure of 11.26 (on 3 degrees of freedom, $p<0.01$).

A similar pattern of responses was found across the three other opinion items shown in table 6.6, which were concerned with the future of the Pound, voting intentions in a referendum on Britain's links with the EU and whether or not Britain should unite fully with the EU. In each case, the odds of selecting the 'Don't Know' response category were consistently around 8-9 times greater for low-involvement participants than for those in the high-involvement group. In the case of the question about the single currency, the difference in the proportion of low and high involvement participants selecting 'Don't Know' was smaller, but low-involvement participants were more likely to hold the view that the pound should be retained as the only currency for Britain (59% compared with 33% of high involvement participants) and correspondingly, were less likely to believe that the pound should be replaced by a single currency (17% of the low involvement group selecting this option, compared with 28% of the high involvement group).

Table 6.6 Opinions about the future of the Britain's relationship with Europe by involvement

Survey Item	Low Involvement Participants %	High Involvement Participants %
Q1. Britain's relationship with the EU should be...		
Closer	48	61
Less close	22	28
Is about right	8	7
Don't know	22	4
Q5. Future of the pound in the EU. The pound should be...		
Replaced	17	28
Retained	59	33
Both £ and €	17	38
Don't know	7	1
Q12. In a referendum about Britain's links with EU how would you vote?		
To strengthen	33	57
To weaken	14	18
Keep the same	21	20
Don't know	33	5
Q15. 'Britain should do all it can to unite fully with the EU'		
Agree	34	61
Disagree	18	30
Not sure/ Don't know	48	9

Notes: For Q1 and Q5, figures have been rounded up and response categories have been collapsed such that the two end points of 5-point scales provided in the questionnaire constitute the positive and negative responses shown here.

These results support the findings of previous research that has found a positive relationship between attitudes to Europe and greater involvement in European issues (especially being more knowledgeable about European politics). Across each item, a higher proportion of high involvement participants than low involvement participants expressed pro-EU attitudes. Equally, high involvement participants were also more likely overall to express an opinion at all – whether positive or negative – than their low involvement counterparts, who were more likely to select the 'don't know' option (on 3 out of 4 of the items), rather than to give a substantive response. The large numbers of 'Don't Know' responses expressed by respondents in the low-involvement group lends some support to the proposition that respondents with higher issue-involvement will hold stronger attitudes about European integration than those with lower issue involvement. In this case, the propensity to opt for the 'don't know' option is taken as indicative of the fact that those respondents with low involvement had unformed views about the polling issue.

Further support for the prediction that participants with higher involvement will hold stronger attitudes comes from the results of analyses of variance looking at variation in scores on the 'involvement continuum' (described above) as a function of responses to each of the four opinion items. Post-hoc Scheffé multiple range comparisons allow you to assess the size of differences in mean scores on the involvement index between multiple groups – in this case, those selecting 'Don't know' on the four opinion items shown in table 6.6 compared with those selecting other response categories (i.e. those expressing an opinion). Table 6.7 shows the results of the ANOVA and the Scheffé tests (the full output is available in appendix C). The results of the analysis show that the involvement scores for participants selecting 'Don't know' were significantly lower than for those expressing an opinion, and especially those selecting the most pro-European response options. Thus, high issue involvement is not only associated with having more firmly held opinions about European integration, but it is also associated with holding more positive opinions about Europe.

Table 6.7 Scheffé post-hoc tests in ANOVA, comparing mean scores on involvement continuum (0-5) for respondents selecting the 'Don't Know' response category and those selecting the 'Pro-Integration' response categories

Item	Mean Involvement Score for 'Don't Know' Respondents	Mean Involvement Score for 'Pro-Integration' Respondents	Mean Differ -ence	*SE*	*p*	*F* (ANOVA)	*p*
Q1.	1.99	2.71	-0.72	0.15	.000	$F_{3,218} = 7.91$	.001
Q5.	2.10	2.83	-0.73	0.25	.037	$F_{3,217} = 8.46$	.001
Q12.	2.12	2.80	-0.67	0.13	.000	$F_{3,220} = 9.90$	.001
Q.15	2.23	2.79	-0.56	0.10	.000	$F_{2,221} = 17.57$	.001

6.2.3 Underlying attitudes towards European integration

In addition to the opinion measures shown in table 6.6, the core questionnaire contained 23 'attitude statements', with 5-point Likert response scales, ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' (the full questionnaire is available in Appendix C). The items were recoded such that a high score on each represented a positive attitude towards Europe. The data from these items were then analysed using exploratory factor analysis (using Maximum Likelihood as the extraction method), which allows the researcher to explore the latent structure of attitudes underlying responses to different scale items, such as those used here. As a data reduction technique, factor analysis also makes it possible to develop a more refined measure of attitudes, by identifying those items that are most strongly associated with the underlying attitude dimension. Both of these features of the method were important in the present exploratory analysis of the deliberative poll data.

In order to boost the sample size for the factor analysis, data from all 900 participants in the initial household survey were used (with missing data excluded 'listwise')[14]. The analysis yielded a two factor solution (both factors were chosen for having Eigenvalues greater than one). Together, the factors explained around 48% of the variance in responses to the statement batteries. The best-fitting model was obtained by applying an oblique rotation, which allows the two dimensions to be correlated with each other. The rotation achieved a very clear differentiation between the two dimensions, as is evident from the factor loadings shown in table 6.8. The factors were moderately correlated at .401 (see appendix C for full output).

The factor solution shown in table 6.8 represented the most parsimonious model of the data. However, it is less certain how best to interpret the model. The items found to load most highly on factor 1 were those concerned with the negative consequences of European integration, in terms of economic and cultural outcomes. By contrast, the items most highly correlated with the second factor were concerned more with the positive benefits of EU membership and reflect more positive views about integration.

[14] The model was also fitted to the data from just the weekend participants, and there were only very minor differences in fit.

On the one hand, it is perhaps unsurprising that respondents are at once able to recognise both the advantages and disadvantages to Britain of closer integration with the EU. Their underlying attitudes appear to be comprised both of concerns about the possible negative consequences of closer integration, as well as of recognition of the positive benefits it could bring. On the other hand, however, an alternative explanation of the finding might be that it is, at least partly, an artefact of the methodological design of the questionnaire (comprising, as is typical, a balance of positively and negatively-valenced attitude statements). Obtaining such a clear split between the negative and positive statements in this way is often indicative of measurement error. Respondents sometimes adopt certain 'response sets' – sometimes referred to as 'satisficing' strategies (Krosnick, 1991) – such as always agreeing with attitude statements (an effect also known as acquiescence (Couch and Keniston, 1960)), always disagreeing with them or always selecting the middle response category. In this case, it seems likely that respondents showed an increased propensity to agree with the attitude statements, regardless of whether the statements were positively or negatively valenced.

Table 6.8 Pattern matrix showing factor loadings for all attitude measures

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor	
	1	2
British traditions would have to be given up	.762	
Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.712	
Britain will lose control over decisions	.697	
Britain will lose control of economic policy	.671	
Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.636	
Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.605	
British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.601	
Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.577	
EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.547	
If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress		.734
Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.357	.611
Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU		.584
There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU		.572
The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU		.497
Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient		.496
The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries		.340

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Because the two factors appeared to be affected by measurement error in this way, it was decided that only those items concerned with the negative consequences of EU membership would be retained in the analysis. The rationale behind this decision was that the negative items constituted a more robust measure of underlying attitudes to integration, because it is likely that these items were more challenging to those inclined to satisfice by 'acquiescence' (i.e. by agreeing with every item). Therefore, mean scores (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents a more pro-European attitude) based on the six items with the highest factor loadings on factor 1 (shown in table 6.9) were computed for each respondent to provide an overall measure of their concerns about the negative consequences of closer integration with Europe.

Reliability analysis of the scale items yielded an alpha of .85. Differences in scores on this factor as a function of issue involvement were then examined using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), in order to explore further the finding that individuals with higher issue-involvement are also more pro-European. Mean scores on the attitude factor for the low and high involvement groups revealed a non-significant difference between the two groups (mean scores = 2.66 and 2.84 for the low and high involvement groups respectively). However, the same comparison using the initial household survey sample found the difference to be statistically significant. Mean scores for low and high involvement participants in the phase 1 survey were 2.58 and 2.84 respectively ($F_{1,580}$ = 17.04, $p<0.001$). Thus, being more involved in and knowledgeable about the polling issue was found to be associated with being more pro-European.

Table 6.9 Items comprising the attitude scale (concerns about negative consequences of integration)

6e	*Lots of good British traditions will have to be given up if we strengthen our ties with the EU.*
7b	*In a united Europe the various nations will lose their culture and their individuality.*
7d	*If we stay in the EU, Britain will lose too much control over decisions that affect Britain.*
6a	*Unless Britain keeps its own currency, it will lose control of its own economic policy.*
6h	*Only the Germans have anything to gain from a single European currency.*
6c	*Britain does not get enough out of the European Union, in comparison to what it puts in.*

6.2.4 The relationship between underlying attitudes, issue involvement and opinions about the euro

If it is assumed that underlying concerns about the negative consequences of integration are likely to impact on what people believe Britain's role in Europe should be, then scores on the attitude factor will be predictive of responses to each of the opinion items shown in table 6.6. The analysis presented here focused on respondents' views about the future of the pound. Respondents were asked:

"Here are three statements about the future of the pound in the European Union. Which one comes closest to your view?

1. *The pound should be replaced by a single European currency*
2. *Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in Britain*
3. *The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain.*
4. *(Can't choose)"*

Logistic regression analysis was used to predict the likelihood of selecting option 1 compared with option 3 (those respondents selecting options 2 and 4 were excluded from the analysis). The analysis showed that every unit increase on the mean attitude score (recall that higher scores were associated with positive attitudes towards integration) considerably increased the odds of being in favour of replacing the pound with a single European currency (Exp B = 26.65, $p<0.001$). Introducing the involvement score into the logistic regression model illustrates clearly the differential effect of these two variables on people's opinions about the future of the pound. Issue involvement was not found to have a significant predictive effect on the dependent variable, even when it was retained in the model to control for its effect on opinions about the single European currency. Underlying concerns about the negative consequences of integration were, however, found to be highly influential in determining views about the future of the pound (Exp B = 24.86, $p<0.001$). Once again, however, it is noteworthy that fitting the same model on the phase 1 household survey sample (and thereby, boosting the sample size) yields a significant effect for issue involvement. By including an interaction term for the two variables in the same logistic regression model, it was possible to rule out the possibility that being more issue-involved reduces a person's concerns about the negative consequences of closer integration with the EU. Indeed, it appears to be the case that being more involved serves to highlight the concerns one might have rather than to reduce them.

6.2.5 The role of issue involvement in persuasion: attitude strength, attitude constraint and attitude change

The deliberative poll methodology is specifically designed to examine the effects of prolonged exposure to persuasive communications on participants' attitudes towards the polling issue. The next stage of the analysis, therefore, was to examine the nature and extent of attitude change between the initial household survey and the measures taken at the end of the deliberation event. Three related predictions formed the focus of this analysis. Overall, it was predicted that respondents would differ systematically in their responses to persuasion as a function of their level of prior issue-involvement and that this would manifest itself in three ways: a) in the extent to which respondents are open to persuasion (measured in terms of prior attitude strength); b) in the extent to which attitudes towards Europe and the euro are internally consistent (i.e. the degree of attitude constraint); and c) the nature and extent of attitude change at the end of the deliberation event. Once again, the key variables that were analysed were the four opinion measures (table 6.6) and the attitude score from the factor analysis – a measure of respondents' concerns about the possible negative consequences of closer integration with Europe.

The first prediction is based on the assumption that those respondents with lower levels of issue involvement will be more 'open to persuasion' because they will not have already formed fixed views about the polling issue. Recall from chapter 1 that this is the rationale behind the MORI opinion poll item that seeks to identify the 'euro waverers'. It has been shown that low involvement participants were significantly more likely to give 'Don't Know' responses to the four opinion items than were the high involvement participants. In addition, low involvement participants (92% compared with 75% of those in the high involvement group) were more likely to feel that they did not have sufficient information on which to vote in a referendum on whether or not Britain should strengthen its links with the EU, further indication that this group might be more open to persuasion, were they provided with further information.

In order to establish whether high involvement participants also exhibited greater attitude 'constraint' (in terms of the correspondence between related sets of attitudes), two statistical measures were evaluated: 1) the inter-correlations between responses to the four opinion measures; and 2) the Cronbach's alpha coefficient from reliability analyses of the items comprising the attitude scale. With respect to (1), we would expect high involvement participants to exhibit stronger associations between their opinions about European integration, and correspondingly, with respect to (2), we would expect higher values for alpha for high involvement participants. Table 6.10 shows the Pearson's correlation coefficients for the four opinion questions (refer to table 6.6 for details of question wording).

Two findings are of interest simply eyeballing the statistics presented in table 6.10. Firstly, as predicted, there is a tendency for higher involvement respondents to show stronger associations between their responses to the four opinion items about the future of Britain's relationship with Europe. The exceptions are the correlations between question 5 (about the future of the Pound) and questions 12 and 15 (concerned with forging closer links with Europe), which were slightly lower than those for the low involvement group. However, the data are generally consistent with the prediction that those who are more involved in the polling issue hold more 'coherent' or 'constrained' attitudes (Converse, 1964). Secondly, comparing the inter-item correlations before the deliberation event with those from the post-deliberation measures, it is noteworthy that many of the associations have become stronger. This suggests that attitudes have not only become stronger through the deliberation process, but have also become more internally consistent.

Table 6.10 Inter-correlations between opinion items by involvement

		Pre-deliberation				**Post-deliberation**			
		Q1	**Q5**	**Q12**	**Q15**	**Q1**	**Q5**	**Q12**	**Q15**
All respondents	Q1								
	Q5	.422				.592			
	Q12	.740	.481			.846	.652		
	Q15	.704	.441	.769		.747	.637	.783	
Low involvement	Q1								
	Q5	.408				.497			
	Q12	.530	.543			.876	.609		
	Q15	.538	.433	.730		.692	.617	.729	
High Involvement	Q1								
	Q5	.479				.728			
	Q12	.913	.470			.882	.729		
	Q15	.827	.410	.856		.798	.699	.851	

This finding is also reflected in the results of the reliability analyses of the attitude scale derived from the factor analysis. The scale broadly measured respondents' concerns about the possible negative consequences of closer integration in Europe – a factor that seems to form a key dimension of people's attitudes towards the EU. As predicted, Cronbach's alpha for high involvement participants was higher than that for low involvement participants, although not markedly so (.86 compared with .84). As with the correlations between the opinion items, however, there was a similar increase in the strength of association between responses to the six attitude statements that comprised the scale (post-deliberation α = .90 for the high involvement group and .86 for the low involvement group).

Table 6.11 Responses to opinion items after the weekend event (post-deliberation)

Survey Item	**Low Involvement Participants %**	**High Involvement Participants %**
Q1. Britain's relationship with the EU should be...		
Closer	69 (+21)	78 (+17)
Less close	13 (-9)	13 (-15)
Is about right	17 (+9)	7 (--)
Don't know	1 (-21)	3 (-1)
Total change (TC)	*30*	*17*
Q5. Future of the pound in the EU. The pound should be...		
Replaced	28 (+11)	38 (+10)
Retained	42 (-17)	23 (-10)
Both £ and €	21 (+4)	26 (-12)
Don't know	9 (+2)	13 (+12)
Total change (TC)	*17*	*22*
Q12. In a referendum about Britain's links with EU how would you vote?		
To strengthen	52 (+19)	64 (+7)
To weaken	11 (-3)	13 (-5)
Keep the same	24 (+3)	18(-2)
Don't know	13 (-20)	5 (--)
Total change (TC)	*23*	*7*
Q15. 'Britain should do all it can to unite fully with the EU'		
Agree	58 (+24)	63 (+2)
Disagree	26 (+8)	31 (+1)
Not sure/ Don't know	16 (-32)	7 (-2)
Total change (TC)	*32*	*3*

Notes: Total change refers to the percentage of respondents switching response. Figures have been rounded up and response categories have been collapsed. Any discrepancies result from rounding and/or item non-response.

Finally, the analysis focused on the nature and extent of attitude change among low- and high-involvement respondents, as a result of participation in the deliberation event. As expected, there was a considerable amount of variation in attitudes expressed at the time of the initial household survey and those recorded in the post-deliberation survey carried out at the end of the weekend event. That is, in keeping with previous deliberative polls (Fishkin, 1995; Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002), the deliberation process had a persuasive effect on the participants' views about Europe. For the most part, the shift was in a positive direction, boosting support for European integration among the participants. Table 6.11 summarises responses to the four opinion questions at the post-deliberation stage of the poll. The increased support for the pro-European position on each of the items is evident at the aggregate level, but some differences on the basis of issue-involvement are also apparent. The direction and extent of change is shown in parentheses (representing percent points), as well as in the 'Total Change' (T.C.) row.

In general, there was more attitude change evident among low involvement participants (as measured by the amount of 'switching' of response choices on these items). This finding is consistent with the fact that these participants also showed weaker attitude strength than those in the high involvement group (in terms of the proportion expressing 'Don't knows', as well as in terms of the internal consistency of their attitudes), suggesting that these respondents were, therefore, perhaps more 'open to persuasion' than those who were more involved. Furthermore, the general shift in respondents' opinions from the anti-European response options to more positive positions was also matched by a reduction in the number of 'Don't knows', lending further support to the conclusion that the deliberation process had served to strengthen people's views on the polling issue. This was true for all the items with the exception of the question about the future of the pound. In the case of this item, the deliberation process appeared to have the effect of making respondents *less* certain of their views, especially those with *higher* issue-involvement. This was reflected in the reduction in the proportion selecting the 'retain the Pound' response and the greater number of respondents selecting the 'Don't know' responses.

Overall, the increased propensity for low-involvement participants to switch response categories after the deliberation event was evident across all the items in the survey. The mean number of response switches for low-involvement participants was significantly higher than that for the highly-involved group (57.75 compared with

40.31; $F_{1,152} = 23.28$, $p<0.001$). This finding is illustrated for the four opinion items in table 6.12, which shows the total proportion of low-involvement respondents who expressed an opinion[15] and the direction of aggregate-level response switching. Question wording is shown in table 6.6.

Table 6.12 Percentage of respondents switching response to items 1, 5, 12 and 15 in either a positive or negative direction, or not at all, by issue involvement

Direction of Response Switch	Low Involvement Participants %				High Involvement Participants %			
	Q1	Q5	Q12	Q15	Q1	Q5	Q12	Q15
Positive	48	26	20	44	38	22	17	29
Negative	16	7	10	26	14	12	9	14
No Change	35	51	31	30	43	52	64	55

As well as becoming more coherent (in terms of the strength of inter-item associations) scores on the attitude scale also became more positive as a result of participation in the deliberation event. Paired-samples t-tests for both the low- and high-involvement groups were used to examine the extent of this shift. The increase in mean scores on the attitude factor was greater for high-involvement participants than it was for low-involvement participants. The latter group continued to be more concerned about the negative consequences of integration than their more involved counterparts, even after the weekend event ($t=-2.99$, $df=77$, $p<0.05$ (low-involvement group) and $t=-3.42$, $df=76$, $p<0.001$ (high-involvement group).

6.2.6 Does deliberation increase issue involvement?

The positive shift in attitudes was accompanied by a significant improvement in participants' knowledge about Europe (as measured by their performance on the five-item quiz). Mean score on the knowledge quiz (out of a total of 5) rose from 1.30 to 2.96 for the low-involvement participants and from 3.88 to 4.42 for those who were highly-involved. The difference between the two test results was statistically significant for both groups (paired-samples t-tests yielded values for t of -9.06, $df=76$, $p<0.001$ for

[15] Don't know responses are not dealt with here.

the low-involvement group and -4.27, df=76, $p<0.001$ for the high-involvement group). Similarly, the relative shift in scores between the two groups was also found to be significant (ANOVA was carried out on the total change in knowledge score: $F_{1, 152} = 25.9$; $p<0.001$).

The improvement in scores on the quiz, however, was not reflected in responses to items asking whether a) the British public or b) the respondent had enough information on which to vote in a referendum on whether or not Britain should strengthen its links with the European Union. Before the weekend event, just 3% low-involvement respondents felt they personally had enough information, compared with just 5% of the high-involvement group. After the event, these figures increased to 25% and 51% respectively. With respect to the wider public, however, respondents were almost unanimous in their agreement, having participated in the deliberation event, that insufficient information was available.

6.3 Discussion

In accordance with the assumptions of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), it was possible to create two groups of participants in the deliberative poll who were characterised by either very high or very low involvement in the polling issue. These groups of individuals were scaled on a so-called 'involvement continuum' on the basis of their responses to items asking how interested in and testing how knowledgeable they were about the issue of European integration. Demographically, the groups were not particularly distinct, except in terms of sex – women in the sample were far more likely to be allocated to the low-involvement group than were men. Beyond this, however, the second most important predictors of whether a participant was highly-involved in the polling issue was their openness towards, and experience of other European cultures. This was measured by their ability to speak other languages and by whether or not they had travelled to Europe in the year prior to the survey.

The two groups were found to differ systematically both in terms of their existing attitudes to Europe and in terms of their responses to persuasive communications over the course of the deliberation event. Individuals with high involvement tended to give more pro-European responses while those individuals with low-involvement levels were not only less enthusiastic, but also significantly less sure of their views, which led them to choose the 'Don't Know' response option more frequently. However, issue-involvement was not the only influence on the participants' views about integration. Indeed, it seems that people's underlying concerns about the possible negative consequences of UK membership of the EU were far more influential in determining opinion in this area, thus highlighting the importance of understanding peoples' uncertainties about EMU and achieving the best means by which to clarify them.

In terms of the persuasive effect of the deliberation stage of the poll, there appeared to be at least three main outcomes: (1) amongst all participants there was a tendency for opinions to become more favourable towards European integration. High-involvement participants remained the more pro-European of the two groups, however. (2) The weekend also had the effect of strengthening attitudes – demonstrated most markedly by the shift from 'Don't Know' responses to alternative response choices by the low-involvement group. (3) Knowledge about the issues associated with integration was also clearly improved, although there were still concerns that what had been learnt was not enough information on which to decide how to vote in a referendum.

The deliberative poll provides some insight into how British attitudes to the euro might change in the context of a referendum campaign, highlighting the importance of information in influencing not only attitudes, but public involvement in the issue and openness to persuasion. The poll provides further evidence that expressed opposition in the polls does not always reflect the reality of public opinion on Europe. Indeed, it seems even more likely that, in conjunction with consistently high numbers of 'Don't Knows', such poll findings simply disguise the large proportion of voters who are uninterested in the issues, uninformed about them and, as a result, uncertain of their views. Yet these are the people who are most likely to respond to persuasion, and providing them with information and the opportunity to raise their interest and understanding will help them to strengthen their views and to inform public opinion. This provides a clear indication for campaign leaders in the event of a referendum – the arguments for and against the single currency must be publicly addressed by politicians and balanced information must be made available to the public.

This finding is further backed by the fact that those participants in the poll who were already highly involved in the issue, were considerably more favourable towards closer integration even before the deliberation weekend. Raising knowledge about Europe appears to improve people's disposition towards European integration and the government will need to respond to the public's demand for information. Yet simply making information publicly available may not be enough. In spite of the vast number of publications available and periods of high intensity press coverage afforded by European issues, the public continue to feel they have not been given enough information. In order to increase the public's 'elaboration likelihood' of available material, therefore, it will also be important to increase public involvement in the issues. This means making the issues surrounding Britain joining the single currency personally relevant and interesting to people. From the present data, it is possible that one way of achieving this would be by fostering openness to other European cultures and relating the political issues surrounding EMU to people's personal experiences of travel in other European countries.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the public carry with them a large amount of 'attitudinal baggage' when it comes to European issues. This is perhaps unsurprising given the Government's scepticism regarding European integration in the past. This relates particularly to people's concerns about the possible negative consequences of closer integration with the EU, as these seem to be especially influential in determining people's views about the future of European policy and perhaps even more so than people's levels of interest and knowledge about Europe. The phenomenon discussed in the psychological literature on decision-making that 'losses looming larger than gains' when people are faced with a risky choice (e.g. Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982), is consistent with this finding from the deliberative poll. It seems, therefore, that any attempt to change public attitudes to the euro will need to address two things: firstly, the problem of improving levels of interest and knowledge so that people will more readily engage with the arguments both for and against EMU; secondly, the need to clarify people's concerns about the potential risks of a single currency.

Deliberative polls have been likened by some to referenda (e.g. Curtice and Jowell, 1998), because similar to the campaign period prior to a popular vote, the weekend event of the poll is characterised by artificially-heightened issue salience. This means that not only is there a greater flow of information about the issue than there would otherwise normally be, but there are also greater opportunities for discussion and debate, both with experts as well as amongst the participants themselves. In the deliberative poll, this context provides participants with the ideal opportunity to become better informed and to achieve a greater degree of confidence in their opinions on an issue. The present findings demonstrate how effectively this can be achieved. This 'success' is what has been termed the 'prescriptive' function of the deliberative poll (Fishkin, 1995). The results are intended to provide a demonstration of how the public might ideally vote on a given issue were they better informed.

A possible criticism of the deliberative polling technique, however, is that the unique environment the participants find themselves in (for example, being surrounded by fellow members of random sample of the population, being filmed for a television programme) is quite unlike the real world context in which political persuasion actually takes place. This raises concerns about the validity of the findings and questions the extent to which the heightened issue salience of a real referendum campaign could achieve the same effects as those observed here. In terms of the theoretical model, elaboration likelihood appeared to increase, making participants more likely to reflect on their own position and to weigh up the evidence they are presented with. However, we cannot assume that this kind of central processing is what actually took place (if it did, then it may have been as much a function of taking part in a televised event as it was a result of artificially-heightened issue salience per se), nor can we assume that it would occur in a real-life campaign.

Because the design of a deliberative poll essentially mimics an attitude change experiment, the data provide an opportunity to examine the extent to which social psychological theories of persuasion are able to account for attitude change in a 'real-world' context. However, as was described in chapter 2, formal ELM studies designed to test tenets of the theory rely on a strict methodological paradigm, which allows the researcher to experimentally control variables assumed to be responsible for, and to provide evidence of, variation in attitude change (namely, involvement and argument quality). Because the deliberative poll is designed for an altogether different purpose, it can in no way be considered a stringent test of the model. Nevertheless, the method does offer some important advantages over conventional attitude change experiments – in particular, its use of a general population, random probability sample (rarely used in public opinion surveys and social psychological experiments). A further advantage is that the deliberative event as an attempt at persuasion (comparing a mix of different 'messages' and exposure to a range of arguments of different kinds) mirrors far more closely the way in which persuasive communications happen in the real world – compared with the persuasive messages typically used in ELM attitude change experiments.

Those taking part in a deliberative poll are exposed to a great variety of persuasive communications. Some of these are under the direct control of the experimenter (the deliberation event makes use of pre-prepared, balanced reading materials), and some of which are beyond this control, such as the responses of politicians who participate in debates and the vagaries of group dynamics which evolve among the participants. We cannot be certain, therefore, about the exact nature of the psychological processes underpinning persuasion during such an event – i.e. whether or not attitude change is achieved via central or peripheral processing. Whilst it seems likely that the observed attitude change is a result of central route processing of the various arguments presented, the possibility that it is a function of the multitudinous peripheral cues inherent in such an event should not be overlooked. Indeed, this note of caution has been discussed elsewhere in relation to this particular poll, with the suggestion that the weekend event may have been unintentionally biased towards the pro-European standpoint (Curtice and Jowell, 1998)[16]. In addition to this, the effect of group discussion and the social influences inherent in such a context undoubtedly carry with them their own persuasive effects – perhaps the most significant being that of convergence to group norms (Sherif, 1936) which could arguably be said to have occurred here.

In theoretical terms, it could be argued that the deliberative poll achieves high elaboration likelihood amongst its participants by increasing people's motivation and ability to engage with persuasive communications of a wide variety. In reality, it is not very well-understood what psychological processes or causal mechanisms occur during the course of the polling event. For this reason, the method has been criticised because the deliberation stage represents something of a 'black box' (Price and Neijens, 1998), in terms of the explanations offered of why or how attitude change occurs. This not only has implications for the conclusions that can be drawn about how people might respond to the heightened salience of an issue during a referendum campaign, but it also means that these data provide only a limited test of the postulates of the ELM as

[16] While this may appear to lend further weight to criticism concerning the ecological validity of the research, an alternative viewpoint is that biases of this kind are also inherent in real-world campaigns, thus providing some realism to the proceedings (Jowell – personal communication).

explanations for attitude change in the real world. This limitation of study C provided the motivation for study D, an experiment designed specifically to test predictions derived from the ELM using the method developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). The results of this experiment are presented in chapter 8. Chapter 7 provides a detailed description of the methods used.

7 DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

In study D, I investigate further the roles of information and involvement in attitude change in an experiment designed especially to test the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2. Specifically, the research examines the relationship between people's involvement in the euro issue, their attitudes towards the euro and their motivation to process issue-relevant information. In addition, the research looks at how national identity influences people's attitudes towards EMU, the motivation to process information about the euro and the effect that information has on attitudes. Both involvement and national identity are, therefore, investigated as factors influencing how people respond to information about the euro. The study was also designed specifically to test the effect on persuasion of varying the salience of national identity in communications about the euro. Thus, the research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the psychological processes by which people's attitudes are formed and changed in response to information?
2. What effect does issue involvement have on these processes?
3. What is the effect of manipulating the salience of national identity in information about the euro on the psychological processes involved in attitude change?
4. To what extent does national identity influence the elaboration likelihood of information about the euro?

In chapter 1, I reviewed existing research that has studied the relationship between national identity and attitudes towards European integration. This research has shown that attitudes vary with the *strength* of people's attachment to their national identity (those with a stronger attachment tend to be more resistant to integration), as well as with the *nature* of that attachment – e.g. whether their attachment is instrumental or sentimental (Rothi, Lyons and Chryssochoou, 1995; Cinnirella, 1996); or whether it consists of mainly patriotic sentiments or nationalistic ones (e.g. Dowds and Young, 1996). In general, sentimental, or nationalistic forms of national identity tend to be correlated with negative attitudes towards Europe, while holding patriotic sentiments and an instrumental attachment to national identity facilitate more positive views about integration. Similarly, attitudes towards integration tend to vary as a function of the strength and nature of people's attachment to a European identity (e.g. Cinnirella, 1996; Routh and Burgoyne, 1996). However, the influence exerted by social identities on attitudes also varies as a function of the *salience* of the identity at a given point in time.

In this study, I focus on what happens when British national identity is made salient in communications about the euro, looking at its influence on expressed attitudes and the processes (central or peripheral) by which those attitudes are formed. As a result, the study does not examine variation in different forms of attachment to national and European identity and how they relate to attitudes, as an extensive exploration of these relationships was beyond the scope of the research. Instead, I concentrate on how the strength of people's national identity and their issue involvement influence their responses to information under conditions of high and low category salience.

Once again the Elaboration Likelihood Model provides the conceptual framework for the study. In study C, I tested some of the key predictions derived from Petty and Cacioppo's model using data from a deliberative poll. The analysis found evidence consistent with previous ELM research. In particular, there were differences in the strength of attitudes and the susceptibility of attitudes to change as a function of the participants' level of issue involvement. But the ELM is concerned not only with the effect of information on attitudes, but with the cognitive processes by which attitudes are changed. It relies on a sophisticated experimental design, which allows the researcher to make inferences about the particular 'route to persuasion' (central vs. peripheral) that has led to persuasion. The research design used in study D is adapted from the ELM experimental method (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) with the aim of identifying how information about the euro is processed and how this, in turn, influences people's attitudes towards EMU.

In this chapter I review the background to the research, briefly returning to the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2. I then describe the classical ELM experimental design and the ways in which it was adapted to accommodate the specific requirements of the present study. I then present in detail the specific design and methodology used here, the key dependent and independent measures, the experimental manipulation and the procedures used. Due to the relative complexity of the method, I have chosen to present the findings of the experiment separately in chapter 8.

7.1 Involvement and identity: Two routes to central processing?

Chapter 2 reviewed the research literature relating to the role of identity in attitude change. It was noted that this topic has received research attention in both the fields of social influence and persuasion (Mackie and Skelly, 1994). However, in the field of persuasion, the majority of empirical evidence relates to the role played by the identity of the message source. Early ELM studies examined the effect of manipulating the source of a message and concluded that compared with the arguments contained in the message, source plays a relatively unimportant role in changing attitudes, acting as a peripheral cue for those with low elaboration likelihood. Because the peripheral route tends to have a less enduring impact on attitudes, source identity was concluded to be a relatively unimportant factor in persuasion.

In fact, as the studies reviewed in chapter 2 have demonstrated, information regarding the ingroup-outgroup status of a message source can be an important motivator for systematic processing of the message content. For example, Mackie and her colleagues' (1990) first study indicated an increased propensity for participants to engage in argument-based processing of *ingroup* messages (strong messages being more persuasive than weak messages), but in a second study, this effect was only observed where group relevance was high (where group relevance was low, group membership was assumed to have served as a peripheral cue in the persuasion context). McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson and Turner (1994) replicated and extended this research by integrating the findings into a social identity account of the cognitive mediation of attitude change. Their two studies found that group-membership information about a message source could induce thoughtful content-based processing, but only under conditions of high category salience (McGarty et al., 1994; Haslam, McGarty and Turner, 1996). Under conditions of low salience, the group information appeared to function in the manner specified by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), as a cue to a peripheral mode of processing.

The ELM's treatment of the role of extra-message variables such as source identity in persuasion has been defended by Fleming and Petty (2000), who maintain that the apparently discrepant findings of these studies are indeed compatible with the postulates of the model. They argue that according to the ELM any variable in the persuasion context (including source identity, the group-relevance of a message, salience of ingroup identity, and so on) can influence attitude change in any of four different ways: 1) as a cue to peripheral route processing; 2) as a motivator for central-route processing (i.e. influencing the *quantity* of elaboration); 3) as a bias on central-route processing (i.e. influencing the *quality* of message elaboration); and 4) as a message 'argument' in its own right (i.e. an additional persuasive factor that is elaborated on during central processing) (Fleming and Petty, 2000; Petty and Wegener, 1999). The way in which a variable influences persuasion will depend on an individual's prior motivation and ability to process the persuasive message and the relevance the message holds for them personally or for their in-group. They argue that the task for future studies is to identify the conditions under which different roles are activated in different persuasion contexts.

In this study, I test predictions derived from the above about the effect of manipulating the salience of British national identity in information about the euro. The analysis has two main objectives: the first is to examine the influence of involvement and identity on the likelihood of message elaboration. As in study C, I test the basic hypothesis that central-route processing of information about the euro will be more likely at higher levels of issue involvement (because people who are more interested in and knowledgeable about the euro issue will be more motivated and able to process information about it). However, in study D, I extend this by testing the hypothesis that central-route processing will also be more likely among those with a stronger attachment to British national identity, because of the greater group relevance of the issue for this group. I then investigate which of the four roles identity salience assumes in the persuasion context for a) participants with high and low levels of issue involvement; and b) participants with strong and weak attachment to British national identity.

The assumption behind focusing on these four groups in particular is that the effects of salience on elaboration will depend upon involvement and the strength of a person's attachment to their national identity and the effect these variables have on the motivation to elaborate. For example, at low levels of issue involvement, increasing the salience of national identity in information about the euro might be expected to serve as a peripheral cue to persuasion. For those with a strong attachment to national identity, however, increasing category salience might be expected to increase the motivation to process group-relevant information. The precise hypotheses tested in the analysis are presented in chapter 8. In the next section, I review the classic ELM experimental method, before describing the specific design of the present study.

7.2 Key features of the ELM experimental method

In chapter 2, I introduced the main features of the ELM experimental method, described in detail by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) in one of their earliest accounts of the theory. In this section I review the most important elements and provide a short summary of their account.

The ELM method is aimed at measuring two key dependent variables. Most importantly, ELM studies aim to measure the amount of attitude change induced by a persuasive message. As described earlier, in the classic experimental design, this involves presenting participants with a persuasive communication (or 'message') about a target issue/proposal and then measuring their attitudes to that issue/proposal. Because the design involves random allocation of participants to the experimental conditions, it is assumed that any individual variations in attitudes prior to message exposure will be randomly distributed across experimental conditions. For this reason, it is not usually necessary to obtain pre-exposure attitude measures. Rather, it is inferred that differences in post-message attitudes across the different conditions are a function of exposure to the persuasive message. It is noteworthy that most ELM studies have focused on issues about which a participant is unlikely to have a pre-existing opinion. Participants are typically presented with information about a fictitious debate or proposal (manipulated to be of either high or low relevance to the participants). The aim of the experiment, therefore, is to examine the relative differences in attitudes between participants in each of the treatment groups and to identify the process by which the attitude about the proposal is formed.

The second dependent variable of interest in ELM research is 'elaboration'. Measures of message elaboration are obtained so that conclusions can be drawn about the extent and nature of message processing. This is the method by which the researcher can determine whether the central or peripheral route has been followed and, where central processing has occurred, whether or not it has been relatively objective or relatively biased (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In other words, by measuring the nature of message elaboration, the researcher has a means of determining what kind of influence an independent variable has had on persuasion (in terms of the four roles identified above). ELM research has used a variety of measures of elaboration - typically ones that involve recording recipients' cognitive responses to the message (such as the number of favourable thoughts it elicits, the extent of counter-argumentation, etc.). The measures of elaboration used in the present study are described in greater detail below. See Petty, Ostrom and Brock (1981) for further information about the cognitive response approach to the study of persuasion.

7.2.1 Experimental manipulations: Argument quality and involvement

In addition to the two dependent measures in the ELM experimental design, the method relies on two key treatments or manipulations. The first of these is 'argument quality'. As we have seen, argument quality refers to the strength of the arguments contained in the persuasive message. Because the model predicts that people with high involvement in the target issue will be more likely to take time to systematically process the arguments contained in the persuasive message, while people with low involvement will be unable or unmotivated to process the arguments carefully, the argument quality manipulation in ELM studies provides a means of inferring the nature and extent of message elaboration. People who are centrally processing the message will be able to distinguish between strong and weak arguments.

The second key experimental manipulation used in ELM studies is *involvement* in the target issue. Typically, the extent to which the topic of the persuasive message is personally relevant or 'involving' for the experimental participants is manipulated by varying the message content. For example, Petty and Cacioppo (1979b; 1984b) varied the personal relevance of the message in their study by having one condition in which undergraduate participants read a communication regarding plans to introduce a comprehensive exam in a year's time (highly relevant to the current undergraduates) and another, which concerned plans to introduce the exam in five years time (which would not directly affect the present undergraduates). Thus, for the former group, the persuasive communication was highly involving, whereas for the latter group, involvement in the communication was relatively low.

The purpose of manipulating participants' level of involvement in the target issue is to control the likelihood of message elaboration in the same way across all participants in the experiment (or a specific subset of them). By constraining the level of involvement to be either high or low (e.g. by varying the personal relevance of the message topic), it is possible to test the effect of a treatment variable on persuasion. Controlling for argument quality and involvement, therefore, allows the researcher to draw conclusions about the influence of an independent variable on the variables 'attitude change' and 'message elaboration'. In other words, manipulating involvement makes it possible to determine the influence of a third variable on the quantity of attitude change, as well as on the nature of the cognitive processes by which attitude change occurs (central vs. peripheral route).

7.3 Adapting the ELM method for the purposes of the present study

In order to test predictions derived from the ELM about how the public's knowledge about and interest in EMU and their feelings about their national identity influence their attitudes towards Britain joining the euro, an experiment was designed based on the basic methodology developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). However, a number of adaptations were necessary to make it suitable for studying a) the particular population of interest (British adults who would be eligible to vote in a referendum on the euro); and b) attitudes towards a 'real-world' issue, about which participants might hold pre-existing views. A further advantage of these adaptations was to enhance the ecological validity of the findings of the research. This section describes how the classical ELM method was modified for the purposes of the present study.

The principal change to the classic research design was to take the experiment 'out of the laboratory' and to administer it as an Internet-based self-completion survey with a 'built-in' experimental design. As stated, a key priority for the study was to have access to a sample of British adults. ELM studies, like much experimental research in social psychology, have tended to rely on student samples. While the use of random allocation to experimental conditions overcomes many of difficulties associated with selection bias when non-random samples are used, a student sample was not appropriate in this context given the particular focus of this research. In particular, because the experiment focuses on a real political issue (which at the time the research was carried out (2003) was relatively salient in the media), it would not have been possible to control for the fact that many people would already hold attitudes towards it, nor to experimentally manipulate participants' involvement in the issue. For this reason, it was necessary to be able to distinguish participants with low and high levels of issue involvement at the analysis stage, which meant accessing a sufficiently heterogeneous sample of the British population[17]. This precluded the use of a student sample, particularly at a university like the London School of Economics, where levels of involvement in European politics are likely to be higher than among the British public as a whole. Equally, the unusually high proportion of international students at the LSE meant that it would prove difficult to recruit participants who were British citizens. Using the Internet to collect the data offered a solution by not only providing this necessary access to British voters, but also making it possible to access participants from across the country. An added advantage of collecting data from respondents in their own homes or places of work was to avoid any detrimental impact on data quality associated with the artificiality of the experimental laboratory as a setting for research.

On a more practical level, the use of the Internet to field the questionnaire represented the most cost-effective method of collecting data, both in terms of time and money. To recruit a nation-wide sample of British voters (albeit a non-representative sample) to take part in an experiment at the LSE, or some other fixed location, would have been excessively costly. Equally, to use a postal method of distributing questionnaires to collect the data would also have been too expensive, both in terms of gaining access to a sample of postal addresses, as well as in terms of postage costs. Using an electronic method of data collection made it possible to automate the random allocation of participants to the different experimental conditions, whereas a postal method would have entailed a more complex method of randomisation, which may have reduced the degree of experimental control over the procedure. Furthermore, the administration of postal questionnaires is time-consuming and is often associated with low levels of response (Czaja and Blair, 2005[18]). While the latter is a problem associated with web-based surveys also, the method used here meant that the sample could easily be boosted until sufficient numbers had participated in each of the experimental conditions.

Two of the main obstacles to the use of web-based data collection methods include the development of the questionnaires and gaining access to a sample of Internet users willing to participate in academic research. In the case of the present study, however,

[17] Limited resources precluded the selection of a random probability sample for the survey, a method not easily applied in web-based surveys, except where the population is clearly defined and all members have access to the Internet. Details on sample selection and the demographic profile of the achieved sample are provided in section 7.5.

[18] Dillman's (1978) 'Total Design Method' has proved highly successful as a means of enhancing response rates in postal surveys.

these two obstacles were relatively easy to overcome. First of all, the questionnaire development and programming for the experiment (and two pilot studies that were conducted to pre-test the methodology) were both done by me, using Microsoft Frontpage. The web server at LSE on which the questionnaires were hosted was already equipped to handle data from Frontpage forms (using a custom cgi script), which meant that it was comparatively straightforward to manage the data collection procedure. Second of all, I was generously donated a sample of participants by Saros Research Ltd. – a company offering a recruitment service for market researchers, that holds its own database of would-be participants willing to take part in research. These participants are described as members of the general public they have recruited especially, who have agreed to participate in studies (typically, for qualitative market research) and to be financially rewarded for doing so[19].

The decision to carry out the experiment via the Internet entailed a number of further adaptations to the standard ELM method. Because the study was conducted entirely through self-completion questionnaires, it meant that no experimenter or confederate could be present to facilitate the running of the experiment. Experimental control was achieved entirely by manipulating the order in which different sets of questions were presented to participants, and the location of the 'persuasive message' in the questionnaire. Using a basic algorithm programmed in html, participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental treatment groups as soon as they accessed the questionnaire from the survey's homepage (see below).

As with the standard design, the key dependent variable was attitude change. Unlike many ELM experiments, however, where attitudes are measured only after exposure to the persuasive message, half of the participants' in the present study completed the attitude measures prior to message exposure. The reason for measuring attitudes before message exposure was partly to strengthen the overall experimental control in the design, as it provides a more robust measure of the effects of the arguments on attitudes. In addition, however, this feature of the design also provided a measure of the degree to which the participants' attitudes towards Europe were representative of the electorate as a whole.

[19] I am very grateful to Maya Middlemiss of Saros Research for drawing the sample and sending participants the email invitation to participate in the study. I would also like to thank Fiona Jack and Teresa Edleston (then) at Green Light Research for arranging the connection with Saros.

7.3.1 Issue involvement

Where the target issue in an ELM study is one about which participants are unlikely to have a pre-formed attitude, it is relatively straightforward experimentally to manipulate involvement in the message topic. However, where the target issue is a real-world political issue, it is impossible to control for participants' pre-existing interest and knowledge about the issue and the personal relevance that issue will hold for them. Thus, the design of the present study deviated from the ELM in that no attempt was made to manipulate participants' elaboration likelihood (except via the experimental manipulation of identity salience described below). Rather, those variables assumed to predict elaboration likelihood (including knowledge about and interest in the EMU issue; strength of attachment to British national identity; and others assumed to relate to the personal relevance of the issue) were measured as covariates and used in the analysis as independent variables, as well as to create an index of involvement with which to divide the sample into groups with high and low elaboration likelihood.

7.3.2 Argument Quality

A second major adaptation of the standard ELM methodology in the present study concerned the presentation of the persuasive arguments. Whereas participants in ELM experiments are presented with a single 'message' comprising a number of different arguments about the target issue, such a method was less well-suited to an Internet-administered questionnaire. Firstly, it would have been difficult to control the presentation of the message to participants. Secondly, it was possible that asking participants to read a long passage in the context of a web survey would lead many to 'switch off' and result in high levels of non-response (either through break-offs or at the item level)[20]. For this reason, the presentation of the persuasive message was achieved by asking participants to read a set of three separate 'arguments' and then to evaluate each of them on a series of scales measuring different dimensions of argument quality and cognitive response.

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[20] This was confirmed in a pilot study in which the arguments were combined into a single message; participants found the exercise burdensome and off-putting.

For the purposes of ELM studies, the persuasive message consists of either 'strong' or 'weak' arguments, defined empirically using the following method:

> *"In developing arguments for a topic we begin by generating a large number of arguments, both intuitively compelling and specious ones, in favour of some target issue (...). Then, members of the appropriate subject population are given these arguments to rate for persuasiveness. Based on these scores, we select arguments with high and low ratings to comprise at least one "strong" and one "weak" message. Subsequently, other subjects are given one of these messages and are told to think about it and evaluate it carefully. Following examination of the message, subjects complete a "thought listing measure" (Brock, 1967; Greenwald, 1968) in which they are instructed to record the thoughts elicited by the message. These thoughts are then coded as to whether they are favourable, unfavourable, or neutral toward the position advocated (e.g. see Cacioppo and Petty, 1981; Cacioppo, Harkins and Petty, 1981)." (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; 32)*

The cognitive response approach rests on the principle that a 'strong' message contains arguments that generate predominantly favourable thoughts towards the advocacy, such that where the profile of issue-relevant thoughts is more favourable *after* message exposure than it was before, positive attitude change is expected to occur. The thought-listing measure is intended to ensure that the strong and weak messages elicit the appropriate profile of favourable and unfavourable thoughts. Once it has been established that the strong and weak messages elicit the appropriate profile of positive and negative cognitive responses, a panel of judges further check the messages for other characteristics including overall believability, comprehensibility, complexity and familiarity, the aim being to ensure that whilst the messages vary in terms of their argument quality, they are equivalent in terms of these other attributes.

In the present study, a different procedure was used, but which drew on Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) method. A pilot study was devised to empirically establish the argument quality of a selection of arguments in favour of Britain joining the euro for use in the main experiment. A sample of pro-EMU arguments were selected to represent the prototypical arguments about the euro identified in the argumentation analysis in study B. The arguments, which according to Toulmin's (1958) model, mainly consisted of a single claim (some with supporting evidence) were taken partly from the leading articles analysed in study B and partly from two pro-European campaign websites (Business for Sterling and Britain in Europe). Broadly, they were of three types, addressing different aspects of the debate surrounding EMU: economic arguments in favour of Britain joining the euro, political arguments and arguments about national identity.

The pilot study involved a convenience sample of 120 British adults[21] completing a short questionnaire (either on paper or via the Internet), in which they were asked to read the arguments presented and complete a thought-listing task to record their cognitive responses to what they had read. They were then asked to evaluate the cogency of the arguments on a series of scales (the paper questionnaire has been reproduced in Appendix D)[22]. The thought-listing measure was based on approaches developed by Brock (1967) and Greenwald (1968). Each argument was presented in turn, followed by a blank space in which participants were asked to write the first thing they thought about when they read the argument. The second task involved rating each argument on a set of six seven-point semantic differential scales (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1971). These represented an attempt to operationalise the dimensions of argument quality used by the panel of judges in Petty and Cacioppo's studies (1986; p.32). Four of the items measured the overall complexity of the arguments, their familiarity, comprehensibility and believability. The other two asked participants how much they agreed with the arguments and how persuasive they thought the arguments were.

To analyse the data, firstly, cognitive responses recorded in the thought-listing procedure were content analysed using a coding frame developed by Petty, Ostrom and Brock (1981). The coding involved evaluating responses along three different dimensions (each with three categories): (1) the '*polarity*' of the thoughts, referring to their valence in relation to the advocacy of the argument (favourable, neutral or unfavourable); (2) the '*origin*' of the thoughts (direct recall of the message, reactions to

[21] Participants were recruited mainly through friends and relatives working in a variety of different settings, including a range of educational (FE and HE) institutions and research organisations, as well as from undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the Social Psychology department at the LSE. I am grateful to Russell Luyt, Leilani Mitchell, Rebecca Newton and Christine Roberts for their assistance in recruiting the participants.

[22] In the paper version of the questionnaire, participants were asked to evaluate 5 arguments. In order to boost response, a web-based version of the questionnaire was developed. To reduce the response burden in the web mode, the online version only required participants to evaluate a single argument. In both modes, participants were randomly allocated to a different version of the questionnaire, containing different argument(s). There were 2 versions of the paper questionnaire (each containing 5 arguments) and 10 versions of the single-argument web questionnaire.

Table 7.1 Profile of cognitive responses to pro-EMU arguments and mean argument quality ratings

Pro-EMU arguments	**Favourable Thoughts %**	**Neutral Thoughts %**	**Unfavourable Thoughts %**	**Mean argument quality rating**
Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.	65	9	27	2.78
A single currency is in principle a desirable thing for Britain in Europe because of its effect on exchange rate instability, transaction costs, interest rates and because of its disciplinary effects on the public finances of other European nations.	54	15	31	3.16
Money has a powerful symbolic value. Yet the essence of being British has nothing to do with the pound or the euro. Our national identity would be very thin indeed if the best thing about our culture was the Queen's head on the coin. An overarching civic sense of Europeanness based on a set of shared democratic values is surely something to strive after as a way to eliminate the root cause of the violent ethnic conflicts that have occurred as a result of ethnic nationalism.	39	--	62	3.92
Foreign investors choose Britain because we are a gateway to the European Union and remaining isolated from the euro would make us less attractive to them. This investment makes our country more prosperous. As the gateway to Europe and a bridge to the rest of the world, Britain plays a unique and pivotal role in global affairs.	38	13	50	4.07

Joining the euro means pooling sovereignty, not losing it. When it comes to interest rates, joining the euro would in some ways give us more sovereignty. Being represented in the European Central Bank would give us more influence, because we would be there as part of the decision-making process, not just having to accept decisions made by others that have a profound effect on us.	37	7	56	3.93
We are rightly proud of Britain and confident in our national identity. Britain would still be Britain if we voted to join the euro, and the Queen's head would still be on our coins.	37	13	50	4.23
Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency now, it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain. It is inevitable.	31	8	62	4.11
In the modern world, Britain can't afford to go it alone – we're better off in Europe. In the euro, we could be even more prosperous and powerful. Britain's place in Europe is central to our prosperity and standing. Joining the euro could guarantee our economic stability by strengthening our relations with our biggest trading partners.	28	6	66	3.28
There are huge potential advantages of joining the single European currency in terms of living standards, fiscal stability and economic growth. British exclusion from the project could entail many risks.	26	3	71	3.47
Joining the euro would be better for shoppers because prices would be lower. Everybody knows that everyday consumer goods are much cheaper in the rest of Europe than in Britain.	22	13	65	4.07

the message, or the recipient's own message-topic thoughts); and (3) the 'target' of the thoughts (related either to the topic of the communication, to the style of the communication or to the audience of the communication). (The coding frame is shown in appendix D).

Central to Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) determination of argument quality is the polarity dimension – that is, the valence of the cognitive responses elicited with respect to the advocacy of the argument. For these authors, the strength of arguments was established according to a strict formula whereby a 'strong' message was one which elicited on average a profile of thoughts of which 75% were favourable. Because the persuasive 'messages' in the present study were short arguments (often consisting only one or two sentences), it was not appropriate to adopt such a strict criterion. Instead, arguments were selected for the main study on the basis of the proportion of favourable thoughts each generated among participants in the pilot study and on the basis of the ratings they received on each of the dimensions of argument quality identified. A mean score on each of the 5 dimensions was computed for each argument (the semantic differential scales were all coded so that a high score (from 1-7) indicated weaker argument quality). Table 7.1 shows the percentage of thoughts coded in each category on the polarity dimension for each of the 10 pro-EMU arguments in the pilot, together with the mean argument quality ratings. Those arguments generating the highest proportion of favourable thoughts were selected as the strong arguments for the study. The weak arguments selected were those receiving the highest argument quality ratings[23]. An additional criterion for selecting the arguments was that they were balanced by topic - each set was made up of an economic argument, a political argument and a national identity argument – and by length. The arguments selected for the experiment are shown in table 7.2.

[23] NB – To control for the possible confounding effect of the participants' prior attitudes towards EMU on their argument quality ratings, the data in table 1 are taken only from those participants who were pro-EMU.

Table 7.2 Strong and weak arguments selected for the experiment

	Strong arguments	Weak Arguments
1.	*Some people argue that we shouldn't join the euro because money has a powerful symbolic value. Yet, the essence of being British has nothing to do with the pound or the euro. Our national identity would be very think indeed if the best thing about our culture was the Queen's head on the coin.*	*Some people argue that we shouldn't join the euro because the pound is a major national symbol for Britain. We are rightly proud of Britain and confident in our national identity. But Britain would still be Britain if we voted to join the euro, and the Queen's head would still be on our coins.*
2.	*A single currency is, in principle, a desirable thing for Britain because of its effect on exchange rate instability, transaction costs, interest rates and because of its disciplinary effects on the public finances of other European nations.*	*Joining the euro would be better for shoppers because prices would be lower. Everybody knows that everyday consumer goods are much cheaper in the rest of Europe than in Britain.*
3.	*Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.*	*Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency now, it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain. It is inevitable.*

7.4 Experimental design

The experiment was based on a multi-factorial, between-subjects design, involving three treatments. These are shown in table 7.3. The first of these concerned the presentation of the arguments; whether before or after participants were asked about their attitudes. Because of the difficulties of studying attitude change in within-subjects designs (especially in the context of a self-completion survey, where the use of repeated measures would be particularly problematic), the measurement of *attitude change* was achieved by asking half the participants about their attitudes at the start of the questionnaire, *before* asking them to read and evaluate the arguments, and half part-way through the questionnaire, immediately *after* they had read and evaluated the arguments. Random allocation of participants to these two basic conditions meant that any resultant difference in attitudes between the two groups was assumed to be a function of exposure to the persuasive communication.

The second treatment in the study was the manipulation of argument quality. As described, half the participants were presented with three 'strong' arguments in favour of joining the euro to read and evaluate, and half were presented with three 'weak' arguments (shown in table 7.2).

The third treatment involved the manipulation of national identity salience. The concept of 'salience' is derived from self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). The manipulation involved a priming procedure based on that used by Brown, Vivian and Hewstone (1999) and Memmendey, Klink and Brown (2001), aimed at maximising the likelihood of self-categorisation as 'British', encouraging inter-group comparisons, highlighting inter-group bias and inducing in-group favouritism. The priming procedure involved responding to 6 additional items, and as with the other treatments, was applied to just one half of the sample.

Table 7.3 Experimental treatments

Factor	Description of treatment	Levels
Attitude Measurement	Question ordering of the attitude measures	Pre-message measure Post-message measure
Argument Quality	Strength of persuasive messages	Strong Weak
Salience	Salience of national identity	High Low

The design of the experiment was fully-crossed, such that the three factors yielded 8 different conditions, each with its own version of the questionnaire. The questionnaires varied in terms of the order in which the different questions (and the arguments) were presented (attitude measurement *before* or *after* message exposure), the quality of the arguments presented (*strong* or *weak*) and the presence or absence of the salience manipulation (*high* versus *low* salience). The full design is illustrated in table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Full experimental design

FACTOR 1 *Attitude Measure*	Pre-Message Attitude				Post-Message Attitude			
FACTOR 2 *Argument Quality*	Strong		Weak		Strong		Weak	
FACTOR 3 *Identity Salience*	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Group	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

7.5 Participants

Participants in the experiment were recruited and contacted through the qualitative research recruitment service, Saros Research Ltd – a company specialising in managing a database of over 25,000 members of the general public who have expressed an interest in occasionally participating in market research. The company claims that its database is broadly representative of the British online community[24]. However, because of the experimental design of the study, no systematic sampling method was necessary. Random allocation ensures that the distribution of responses across different conditions will differ systematically only as a result of the manipulations. The profile of the sample contacted was not, therefore, designed to be representative of the population (the use of the Internet as a data collection instrument further restricted this). Rather, it was decided that people who had most recently joined the database should be contacted, to ensure that email address details were up-to-date, in order to maximise the contact and response rates (by targeting those who had only relatively recently expressed their interest in participating in research).

Nevertheless, because of the nature of the topic under investigation, was desirable that the achieved sample provided some point of comparison with the population it is intended to represent (British citizens aged 18 and over, eligible to vote in a referendum on the euro). For this reason, a number of demographic measures were included in the questionnaire that could be compared with population estimates. Similarly, some of the measures of attitudes and involvement used in this study were taken from recent large-

[24] Characteristics of the achieved sample are compared with the British online community in chapter 8.

scale surveys using nationally-representative samples (a survey conducted by MORI on behalf of the Foreign Policy Centre in 2002 and the Autumn 2002 Eurobarometer) to provide further possibilities for comparison.

In total, 1092 participants returned complete questionnaires from an initial sample of 5500, who were invited to participate in the study[25] (a rate of 19%; though there is no record of the number of ineligible email addresses in the starting sample). The method of randomly allocating participants to the experimental conditions employed in the experiment (a html script) worked in the following way: Rather than ensuring that equal numbers of each version of the questionnaire were completed in series, it allowed the researcher to manipulate the *relative likelihood* of a respondent being presented with a particular version of the questionnaire over another. Thus, the total number of returned questionnaires in each condition was monitored throughout the fielding of the survey, so that, if necessary, the likelihood of receiving a particular version could be manipulated to try to ensure as far as possible equal numbers in each of the 8 experimental groups[26].

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[25]The research methodology was pre-tested in an extensive pilot study, to ensure that all aspects of the design worked as intended. Email invitations were sent to 1500 people registered on the SAROS database. Because of uncertainty regarding the likely response rate for the survey, the rationale behind the comparatively large sample for the pilot study was to ensure sufficient numbers in each of the 8 cells of the design to permit an initial examination of potential effect sizes. Pre-testing the method in this way, therefore, not only provided an indication of the achievable response rate, but also a basis for power calculations to decide the total number of SAROS members to contact for the main survey. In total, 367 people returned responses to the pilot study, a response rate of about 25%.

Following the pilot study and initial analysis of the pilot data, it was possible to make a more informed decision regarding the requisite sample size for the main survey. The pilot study achieved a mean per-condition sample size of 45. Analysis of Variance for the full-factorial model (including a measure of issue involvement as a blocking factor), using a 7-point scale attitude measure as the dependent variable, yielded a within-subjects mean square estimate of variance of 2.65. On the basis of this measure of variance, it was possible to use an approximate formula for calculating sample size, which has been demonstrated to yield a power over 0.70 (using the 0.05 significance level for the test). The formula is taken from Boniface (1995) and is shown below:

$$n = (2)^2(1.96)^2\,(\text{variance})/\mathbf{spd}^2$$

(where **spd** = the "smallest practical difference" of importance between the pair of mean scores on the dependent variable (Boniface, 1995; p.90). It was decided that a conservative estimate for the **spd** on the 7-point euro attitude scale (which ranged from 'Very negative' to 'Very positive') should be 0.5. Thus, the resultant formula used for the power determination was as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= (15.3664)\,(2.649)/\mathbf{0.5}^2 \\ &= (15.3664)\,(2.649)/\mathbf{0.25} \\ &= 40.71/0.25 \\ &= 163 \end{aligned}$$

Given the relative efficiency of the online survey and that access to the SAROS database did not constrain the use of a large sample, it was decided to aim for a sample of around 165 in each of the 8 conditions – that is, a total sample size of 1320. Given the relatively low response rate achieved for the pilot survey, in order to ensure sufficient numbers in each of the 8 experimental conditions, a total of sample 5500 people were selected from the database to be invited to participate in the main survey.

[26] This turned out to be necessary. The most likely reason for uneven response rates across the conditions was that some versions of the questionnaire elicited more 'break-offs' or non-response than others. In particular, the questionnaires in the high salience conditions were much longer than in the low salience

In practice, because of the fast rate of incoming responses to the Internet survey (particularly during the first 24 hours of the survey going live), it was not possible to achieve this perfectly and as a result, the numbers participating in each treatment group were not equal. Table 7.5 shows the total number of participants achieved in each cell of the research design.

Table 7.5 Achieved sample sizes in each treatment group

	Pre-Message Attitude				Post-Message Attitude			
	Strong		Weak		Strong		Weak	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Target n	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165
Achieved n	145	156	151	148	139	154	132	150

7.6 Measures

The questionnaire contained items designed to measure each of the following:

a. attitudes towards the euro
b. issue involvement
c. national identification
d. argument elaboration
e. political orientation and engagement
f. socio-demographic background of the participant

In this section, I describe the key dependent and independent measures used to test the central hypotheses of study D (presented in chapter 8). The full list of questions is available in Appendix D.

7.6.1 Dependent variables

Attitude change - The main dependent variable under investigation was attitude change, measured as the difference in attitudes towards the euro between groups A-D (asked

conditions. Also the presence of national symbols in these conditions may have been off-putting to some potential participants.

about their attitude before message exposure) and groups E-H (asked about their attitudes after message exposure). The following measures of attitudes were included: (1) a seven-point semantic-differential scale, ranging from 'Very negative' to 'Very positive', on which participants were asked to rate their views on the single currency; (2) a categorical measure of attitudes developed and used by MORI to differentiate those who are decided in their opinion on the euro ('strongly in favour' or 'strongly opposed'), and those who are undecided and but might be persuaded if they thought it would be good or bad for the British economy (the euro waverers question described in chapter 1). Question (1) was deliberately intended to be quite vague, to allow the detection of relatively small difference in means. By contrast, question (2) was included primarily to enable direct comparison of the pre-message sample (groups A-D) with the British population as a whole. However, the waverers question was also used as an additional, albeit crude ordinal measure of attitudes, coded from 1 to 4 (where 1 indicates strong opposition to the euro and 4 indicates strong support). For the overall sample (i.e. across all the conditions), question (2) was correlated with the question (1) at 0.72 ($p<0.001$; $n=1092$)[27].

Following message exposure, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the three arguments (taken together). This item was intended as a measure of the favourability of participants' cognitive responses to the arguments. However, it was also used in the analysis as a proxy for participants' attitudes towards the euro, in order to explore within-sample differences in groups A-D in the amount of attitude change following message exposure. The correlation between the attitude index and agreement with the message was only moderate however, at 0.51 ($p<0.001$; $n=546$) in the pre-message condition and 0.56 ($p<0.001$; $n=546$) in the post-message condition.

Message elaboration – In keeping with the classic ELM studies, the second dependent variable of interest was the extent of message elaboration. This was measured using two procedures based on those developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986): (1) a self-report of elaboration effort; and (2) the manipulation of argument quality described above (which included two measures of participants' own evaluations of message quality). While the former provides a direct measure of elaboration effort, the latter provides an indirect measure, resting on the assumption that the quantity of attitude change will depend on the strength of the arguments, *only* where participants are

[27] 'Don't Know' responses to the MORI "Waverers" item were coded zero for this purpose.

engaging in deep, systematic processing. The implications of this assumption, and the predictions derived from it are discussed in the next chapter.

Participants in the study were asked to read three arguments and then to evaluate them on a set of four measures. Participants were asked to identify which of the three arguments they 'liked the best' and which one they 'disagreed with the most' (aimed at tapping favourable and unfavourable cognitive responses); then they were asked to report the extent to which they felt the arguments taken together (a) made their point effectively and (b) were convincing (aimed at evaluating the persuasive quality of the items) using 7-point semantic differential scales as used in the pilot study to establish argument quality. The argument evaluation measures were primarily intended to reinforce the cover story for the experiment and were only used in the analysis as a check of the success of the argument quality manipulation.

7.6.2 Independent variables

Issue involvement – Multiple indicators of participants' knowledge about EMU and their level of interest in the issue were used to create a single index of involvement. As in study C, this index was intended to provide a measure of an individual's motivation and ability to systematically process information about the euro, and thereby, of their elaboration likelihood. Participants located at the high end of the involvement continuum were hypothesised to have high elaboration likelihood, whilst those at the lower end of the continuum were hypothesised to have low elaboration likelihood. The index was also used in the analysis as a predictor of attitude change and elaboration likelihood.

The measures of issue involvement included in the experiment were based on those used in the deliberative poll (study C). The index was created using the mean of scores on two sets of variables. The first set of questions included four items asking participants to use 7-point semantic differential scales to subjectively rate a) how *interested* they are in politics generally as well as, b) how interested they are in the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union; c) how knowledgeable they are about Britain's relationship with the EU, and d) how well-informed they are about the pros and cons of joining the single currency. The second set of questions provided an objective rating of knowledge about the EU and EMU, based on responses to a 5-item quiz. Scores on all items in the quiz were positively and highly correlated with each other. The decision to create the index based on responses to both sets of questions was supported by a principal component analysis, which yielded a main principal component, accounting for over 63% of the variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.17. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.85.

National identity – As noted earlier, the measures of national identity used in this study were intended to capture variation in the *strength* of participants' attachment to Britain. The decision to focus on this aspect of national identity – as opposed to the *nature* of participants' attachment to nation (Cinnirella, 1996) – was mainly pragmatic. For reasons of limited questionnaire space, it was not possible to include a large number of items measuring the various dimensions of national identity that have been identified in previous research (e.g. Rothi et al., 1995; Dowds and Young, 1996). To have included all the items from the 1995 British Social Attitudes Survey module that were analysed by Dowds and Young, for example, would have made the questionnaire overly long and off-putting for respondents. Furthermore, because the priming procedure designed to manipulate the salience of national identity consisted of additional questions asking participants' their views about Britain (focused mainly on sentimental aspects of national identity), it was important not to confound it by including multiple independent measures of attachment to nation in all conditions. Simply asking participants about their national identity may have inadvertently made that identity salient for them, so it was decided to keep these items to a minimum.

Three measures of national identification were included in the questionnaires for all the experimental conditions. The first item measured the extent of positive ingroup evaluation by asking participants the extent to which they felt 'proud to be British'. The other two items measured the strength of in-group identification by asking participants the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements (a) 'It is important to me to be British' and (b) 'I identify with British people'(using a standard 5-point Likert scale, from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'). The purpose of the items was two-fold: items 1 and 2 were used to form an index of the strength of participants' attachment to their national identity; item 3 served as a check of the effectiveness of the salience manipulation (see below).

Personal relevance – In addition to the questions relating to levels of interest in and knowledge about the euro issue, a further component of involvement measured in the survey was that of personal relevance. The personal relevance EMU holds for different people depends on a range of different variables, the measurement of which was beyond the present study. However, given the significance of recent European travel experience and the ability to speak European languages in predicting involvement in the deliberative poll study, I decided to include two measures of these in the questionnaire for this study. Recent European travel was measured by asking participants whether they had travelled to any European countries since the launch of the euro (and if so, which countries), and the ability to speak other European languages was measured by asking if the participant could speak any European language(s) either fluently, a little or not at all.

Political orientation and engagement – The questionnaire also asked participants about their political orientation by asking which political party they are most inclined to support and which daily newspaper they most regularly read. Finally, participants were asked how likely it is that they would get along to vote, if there were a referendum tomorrow on whether Britain should be part of a single European currency. Neither the personal relevance nor political orientation variables were included in the present analysis, however.

7.6.3 Salience manipulation

The manipulation of national identity salience involved a priming procedure consisting of six items, broadly based on a procedure used by Brown, Vivian and Hewstone (1999) and Mummendey, Klink and Brown (2001). As stated, the aim of the procedure – derived from self-categorisation theory – was to maximise the likelihood of self-categorisation as 'British', to encourage inter-group comparisons, in-group favouritism and inter-group bias. First of all, in two open-ended questions, participants were asked to write down (a) 'the best things about living in Britain compared with other European countries', to elicit a positive evaluation of the national category; and (b) 'the characteristics they like most about British people compared with other Europeans', to prompt inter-group comparison (Mummendey et al., 2001). Secondly, participants were asked how 'typical' of British people they considered themselves to be, the aim being to decrease ingroup and outgroup heterogeneity. Thirdly, participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two attitude statements, aimed at further drawing attention to inter-group differences ('Of all the nations in the world, Britain stands out') and encouraging inter-group comparison ('I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world'). Lastly, two items reflecting instrumental and cultural aspects of patriotism asked how proud participants were of (a) Britain's economic achievements and (b) history, with the aim of reinforcing participants' positive in-group evaluations[28]. To reinforce the intended effects of the priming procedure, the label 'British' was repeated frequently to try to raise category accessibility, and national symbols (the Union Jack flag, the Queen's head and a Pound coin) were pictured on the homepage and background of the questionnaire to try to evoke specific category cues.

7.6.4 Question order

As described, the experimental design included eight conditions, each with its own questionnaire. All eight versions of the questionnaire used the same questions, differing only in terms of the order in which they were presented, by the 'strength' of the message arguments, and by the presence or absence of the salience manipulation. Table 7.6 shows the order in which the questions were presented in each of the experimental groups (note that the question ordering was identical in both the strong and weak argument quality conditions, so it is illustrated for just 4 of the 8 groups here).

An extensive pilot survey provided a test of the argument quality and national identity salience manipulations, question wording and the overall design of the questionnaire from the point of view of layout and led to a number of modifications for the main survey. Further details about the pilot study are available in Appendix D.

[28] Future analysis of the data could examine differences in attitudes as a function of the *nature* of attachment to nation by deriving instrumental and sentimental attachment to nation from these measures.

Table 7.6 Order of question presentation

	Pre-message/ High salience Conditions	Pre-message/ Low salience Conditions	Post-message/ High salience Conditions	Post-message/ Low salience Conditions
1	Salience manipulation	Attitudes	Salience manipulation	National identification
2	Attitudes	Involvement	National identification	**MESSAGE PRESENTATION**
3	Involvement	National identification	**MESSAGE PRESENTATION**	Argument elaboration
4	National identification	**MESSAGE PRESENTATION**	Argument elaboration	Attitudes
5	**MESSAGE PRESENTATION**	Argument elaboration	Attitudes	Involvement
6	Argument elaboration	Demographics	Involvement	Demographics
7	Demographics	Political engagement	Demographics	Political engagement
8	Political engagement		Political engagement	

7.7 Procedure

The questionnaire was designed and programmed by the author as a form in Microsoft Frontpage 2000 (using a custom-script for returning the data to the author's email address). The questionnaire was presented on a single page and the respondent was required to navigate the page by scrolling down as they answered each question. While the 'form-based' design of web surveys is generally considered to be less sophisticated than interactive or page-by-page designs (e.g. Moon, 1998; Couper, 2000), it has the advantage that it is more similar to a paper self-completion questionnaire, making it a more familiar response mode for participants (Dillman, 2000). The form-style questionnaires also has the advantage of enabling participants to look ahead at what is coming up, as well as to review and modify their responses to earlier questions (although this can also be considered a disadvantage if the questionnaire is very long, or appears too demanding).

Sample members were sent a personalised email from Saros, inviting them to participate in the study if they were aged 18 or over and were UK citizens[29]. The email contained a hyperlink to the survey, which when clicked activated a script, which randomly allocated the respondent to the 'homepage[30]' of one of the 8 treatment conditions. The homepage contained the cover story for the experiment and instructions for how to take part. From the homepage, participants had to follow a further link to access the associated questionnaire for that condition.

The cover story was intended to prepare people for the fact that they would be presented with different arguments in favour of joining the euro and read as follows:

"This research is being carried out in the Department of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics. It is part of an ongoing project evaluating the different arguments people use for and against joining the single currency, the 'euro'. This particular study looks at arguments in favour of the UK joining the euro - arguments from newspapers, websites and euro campaign material. We are asking people to assist in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments in favour of the introduction of the euro in the UK. Because your personal views about Britain and Europe (for example, whether you think we should join the euro or not) might influence what you think of the arguments, it is necessary to gather some additional information about you. For this reason, we have included lots of different questions that ask your opinions about Britain creating stronger links with Europe, how interested you are in European politics and some questions about how you feel about living in Britain and being British.

Fieldwork took place during March 2003 and lasted a fortnight. It is the policy of Saros not to contact their members more than once about any given opportunity to participate in research[31]. So the sample was contacted just once only and was asked to complete the survey within the specified period of two weeks. The opportunity to participate in a prize draw to win £100 was offered as an incentive to participate.

[29] The email invitation is available in Appendix D.

[30] http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey01X.htm (Group A). For groups B-H, change suffix to 02X, 03X, 04X, etc. Last accessed April 2007.

[31] Note that Saros's data protection policy also meant that it was not possible to seek information regarding non-respondents.

After completing all the questions[32], participants were asked to submit their answers (the 'Submit' button activated a custom script to email the responses to the author). On submission, a 'thank you' page appeared, containing a link to further information debriefing participants as to the actual purposes of the study. This page additionally contained an email address, with which participants could contact the researcher with any additional queries they might have about the research.

7.8 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I described the design and methodology of Study D, an ELM experiment investigating the role of involvement and identity in persuasion. Specifically, the aim of the study was to examine the effect of raising the salience of national identity in persuasive communications about the single currency on people's attitudes and the psychological processes by which their attitudes are formed and changed. In order to access a sample of British adults, the experiment was administered as an Internet-based self-completion survey. However, the experimental design was based on the original methodology developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) to test the predictions of the ELM. Participants were asked to evaluate a set of (either strong or weak) arguments in favour of joining the euro. Half the participants were allocated to the 'high salience' condition, in which a priming procedure was used to raise the salience of British national identity. The questionnaire additionally contained measures of issue involvement and strength of attachment to British national identity. The aim of the analysis was to examine the effect of the salience manipulation on attitude change and elaboration likelihood at different levels of issue involvement and attachment to national identity. In chapter 8, I describe in detail the specific predictions derived from the ELM that were tested and present the results of the data analysis.

[32] Participants were required to respond to all items in the questionnaire. When they came to submit their responses, if any item was left unanswered, an error message appeared asking them to return to that question and provide an answer. The questionnaire could not be submitted if it was incomplete. The practice of forcing responses to all items in a web-based questionnaire is not recommended (e.g. DeRouvray and Couper, 2002). However, at the time of developing the instrument, there was only limited literature on the conduct of Internet surveys to guide such design considerations and a pragmatic decision was taken to force participants to answer all the questions in order to ensure that the data were as complete as possible.

8 THE EFFECT OF INVOLVEMENT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EURO

In the previous chapter I presented the design and methodology of study D, an internet experiment designed to test the theoretical framework developed in this thesis. In this chapter I present the results of the statistical analysis of the data from the experiment. Before turning to the results, I shall briefly review the aims of the study and describe the focus of the analysis presented here.

The study was designed to investigate further the roles of information, involvement and identity in attitude change, in the context of the theoretical framework provided by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986). The research had two main aims. The first was to test the predictions of the ELM regarding attitude change and cognitive processing in relation to a real-world issue: Britain's membership of the euro. The model predicts that, as a result of variation in elaboration likelihood, people will respond differently to information about an issue in terms of the psychological processes used to form and change their attitudes. Groups of participants in this study are compared on the basis of two variables: 1) their level of issue involvement and 2) the strength of their attachment to British national identity. The second aim was to examine the effect of raising the salience of national identity in information about the euro, a) on persuasion, and b) on the psychological processes by which persuasion is achieved.

In order to identify the psychological processes by which attitudes are formed and changed (i.e. whether cognitive processing of information is via the 'peripheral' or 'central' route), a range of evidence is taken into consideration. Firstly, I look at the effect of the persuasive message on attitudes and look for evidence of differences in attitudes on the basis of argument quality. I then look at the effect of raising the salience of national identity on attitude change and processing, to decide which of the four roles identified by the authors of the ELM the manipulation played in effecting attitude change across each comparison group. Finally, I look at a range of indicators of increased message processing (based on Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; van Knippenberg, 1999), on which to compare high versus low involvement participants and participants with strong versus weak attachment to British national identity. The hypotheses and predictions are specified in detail below.

8.1 Hypotheses

The data analysis tested a number of hypotheses derived from the postulates of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Petty and Wegener, 1999). One postulate of particular interest is that any variable can influence persuasion in one of four ways:

1. As an **influence on the extent of central-route processing** - i.e. by influencing the *quantity* of elaboration. A variable can either enhance or reduce how much (relatively objective) processing a participant engages in.
2. As an **influence on the direction of central-route processing** – i.e. by biasing the quality of central-route processing either positively or negatively.
3. As a **cue for peripheral processing** – i.e. by activating a mode of processing that is qualitatively different from the systematic processing associated with the central route.
4. As an **issue-relevant argument**. Where an individual is engaging in high levels of relatively-objective message processing (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), it is likely that so-called 'peripheral' information will be processed alongside arguments contained in the message. Under such circumstances, it is said that the variable has acted as an issue-relevant argument in the persuasion context.

Variables are predicted to take on different roles depending on the likelihood of elaboration (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). As Petty and Wegener (1999; p.51) explain:

> *"In brief, variables serve as cues (or work via peripheral mechanisms) at the low end of the elaboration continuum. Variables serve as arguments or bias information processing at the high end of the elaboration continuum. Variables are most likely to affect the amount of thinking when the elaboration likelihood is not constrained by other variables to be high or low (e.g., at about the middle of the continuum)."*

In this study, elaboration likelihood was not constrained to be high or low. The first aim of the analysis, therefore, was to investigate how 'naturally-occurring' variations in issue involvement and attachment to British national identity influenced the extent of message processing.

8.1.1 The effect of involvement and identity on persuasion

The following hypotheses about the extent of message processing among participants with high and low issue involvement and participants with strong and weak attachment to British national identity are tested:

H1: According to the ELM, the more involved a person is in the target issue, the higher their elaboration likelihood. High involvement participants tend to be more able and more motivated to engage in central-route processing. We would expect, therefore, to see evidence of increased message processing among high involvement participants. By contrast, participants with low issue involvement are expected to have low elaboration likelihood because they are likely to be less able and motivated to engage in central-route processing. We would expect, therefore, to see evidence of less message processing among low involvement participants.

H2: On the basis of research into the group proto-typicality of message topics in persuasion (see Haslam et al., 1996; van Knippenberg, 1999), it is hypothesised that for respondents with strong attachment to British national identity, the topic of the euro will have high group relevance and will be expected to influence persuasion in a similar way to issue involvement – increasing the likelihood of message elaboration, but with a particular focus on determining the validity of messages (van Knippenberg, 1999; Crano and Chen, 1998). We would expect, therefore, to see evidence of increased message processing among participants with strong attachment to British national identity. By contrast, participants with weak attachment to British national identity are predicted to be less motivated to engage in central processing on the grounds of group relevance. We would expect, therefore, to see evidence of less message processing among participants with weak national identity attachment.

According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), individuals engaging in increased message processing should show evidence of the following:

a. High self-reported elaboration effort

H1a: High involvement participants will rate their elaboration effort higher than low involvement participants.

H2a: Participants with strong national identity attachment will rate their elaboration effort higher than participants with weak national identity attachment.

b. *Post-message evaluations of argument quality that differentiate between strong and weak arguments.*

An individual engaged in central-route processing will be able to distinguish arguments that are compelling from arguments that are specious; he/she will evaluate those arguments more positively than weak arguments. On the basis of H1 and H2, it follows that:

H1b: High involvement participants will rate strong arguments more positively than weak arguments, whereas the argument evaluations of low involvement participants will be unlikely to differentiate between strong and weak arguments.

H2b: Participants with strong national identity will rate strong arguments more positively than weak arguments; whereas the argument evaluations of participants with weak national identity will be unlikely to differentiate between strong and weak arguments.

c. *Post-message attitudes that differentiate on the basis of argument quality.*

For individuals engaging in central-route processing, the extent of attitude change will be influenced by the quality of the arguments presented. Strong arguments will have a stronger influence on attitudes than weak arguments. On the basis of H1 and H2, it follows that:

H1c: The post-message attitudes of high involvement participants will differentiate between strong and weak arguments, such that the attitudes of high involvement participants presented with strong arguments will be more favourable to the euro than the attitudes of high involvement participants presented with weak arguments. By contrast, the post-message attitudes of low involvement participants will either differentiate on the basis of argument quality to a lesser degree, or not differentiate on the basis of argument quality at all.

H2c: The post-message attitudes of participants with strong national identity will differentiate between strong and weak arguments, such that the attitudes of strong identity participants presented with strong arguments will be more favourable to the euro than the attitudes of strong identity participants presented with weak arguments. By contrast, the post-message attitudes of weak national identity participants will either differentiate on the basis of argument quality to a lesser degree, or not differentiate on the basis of argument quality at all.

d. *Strong correlations between post-message attitudes and message evaluations.*

The ELM predicts that if message processing is increased, post-message attitudes are more likely to reflect the thoughts and ideas evoked by the persuasive communication (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; p.47). As such, there will be a higher degree of correlation between message evaluations and post-message attitudes. Correlations are also expected to vary according to the quality of the arguments presented, with strong arguments associated with higher correlations. From this, it follows that:

H1d: Correlations between argument evaluations and post-message attitudes will be higher for high involvement participants than for low involvement participants. The magnitude of correlation coefficients will vary with argument quality, such that evaluations of strong arguments will be more highly correlated with post-message attitudes than evaluations of weak arguments are among high involvement participants.

H2d: Correlations between argument evaluations and post-message attitudes will be higher for participants with strong national identity attachment than for participants with weak national identity. For strong identity participants, the magnitude of correlation coefficients will vary with argument quality, such that evaluations of strong arguments will be more highly correlated with post-message attitudes than are evaluations of weak arguments.

e. Favourability of cognitive responses predictive of post-exposure attitudes.

Finally, according to the ELM, if message processing is increased, the favourability of participants' cognitive responses to the arguments should be predictive of post-message attitudes. Thus,

H1e: Cognitive responses to the arguments of high involvement participants will be more predictive of post-message attitudes than those of low involvement participants.

H2e: Cognitive responses to the arguments of participants with strong national identity will be more predictive of post-message attitudes than those of participants with weak national identity.

8.1.2 The effect of identity salience on persuasion

The second aim of the analysis was to compare participants in the high salience condition with participants in the low salience condition in order to identify the effect of raising the salience of British national identity on persuasion. Since the way in which a variable influences persuasion depends on elaboration likelihood, and elaboration likelihood, in turn, is hypothesised to depend on issue involvement and attachment to British national identity, the aim of the analysis was to identify in which of the four roles the treatment variable acted for a) the sample as a whole; b) for high and low involvement participants; and c) for participants with strong and weak national identity attachment.

H3: Across the sample as a whole, because elaboration likelihood was not experimentally manipulated to be high or low, the treatment variable (salience) is expected to influence the amount of elaboration, either by enhancing or reducing the quantity of message processing. Thus, high salience participants will show evidence of processing that is *quantitatively* different (across the five indicators identified above) from that of low salience participants.

H4: The effect of the treatment variable (salience) at different levels of involvement and attachment to British national identity will depend on the effect of involvement and attachment to British national identity on elaboration likelihood (H1/H2). Thus, if involvement and attachment *increase* processing, the treatment variable (salience) will act either as an argument or as a bias on central-route processing. High involvement and strong attachment participants in the high salience condition will show evidence of processing that is *qualitatively* different from their counterparts in the low salience condition (this effect is illustrated in figure 8.1 below).

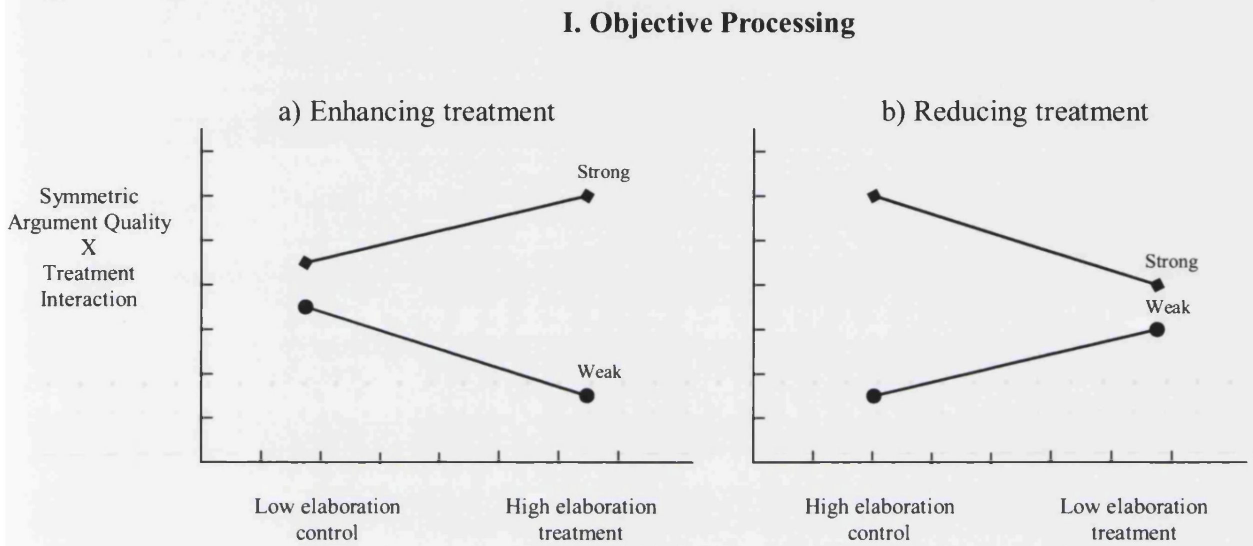
H5: On the other hand, if involvement and attachment *decrease* processing, the treatment variable (salience) will act either as a peripheral cue or as an influence on the quantity of elaboration. Low involvement and weak attachment participants in the high salience condition will show evidence of processing that is either *quantitatively* different from their counterparts in the low salience condition, or of peripheral route processing as opposed to central route processing (as evidenced by the absence of an argument quality effect – again, this is illustrated in figure 8.1).

To identify what role the treatment variable played in persuasion for each group, post-message attitudes are compared on the basis of argument quality and salience. As stated, for participants engaging in central-route processing strong arguments are predicted to be more persuasive than weak arguments and post-message attitudes are expected to differentiate on the basis of argument quality. Therefore, if a treatment variable *increases* the quantity of elaboration, then the post-message attitudes of participants in the treatment group will vary by the strength of the message arguments presented (figure 8.1, left-hand image). If a treatment variable *decreases* the quantity of elaboration, post-message attitudes of participants in the treatment group will be more similar (figure 8.1; right-hand image).

A treatment variable that influences the direction of processing (i.e. biases processing) can do so either positively or negatively and the post-message attitudes of participants in the treatment group will be either more or less favourable towards the object, but will still be expected to show differentiation on the basis of argument quality (figure 8.2).

By contrast, participants engaged in peripheral route processing will not differentiate between arguments on the basis of their argument quality, because persuasion is driven not by the arguments but by the variable acting as the peripheral cue. Thus, there will be no difference between post-message attitudes of participants in the treatment group. The effect of the peripheral cue on attitudes will be either positive (figure 8.3, left-hand image) or negative (figure 8.3; right-hand image).

Figure 8.1 Evidence of enhanced or reduced objective processing



Source: All figures adapted from Petty and Cacioppo, 1986

Figure 8.2 Evidence of biased processing

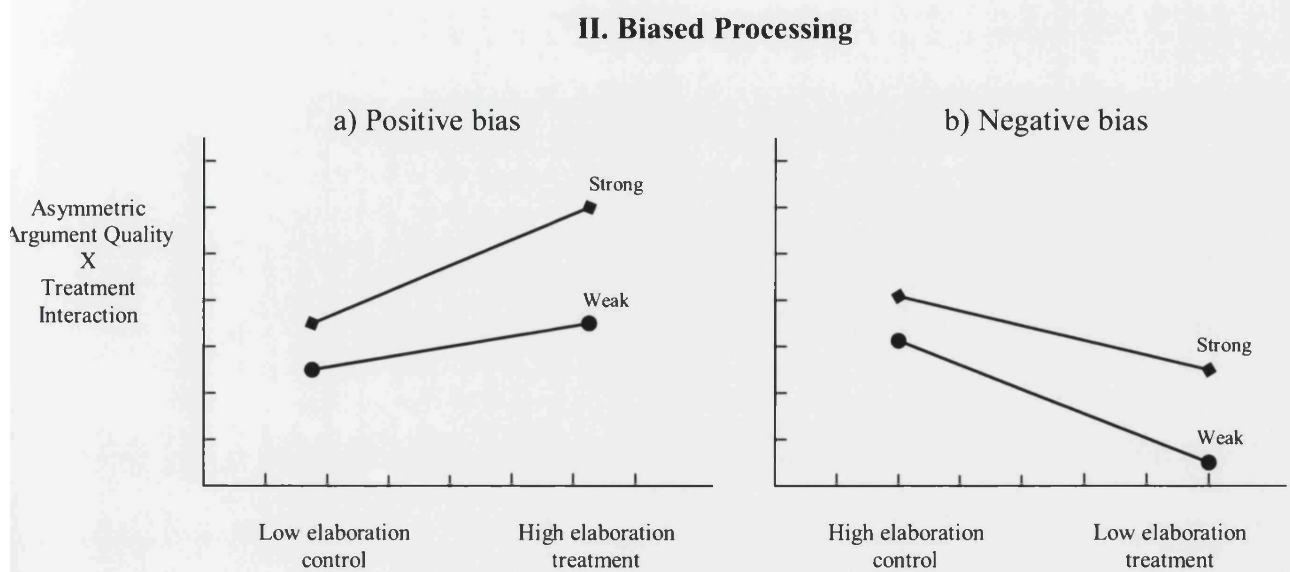


Figure 8.3 Evidence of a peripheral cue effect

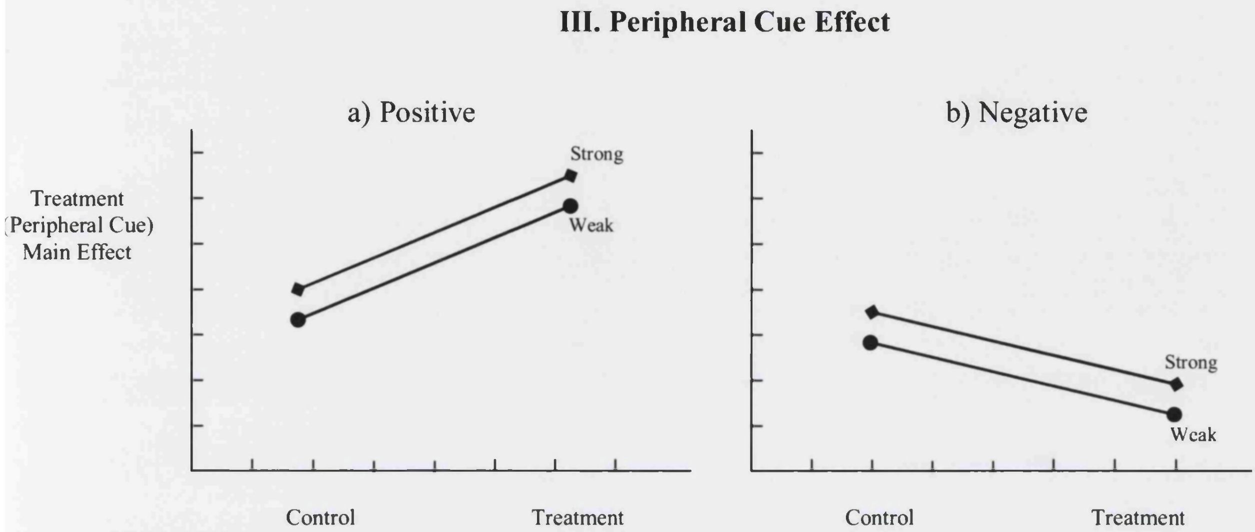
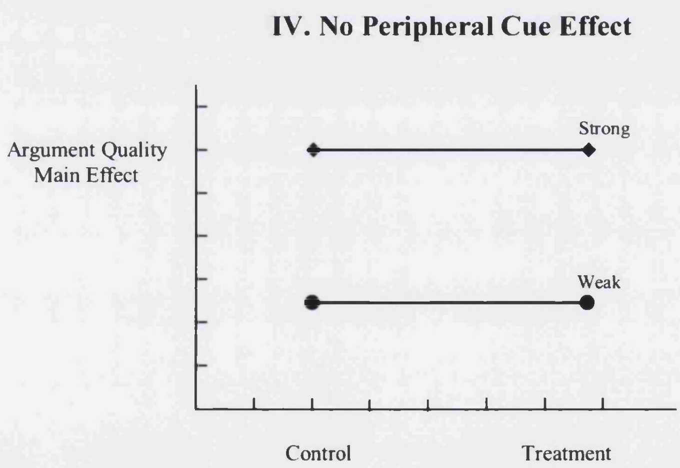


Figure 8.4 Evidence of a treatment variable acting as an argument in persuasion



Finally, if there is evidence of central-route processing (i.e. an argument quality effect is present) but there is no difference between the control and treatment groups (i.e. the low and high salience groups) in either the extent or direction of message processing, then the treatment variable is assumed to have acted as an issue-relevant argument. Such an effect is illustrated in figure 8.4.

8.2 Sample composition

Table 8.1 shows the socio-demographic makeup of the sample. It is noteworthy that both women and young people were over-represented in the overall sample. However, the distribution of all the observed socio-demographic variables did not differ significantly across the experimental conditions, so the randomisation procedure appeared to have worked successfully (this was confirmed using Chi-square tests of independence).

Table 8.1 Socio-demographic composition of the sample

Variable	n (Total n= 1092)	%
Sex		
Male	322	30
Age		
Min	18	-
Max	70	-
Mean	35	-
18-30	486	41
31-40	362	31
41-50	212	18
51-64	110	9
65+	5	.5
Level of education		
Secondary	209	19
Secondary – A-level	187	17
First degree	320	29
Certificate/ Diploma	174	16
Vocational qualification	112	10
Masters/ Doctorate	90	8
Occupation		
Professional/ Higher technical work	222	20
Manager/ Senior administrator	162	15
Clerical	187	17
Sales or services	98	9
Foreman or Supervisor	20	2
Skilled manual work	26	2
Semi-skilled or unskilled manual work	36	3
Full-time student	96	9
Voluntary/ Unpaid work	62	6
Other	179	16
Have never worked	4	.5

Ethnicity		
White	990	91
National identity		
UK citizen	90	8
British	613	56
English	307	28
Northern Irish	8	1
Scottish	36	3
Welsh	17	2
Other	21	2
Region		
South	600	55
North	434	40
Scotland	35	3
Wales	11	1
Northern Ireland	11	1
Overseas	1	-
Newspaper readership		
The Express	42	4
The Daily Mail	169	16
The Mirror	68	6
The Daily Star	14	1
The Sun	111	10
The Daily Telegraph	48	4
The Financial Times	11	1
The Guardian	102	9
The Independent	17	2
The Times	92	8
Local/Regional Daily	57	5
Other	60	6
None of these – I don't read a daily paper	301	28
Political party affiliation		
Conservative	271	25
Green	72	7
Labour	325	30
Liberal Democrats	269	25
Plaid Cymru	7	.5
Scottish National Party	15	1
UKIP	19	2
Other party	5	.5
None	67	6
Don't vote	5	.5
Floating voter/ undecided	12	1
No answer/ don't know	10	1
BNP	8	1
Socialist Alliance	7	.5

The decision to use the Internet as the mode of data collection meant that necessarily certain subsections of the population without access could not be included in the study. In February 2002, around 45% of British adults used the Internet for their personal use (only 39% of women did so). Table 8.2 compares the age and sex of the sample with the estimated age and sex of the UK 'online community' at the time the experiment was conducted. It is clear that the sample still over-represents women (though it is not known the extent to which they are over-represented on the Saros database), and that it slightly over-represents those in the 25-34 age group, while slightly under-representing those aged 55 and over.

Table 8.2 Comparisons with opinion data using representative samples

Variable	**MORI data (%)**	**Study sample (%)**
All internet users[1]:		
Sex		
Male	55	30
Age		
15-24	20	(18-24) 17
25-34	23	35
35-44	24	23
45-54	18	15
55-64	10	5
65+	5	1
Data weighted to GB population[2]:		
Views of British participation in EMU		
Strongly support British participation	18	12
Generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy	24	30
Generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy	24	32
Strongly oppose British participation	29	24
Don't know	5	3

[1]Base: All GB Public aged 15+ who use the internet (1,630); Source: e-MORI Technology Tracker, December 2002

[2]Base: 1,991 British adults aged 16+; Source: MORI Financial Services and Schroder Salomon Smith Barney, February 2002

Also shown in table 8.2 are participants' views of British participation in the euro, as measured by MORI's 'Waverers' item, alongside data from a poll conducted by MORI in February 2002. MORI data are weighted to the known profile of the population of Great Britain. The proportion of 'waverers' – those who are generally in favour or against British participation in the euro, but could be persuaded to change their minds – was slightly higher among participants in the experiment than among the public at large.

8.3 Statistical methods

In order to make comparisons between groups on the basis of a) their level of issue involvement and b) the strength of their attachment to British national identity, two indices were created with which to divide the sample. These are described in the following section. The hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-tests, to compare differences in mean scores between the groups across a range of indicators. To test H1e and H2e, OLS regression models were fitted to the data, in order to identify the effect of cognitive responses on post-message attitudes, while controlling for the effect of other variables. The data were analysed using SPSS.

8.3.1 Involvement index

Multiple indicators of respondents' knowledge about the euro issue and their level of interest in the issue were used to create an index of involvement. The index was computed using the sum of scores on the four items asking participants how interested they are in politics and in the future of Britain and Europe, and about how knowledgeable they feel about the EU and the euro (each measured on 7-point scales). Also included were scores on the five-item quiz, yielding a measure of involvement with a maximum total of 33 points. Mean scores on these items are shown in table 8.3. Scores on all items in the index were positively and highly correlated with each other (table 8.4). The decision to create the index in this way was supported by a principal component analysis, which yielded a main principal component, accounting for over 63% variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.17. All items loaded highly and positively on the principal component (between .6 and .9), so the decision was taken to use the summed scale as the involvement index rather than the principal component scores (which would have weighted the items according to their factor loadings). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.85.

To create high and low involvement groups, a median split of the sample was taken using the involvement index.

Table 8.3 Descriptive statistics for measures of involvement

Measures	Mean	Std. Error	S.d.	Variance	n
How knowledgeable about Europe (1-7)	3.71	.05	1.49	2.22	1092
How informed about the euro (1-7)	3.88	.05	1.62	2.63	1092
Score on knowledge quiz (0-5)	2.60	.03	1.40	1.97	1092
Interest in politics (1-7)	4.04	.05	1.76	3.12	1092
Interest in Europe (1-7)	4.63	.05	1.55	2.42	1092
Involvement index (4-33)	18.85	.19	6.33	6.22	1092

Table 8.4 Correlations between measures of involvement

	Europe knowledge	Euro informed	Quiz score	Political interest	Europe interest
Europe knowledge					
Euro informed	.67				
Quiz score	.50	.40			
Political interest	.69	.50	.39		
Europe interest	.67	.49	.34	.71	

8.3.2 Attachment to British national identity

The three items measuring participants' attachment to British national identity were combined to form a scale (descriptive statistics are shown in table 8.5). The first asked participants to what extent they felt 'proud to be British' (on a 7-point scale), the second and third asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two statements: 'It is important to me to be British' and 'I identify strongly with British people' (on fully-labelled 5-point scales). Item 3 was also used to check the effectiveness of the salience manipulation (see below), while the three items together were combined to form an overall index of attachment to national identity with which to divide the sample. The three items were correlated highly and positively with each other. A principal component analysis yielded a single component on which all three items loaded highly and positively (over .8). To further support combining the items in a scale, reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .78. Again, a median split was used to create two equal groups with high and low scores on the index. A further variable was created to distinguish those with very high and very low scores on the index, by dividing the sample into four equal groups.

Table 8.5 Descriptive statistics for identity variables

Measures	**Mean**	**Std. Error**	**S.d.**	**Variance**	**n**
Proud to be British (1-7)	4.96	.05	1.63	1.63	1092
It is important to me to be British (1-7)	3.64	.38	1.21	1.21	1092
I identify strongly with British people (1-5)	3.70	.34	1.13	1.13	1092

8.4 Results

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in the following order. Firstly, before turning to the hypotheses, I check the effectiveness of the argument quality and salience manipulations and then look at the extent of attitude change as a result of message exposure to evaluate whether reading the arguments resulted in persuasion. Secondly, I examine evidence of increased message processing among high involvement participants and participants with strong attachment to national identity in order to test hypotheses 1a-e and 2a-e. Thirdly, differences in post-message attitudes are compared on the basis of argument quality and salience, in order to test hypotheses 3, 4 and 5.

8.4.1 Manipulation checks

Argument quality manipulation: After reading the arguments, participants were asked to evaluate them on two 7-point scales in response to the following questions: a) 'To what extent did you feel the arguments made their point effectively?' and b) 'To what extent do you feel the arguments were convincing?' Respondents mean response to the two items provided a measure of the effectiveness of the argument quality manipulation (the two items were correlated at .78). An independent samples t-test was used to test the difference in means on this composite measure between those participants presented with 'strong' arguments and those presented with 'weak' arguments. The differences was statistically significant, with strong arguments rated as more effective and convincing ($M = 4.07$) than weak arguments ($M = 3.87$; $t = -2.39$; d.f.= 1090; $p<0.05$).

Salience manipulation: To test the effectiveness of the priming procedure at inducing self-identification with the category 'British', I examined responses to an item asking participants to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: 'I identify with British people'. Overall, participants in the high salience condition were more likely to agree with the statement (mean score = 3.79, where 5 = 'strongly agree'). The mean for participants in the low salience group was 3.62. The difference in means was statistically significant ($t = -2.52$, df = 1090, $p<0.05$).

For participants in the high salience conditions, the priming procedure was administered at the very start of the questionnaire. However, the design of the questionnaire was such that the position of the identification measure used to check the success of the salience manipulation varied across half of the experimental groups. In the 'pre-message' conditions, in which the attitude and involvement measures were located before the argument evaluation task, the identification measure was the last question participants were asked after all the other items, before reading the arguments. In the 'post-message' condition, the identification measure was also located immediately before the arguments, but was preceded only by the other national identity measures (and the priming procedure in the high salience groups). To check for the possibility of an order effect[33] on responses to the measure used to check the effectiveness of the priming procedure, mean scores were compared between the low and high salience groups, controlling for the order of message exposure. Table 8.6 shows the mean scores on the salience check measure. Only the difference between high and low salience groups in the pre-message condition was found to be statistically significant ($t = -2.1$;

[33] The location of the identification measures was changed following the pilot study, in which the priming procedure was unsuccessful. One explanation was that because the identification measures were positioned *after* the arguments for participants in the low salience group and *before* the arguments in the high salience groups (immediately after the priming procedure), the measure of the effectiveness of the priming procedure was confounded by message exposure. Reading the arguments may have influenced identity salience, thereby diluting the effect of the salience manipulation. This led to the decision to relocate the items so that they were presented *before* the arguments in all the treatment groups, despite the possibility that they also may have affected identity salience. By keeping the location consistent across all groups, it was assumed that such an effect would be equal for all participants. However, it may have also have had the undesired effect of weakening the overall impact of the priming procedure.

df= 544; p<0.05), however, suggesting that on its own, the priming procedure was less effective at manipulating the salience of national identity than it was when it was presented along with questions relating to Europe and the single currency.

Table 8.6 Mean scores on the measure 'I identify with British people' by salience and order of attitude measures

	Pre-message	**Post-message**
Low salience	3.64	3.60
High salience	3.84*	3.75

*p<0.05

8.4.2 Attitude change as a result of message exposure

Table 8.7 shows mean scores on the main measure of attitudes towards the euro for participants in both the pre- and post-message conditions. Differences in attitudes between these two groups are attributed to reading and evaluating the three pro-EMU arguments. Pre- and post-message attitudes are compared for the sample as a whole, and on the basis of issue involvement and participants' level of attachment to British national identity.

Table 8.7 Pre- and post-message attitudes (mean scores)

	Pre-message attitudes	***n***	**Post-message attitudes**	***n***
Involvement				
High	3.98	*246*	4.20	*275*
Low	3.30	*300*	3.66*	*271*
Attachment				
Strong	3.00	*223*	3.59**	*216*
Weak	4.03^^^	*323*	4.15	*330*
All	3.61	*546*	3.93*	*546*

Notes: Question: 'How positive or negative do you think your views about the single European currency – the euro - are?'(1 = 'Very negative', 7 = 'Very positive')
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 (*= post-message attitudes significantly different from pre-message attitudes; ^= pre-message attitudes differ significantly between comparison groups).

Reading the pro-EMU arguments had a significant positive effect on attitudes across the experimental groups. However, breaking the sample down by their level of involvement in the issue and their attachment to British national identity reveals that the effect of the arguments was not equal across all participants in the study. In particular, low involvement participants were more likely to be influenced by reading the arguments than high involvement participants. Their post-message attitudes were significantly more favourable towards the euro than their pre-message attitudes, whereas the difference in attitudes for the highly involved – who held more positive attitudes to start with – was not statistically significant.

Participants with a strong attachment to British national identity held more negative attitudes towards the euro than participants with a weak attachment to their national identity. The differences in means were statistically significant both before and after message exposure ($t=6.53$, $df=544$, $p<0.001$; $t=3.36$, $df=544$, $p<0.01$). However, reading the arguments had the effect of reducing the magnitude of the difference between these groups. Those with a strong attachment to their national identity were more persuaded by the arguments than those with weak national identity; the difference in the pre- and post-message attitudes of the former group was highly significant. This pattern of results was particularly marked among those with the highest scores on the national identity measures (participants with scores in the upper quartile on the 'attachment' variable). Overall, those with 'very strong' national identity held more negative pre-message attitudes and were positively influenced by reading the arguments to adjust their attitudes in favour of the euro (not shown in table).

A further test of the effectiveness of the salience manipulation was to see whether attitudes to the euro were influenced by the priming procedure. The attitudes of participants in the high salience/ pre-message group were slightly more negative than those in the low salience/ pre-message group; however, the effect of the salience manipulation on pre-message attitudes was not statistically significant. Post-message attitudes also did not vary as a function of the salience manipulation.

Table 8.8 shows the distribution of responses to the MORI 'Waverers' measure (Mortimore and Atkinson, 2003) for participants in the high and low salience conditions and respondents in the pre- and post-message conditions. There was no difference in the distribution of responses to the items as a function of reading the arguments. However, the priming procedure appeared to have the effect of making participants more likely to report 'fixed' views on British participation in EMU – either strong support or strong opposition.

Table 8.8 Views of British participation in EMU by experimental group

	Attitude Measurement		Salience	
	Pre	**Post**	**Low**	**High**
Strongly support British participation	12	12	10	15
Generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy	29	30	31	30
Generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy	31	32	36	27
Strongly oppose British participation	25	23	21	27
Don't know	2	4	3	3

Note: $X^2 = 17.25$, d.f.= 4, $p<0.01$

A further test of this is provided by looking at the overall proportion of participants classified as 'waverers' (those saying they were either generally in favour, generally against or don't know) in each of the experimental conditions. In the high salience condition, 58% of participants were classified as waverers, compared with 70% in the low salience condition (X^2= 15.23, d.f.=1, $p<0.001$).

8.4.3 Evidence of increased message processing as a function of issue involvement and attachment to national identity

This section assesses the evidence for increased message processing a) among participants with high levels of issue involvement and b) among participants with strong attachment to British national identity.

To recap, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), evidence of increased message processing can be found in the following:

- High self-reported elaboration effort

- Post-message evaluations of message quality that differentiate between strong and weak arguments
- Post-message attitudes that differentiate between strong and weak arguments
- High correlations between post-message attitudes and argument evaluations
- Correlations between post-message attitudes and argument evaluations that differentiate between strong and weak arguments
- Cognitive responses to arguments that are positively predictive of post-message attitudes (i.e. favourable cognitive responses predict favourable post-message attitudes)

I consider the evidence for each in turn comparing high involvement participants with participants with low involvement (H1a-e), and participants with strong attachment to British national identity with participants with weak attachment (H2a-e). I also assess the effect of raising the salience of national identity on cognitive processing for each group of participants.

H1/2a: Self-reported elaboration effort

To measure elaboration effort, participants were asked to what extent they were trying hard to evaluate the arguments (1 'not very hard', 7 'very hard'). Table 8.9 shows mean scores on this item by argument quality and order of message presentation, comparing 1) high and low involvement participants and 2) participants with strong and weak attachment.

Table 8.9 Self-reported elaboration effort by order of presentation and argument quality

	Pre-message			Post-message		
	All	**Strong arguments**	**Weak arguments**	**All**	**Strong arguments**	**Weak arguments**
Involvement						
High	4.91***	4.76	5.04***	5.09***	5.17***	5.01*
Low	4.50	4.53	4.47	4.60	4.50	4.69
Attachment						
Strong	4.81	4.73	4.90	5.02*	5.02	5.01
Weak	4.59	4.55	4.62	4.74	4.72	4.75
All	4.68	4.63	4.73	4.85	4.85	4.85

***p<0.001 *p<0.05 (high involvement vs. low involvement)

High involvement participants reported greater elaboration effort than low involvement participants in both the pre- and post-message conditions and irrespective of argument quality. The difference in scores was statistically significant across all groups (except those presented with strong arguments in the pre-message group). The same pattern of results was found across the high and low salience groups (table 8.10). The priming procedure did not influence self-reports of elaboration effort, but high involvement participants reported greater elaboration effort than low involvement participants.

Participants with strong attachment to their national identity also reported greater elaboration effort across all conditions than those with weak national identity. However, the difference in ratings was only statistically significant in the post-message group and did not vary as a function of argument quality. Table 8.10 indicates that the effect was confined to those in the high salience condition. Salience had no effect on elaboration effort for participants in the pre-message group.

Table 8.10 Self-reported elaboration effort by order of presentation and salience

	Pre-message		Post-message	
	High salience	**Low salience**	**High salience**	**Low salience**
Involvement				
High	4.94**	4.87*	5.05**	5.14**
Low	4.49	4.51	4.50	4.68
Attachment				
Strong	4.88	4.75	5.01*	5.03
Weak	4.57	4.61	4.63	4.83
All	4.70	4.67	4.78	4.91

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

H1/2b: Evaluations of argument quality

The two argument evaluation measures used to check the success of the argument quality manipulation provided a further measure of the extent of message processing. Participants engaging in careful message processing are expected to be able to differentiate between strong and weak arguments. To test this, mean scores on the argument evaluation measures were compared across experimental groups using t-tests (table 8.11) to see a) whether participants rated strong arguments as more convincing and effective than weak arguments and b) whether there were differences in ratings as a function of involvement and identity attachment.

As noted, participants in the strong argument quality conditions rated the arguments they were presented with more highly than did the participants in the weak argument quality conditions. This pattern was observed across both the high and low involvement groups (see table 8.11). However, the difference in ratings between participants in the strong and weak argument conditions was not statistically significant once the groups were broken down by issue involvement. There were also no differences *between* high and low involvement groups in terms of their ratings of argument quality. By contrast, more marked differences are evident in the comparisons between participants with strong and weak national identity. There was no difference in the evaluations of strong and weak arguments for those with strong national identity, but participants with weak national identity rated strong arguments as significantly more convincing and effective than weak arguments. Participants with weak national identity also rated the strong arguments as significantly more convincing and effective than did participants with strong national identity.

Table 8.11 Evaluations of argument quality by order of presentation

	All		**Pre-message**		**Post-message**	
	Strong	**Weak**	**Strong**	**Weak**	**Strong**	**Weak**
Involvement						
High	4.11	3.87	4.17	3.84	4.06	3.91
Low	4.04	3.86	3.93*	3.54	4.17	4.20
Attachment						
Strong	3.85††	3.89	3.76††	3.67	3.94	4.12
Weak	4.23***	3.85	4.23***	3.68	4.23	4.02
All	4.07*	3.87	4.04**	3.68	4.11	4.06

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 (strong v weak)
††p<0.01 (strong v weak identity)

Table 8.12 shows the effect of the salience manipulation on participants' evaluations of argument quality. In the pre-message condition, strong arguments were generally rated as more convincing/effective than weak arguments. However the difference in argument quality ratings was only statistically significant in the low salience condition for the sample as a whole, for high involvement participants and participants with weak national identity. In the post-message group, evaluations of the strong arguments were not significantly different from those of the weak arguments (except among participants with weak national identity in the high salience condition) and argument quality ratings were almost identical in the low salience condition.

Table 8.12 Evaluations of argument quality by order of presentation and salience

		High salience		Low salience	
		Strong	**Weak**	**Strong**	**Weak**
Pre-message group	Involvement				
	High	3.97	3.97	4.38*	3.71
	Low	3.88	3.49	3.96	3.58
	Attachment				
	Strong	3.68	3.69	3.83	3.65
	Weak	4.10	3.74	4.34***	3.63
	All	3.92	3.72	4.13**	3.64
Post-message group	Involvement				
	High	4.03	3.78	4.08	4.04
	Low	4.09	4.12	4.25	4.27
	Attachment				
	Strong	3.80	4.20	4.08	4.05
	Weak	4.26*	3.79	4.22	4.23
	All	4.06	3.94	4.16	4.16

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

H1/2c: The effect of argument quality on attitudes

Table 8.13 Post-message attitudes by involvement and argument quality

			Post -message group			
	All		High salience		Low salience	
	Strong	**Weak**	**Strong**	**Weak**	**Strong**	**Weak**
Involvement						
High	4.22	4.17	4.27	4.25	4.17	4.09
Low	3.68	3.64	3.61	3.61	3.66	3.75
Attachment						
Strong	3.74	3.43	3.73	3.65	3.75	3.23
Weak	4.18	4.12	4.11	4.12	4.13	4.23
All	3.96	3.90	3.95	3.95	3.97	3.86

Table 8.13 shows post-message attitudes broken down by argument quality and salience. Overall, though it is evident that post-message attitudes differentiate on the basis of argument quality, the main effect of argument quality on attitudes was not

significant. Looking at the effect of raising national identity salience, no clear pattern of effects is evident. The post-message attitudes of high involvement participants were no more likely to differentiate on the basis of argument quality than those of the low involvement participants. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the attitudes of participants with strong attachment to British national identity were more sensitive to the persuasiveness of the arguments presented than those of participants with weak national identity attachment.

H1/2d: Correlations between argument evaluations and post-message attitudes

Table 8.14 Correlations between post-message attitudes and argument evaluations

	All participants (n = 1092)		
	Overall	**Strong arguments**	**Weak arguments**
Involvement			
High	.421	.433	.410
Low	.392	.434	.356
Attachment			
Strong	.334	.267	.423
Weak	.443	.548	.350
All	.395	.423	.367
		High Salience (n = 517)	
Involvement			
High	.388	.431	.347
Low	.377	.394	.363
Attachment			
Strong	.277	.150	.408
Weak	.433	.583	.310
All	.365	.407	.328
		Low Salience (n= 575)	
Involvement			
High	.458	.436	.485
Low	.404	.465	.350
Attachment			
Strong	.387	.355	.433
Weak	.453	.514	.395
All	.424	.437	.412

Table 8.14 shows correlations between argument evaluations and post-message attitudes by argument quality. Overall, high involvement participants have higher correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) than low-involvement participants and there is evidence of

differentiation on the basis of argument quality; correlations are weaker among the participants shown the weak arguments. The differentiation between strong and weak messages is also evident for the low-involvement participants, however.

Correlations were higher among participants with weak national identity compared with those with strong national identity. There is a clear difference in the strength of correlations for participants in the strong and weak argument quality conditions; the post-message attitudes of those with strong national identity were correlated more highly with argument evaluations in the weak argument quality condition, while those of participants with weak national identity were correlated more highly with argument evaluations in the strong argument condition.

The same pattern of relationships is evident across the high and low salience conditions. Across all participants, correlations were slightly lower in the high salience condition (.365 compared with .395 overall) and slightly higher in the low salience condition (.424), however, this reducing and enhancing effect did not apply equally across all groups.

H1/2e: The relationship between cognitive responses and post-message attitudes

Finally, according to the ELM, if a treatment variable increases message processing, the favourability of participants' cognitive responses to the arguments should be predictive of post-message attitudes. In order to test this hypothesis in the present study, OLS regression models were fitted to the data, to predict the attitudes of participants in the post-message group. This provided a further test of the hypotheses already addressed, by making it possible to observe at a glance the relative impact of involvement and identity on post-message attitudes, as well as control for the effect of the experimental manipulations[34].

Four models were fitted to the data to compare the predictors of post-message attitudes for the high and low involvement groups and strong and weak attachment groups. The models included the following independent variables: two measures of cognitive

[34] Note, however, that the experimental variables will already be uncorrelated with the other predictors.

response to the arguments, including (a) agreement with the message (measured on a scale of 1-7, where 7 = 'Agree completely') and b) evaluations of argument quality (mean of two 7-point scales, where 7 = 'Very effective(ly)' and 'Very compelling'); the experimental manipulations: argument quality (0 = weak / 1 = strong) and salience (0 = low salience/ 1 = high salience); issue involvement (a summed scale ranging from 1-33, with higher scores indicating higher involvement) or (depending on the subsample) attachment to national identity (a summed scale ranging from 1-17, with higher scores indicating stronger attachment to British national identity); and finally, sex (0=female/ 1=male) and age – to control for the bias in the sample and because both variables are known to be correlated with attitudes towards the euro. None of the interactions between the experimental manipulations (argument quality x salience) and the variables of interest (involvement x attachment) had a significant relationship with the dependent variable in any of the four models.

Model 1 - Low involvement participants

Table 8.15 Regression coefficients for model 1: Low involvement participants

	Unstandardised Coefficients		**Standardised Coefficients**		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	**t**	**Sig.**
Constant	.885	.450		1.965	.050
Argument quality	.123	.181	.036	.674	.501
Salience	-.005	.181	-.002	-.029	.977
Attachment	-.355	.185	-.105	-1.921	.056
Sex	-.318	.254	-.067	-1.252	.212
Age	.013	.010	.073	1.354	.177
Evaluation of arguments	.222	.088	.172	2.513	.013
Agreement with arguments	.406	.080	.349	5.059	.000

Note: Dependent variable: 'How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the euro, are?' (1= 'Very negative'/ 7= 'Very positive')

The model fitted to the data for the low involvement group had an R^2 of .26 and overall the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was statistically significant ($F_{7,263}$ = 12.98; p<0.001). Table 8.15 shows the model coefficients. Of the independent variables, just two were significantly associated with post-message attitudes: holding the effect of all other variables constant, both measures of cognitive response were positively associated with post-message attitude scores. Both age and argument quality was also positively associated with post-message attitudes, while salience, sex and attachment were negatively associated with attitudes. Of these, only the coefficient for attachment approached significance, indicating that for participants with low issue involvement, the stronger a participant's attachment to national identity, the less favourable their post-message attitude was towards the euro. The biggest predictor of post-message attitudes for the low involvement group, therefore, was the favourability of cognitive responses to the message arguments.

Model 2 - High involvement participants

Table 8.16 Regression coefficients for model 2: High involvement participants

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
Constant	.700	.501		1.397	.164
Argument quality	-.025	.201	-.006	-.119	.905
Salience	.233	.205	.056	1.137	.257
Attachment	-.657	.213	-.157	-3.076	.002
Sex	.643	.211	.153	3.043	.003
Age	.018	.009	.098	1.972	.050
Evaluation of arguments	.190	.086	.147	2.224	.027
Agreement with arguments	.514	.078	.439	6.545	.000

Note: Dependent variable: 'How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the euro, are?' (1= 'Very negative'/ 7= 'Very positive')

For the high involvement group, the regression model was a better fit of the data, accounting for 36% of the variance in post-message attitudes ($F_{7,267}$=21.14; $p<0.001$). Holding the effect of all other independent variables constant, neither of the two manipulation variables (argument quality and salience) was significantly associated with post-message attitudes. The remainder of the independent variables were however (coefficients for the model are shown in table 8.16). Of these, only attachment to British identity was negatively associated with the model: for every step increase in scores on the attachment variable, attitude scores were reduced by .66. In other words, participants with stronger national identity hold more negative attitudes towards the euro after message presentation (holding the effect of involvement constant). The other independent variables were all positive and significant predictors of post-message attitudes: men's attitudes were more positive than women's, as were those of older participants. Holding the effect of these, constant, however, the favourability of cognitive responses to the arguments remained an important predictor of post-message attitudes.

Model 3 – Participants with weak attachment to British national identity

The same model was fitted to the data from participants with weak attachment to British national identity (the only difference being that 'attachment' was replaced by 'involvement' in the list of independent variables). The R^2 for the model was .36, and overall the independent variables were significantly associated with the dependent variable ($F_{7,322}$=26.12; p<0.001). Once again, neither of the experimental manipulations was significantly associated with post-message attitudes (while holding the effects of the other predictors constant). Neither was sex nor age. The remainder of the independent variables – involvement and the two cognitive response variables – were positively and significantly associated with post-message attitudes for participants with weak national identity (see table 8.17). Holding the effect of national identity constant, step increases along the involvement continuum were associated with more positive attitudes towards the euro. Once again, favourability of cognitive responses to the arguments was an important predictor of post-message attitudes. The more effective and compelling participants with weak national identity rated the arguments, and the more they agreed with them, the stronger their post-message attitudes.

Table 8.17 Regression coefficients for model 3: Weak attachment participants

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-.126	.469		-.270	.788
Argument quality	-.107	.168	-.029	-.640	.523
Salience	-.021	.168	-.006	-.126	.900
Involvement	.045	.014	.156	3.203	.001
Sex	.065	.211	.015	.310	.757
Age	.012	.008	.066	1.445	.150
Evaluation of arguments	.205	.084	.150	2.450	.015
Agreement with arguments	.545	.074	.448	7.315	.000

Note: Dependent variable: 'How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the euro, are?' (1= 'Very negative'/ 7= 'Very positive')

Model 4 – Participants with strong attachment to British national identity

Finally, the model was fitted to the data from participants with strong attachment to British national identity. Overall, the model explained just 25% of the variance in post-message attitudes for participants with strong national identity and although overall, the independent variables were significantly associated with the dependent variable ($F_{7,208}$=10.00; p<0.001), the model fitted the data poorly (see table 8.18). Just two of the independent variables were significantly associated with post-message attitudes: age and the extent to which participants agreed with the arguments (both positively related to attitudes). The second of the two cognitive response variables was also positively related to attitudes (the coefficient approached significance at 0.06). Neither of the two experimental manipulations was significantly associated with post-message attitudes. Similarly, for participants with strong national identity, issue involvement had no effect on the favourability of post-message attitudes.

Table 8.18 Regression coefficients for model 4: Strong attachment participants

	Unstandardised Coefficients		**Standardised Coefficients**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
Constant	-.350	.642		-.546	.586
Argument quality	.263	.236	.068	1.114	.267
Salience	.295	.233	.076	1.265	.207
Involvement	.022	.020	.070	1.071	.286
Sex	.437	.256	.109	1.706	.089
Age	.024	.011	.143	2.304	.022
Evaluation of arguments	.173	.093	.143	1.862	.064
Agreement with arguments	.401	.085	.357	4.729	.000

Note: Dependent variable: 'How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the euro, are?' (1= 'Very negative'/ 7= 'Very positive')

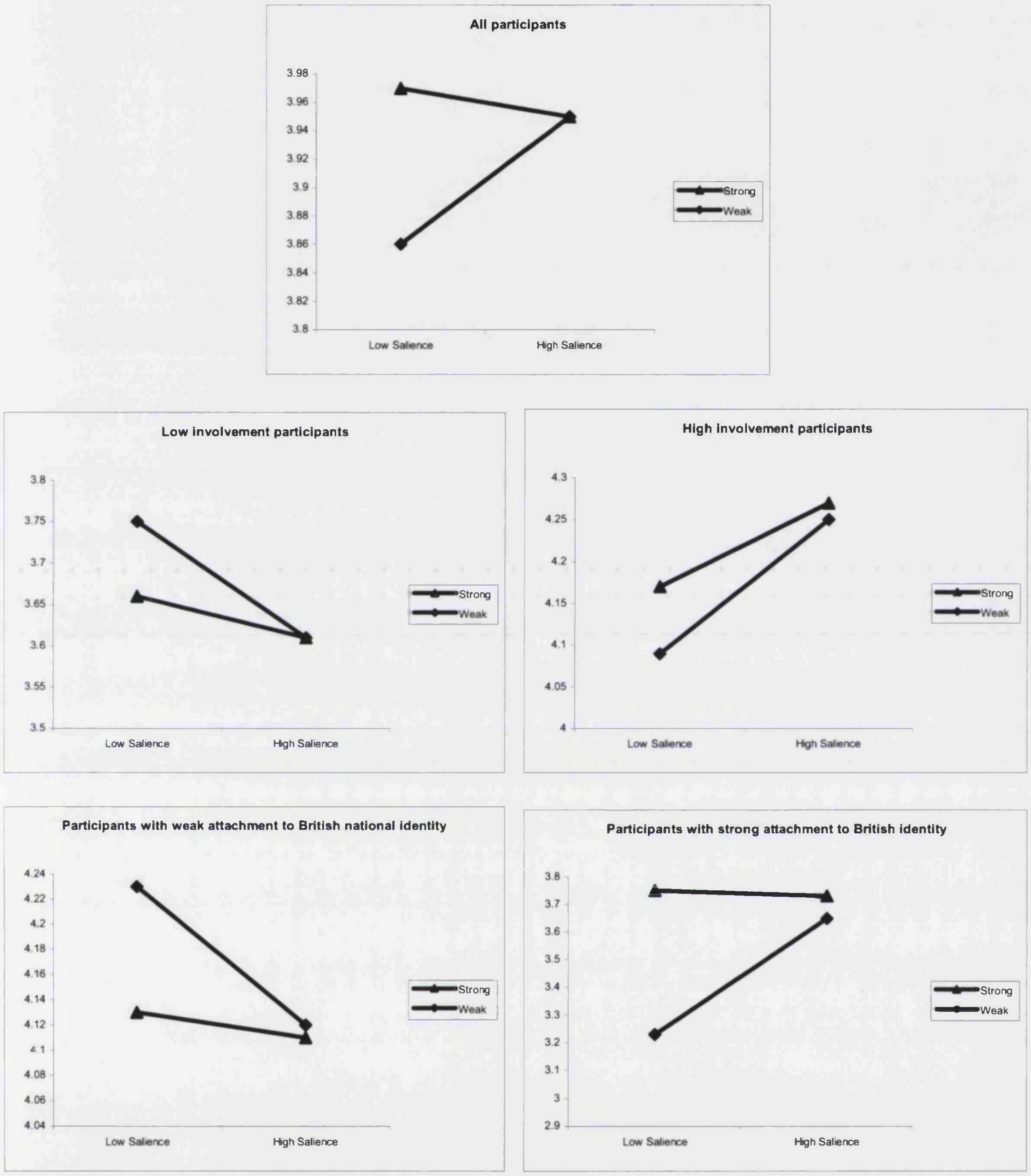
8.4.4 Identifying the role played by identity salience in persuasion

The final stage of the analysis was to assess the evidence relating to hypotheses 3, 4 and 5, concerning the role played by salience in persuasion. To test these hypotheses, the post-message attitudes of participants in the low and high salience conditions are compared on the basis of argument quality. Table 8.13 shows mean scores on the attitude variable by argument quality and salience for all groups. To recap, although there is evidence that post-message attitudes differentiate on the basis of argument quality, the main effect of argument quality was not significant. No clear pattern of effects is evident for the salience manipulation either.

Figure 8.5 charts these data to illustrate the direction of differences in post-message attitudes as a function of argument quality and salience and provides – albeit limited – evidence concerning the role played by salience for each group of participants. To assess the pattern of effects, the reader should refer back to figures 8.1-8.4, which illustrate the pattern of findings associated with each of the four roles for persuasion variables.

The first graph at the top of figure 8.5 provides suggests that overall, the salience manipulation reduced elaboration among participants; attitudes in the high salience group did not differentiate on the basis of argument quality, whereas those in the low salience condition did. For the low involvement group, this reducing effect appears more marked, and there is some indication of a slight negative bias in processing. However, for the high involvement group, the direction of the difference in attitudes between the low and high salience conditions is in the opposite direction, suggesting a possible positive bias in processing. For the strong and weak identity groups, the treatment variable again appears to have reduced processing, with a possible negative bias in the weak attachment group.

Figure 8.5 Post-message attitudes by salience and argument quality



8.5 Discussion and conclusion

One of the challenges of applying the ELM to the issue of whether Britain should join the euro was that, unlike in typical ELM experiments, it was not possible to control for participants' elaboration likelihood. Some people would be motivated to read and evaluate the arguments more carefully than others would be. For this reason, the design of this study had to be adapted from the typical ELM experimental design, to allow for natural variations in elaboration likelihood. In this study, I chose to focus on two: (a) variations in what I have referred to throughout as 'issue involvement', which includes how interested people are in EMU, as well as how much they know, or feel they know about it; and (b) variations in the strength of people's attachment to British national identity; to specifically examine how each would influence the extent of message processing and attitudes change. It was predicted that each of the two covariates would have an effect on the *quantity* of elaboration participants engaged in. According to H1, greater issue involvement will increase elaboration likelihood, because high involvement participants will be more able and motivated to process issue-relevant information (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). According to H2, stronger attachment to British national identity will be associated with higher elaboration likelihood because of the increased group relevance of the target issue (whether Britain should join the euro) (Mackie et al., 1990). The results are summarised in the following.

Overall, the evidence relating to H1 was mixed. High involvement participants held more favourable attitudes towards the euro and their attitudes were unaffected by reading the message arguments. By contrast, the attitudes of low involvement participants were less favourable towards the euro and more susceptible to change as a result of reading the arguments. There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of their evaluations of argument quality; strong arguments tended to be rated as stronger than weak arguments, but high involvement participants were no more likely to rate them differently than low involvement participants. Similarly, there were no differences between the groups in terms of how their post-message attitudes differentiated between strong and weak arguments. Thus, H1b and c cannot be supported. However, high involvement participants did report higher elaboration effort than low involvement participants and the correlation between their argument evaluations and post-message attitudes were higher than those for the low involvement group, so H1a and d are both supported. For the low involvement group, the strongest predictor of post-message attitudes was the favourability of participants' cognitive responses to the message arguments. For the high involvement group, however, while cognitive responses were also predictive of attitudes, in addition, sex, age and identity attachment were significant predictors, presumably because attitudes were already fixed, and less sensitive to the effects of message exposure. Thus, both groups engaged in systematic message processing, but high involvement participants were left un-persuaded by the arguments because their existing attitudes towards the euro were already positive and relatively stable.

Once again, the evidence relating to H2 was mixed, but overall, there was evidence to suggest that participants with *weak* attachment to national identity engaged in more message-processing than those with strong attachment (H2 rejected). Participants with a strong attachment to British national identity held more negative attitudes towards the euro than those with weak attachment to British national identity, but were more persuaded by reading the message arguments than their counterparts were. Post-message attitudes for the weak national identity group were not significantly different from pre-message attitudes. No clear pattern emerges from the results relating to H2a-e. There were no significant differences in self-reported elaboration effort, though self-reports were higher among the strong national identity group than the weak national identity group. Participants with weak national identity rated strong arguments as significantly stronger than weak arguments and they also rated their persuasiveness higher than did the strong national identity group (who did not differentiate arguments on the basis of argument quality at all) (H2b rejected). Yet the post-message attitudes of the weak national identity group were not differentially affected by strong and weak arguments (perhaps because like the high involvement group, their attitudes were relatively fixed and were left un-persuaded by the arguments overall). By contrast, there was some indication that the post-message attitudes of the strong national identity group were sensitive to argument quality though the difference between groups was not statistically significant (H2c only partially supported).

Contrary to hypothesis 2d, correlations between argument evaluations and post-message attitudes were actually higher among the *weak* attachment group than among the strong attachment group and the correlations varied with argument quality. The post-message attitudes of those in the weak attachment group were more highly correlated with evaluations of strong arguments; while those of participants in the strong attachment group were more highly correlated with evaluations of weak arguments. Again, this perhaps reflects the fact that the attitudes of participants with weak national identity were more positive to begin with, making this group more likely to respond favourably to the arguments; their cognitive responses to the message arguments were also the main predictors of their post-message attitudes in the regression model fitted to the data (H2e). In addition, issue involvement was a significant and positive predictor for this group; the higher their involvement, the more positive their attitudes. For the strong attachment group, however, only agreement with the arguments and age were significantly associated with post-message attitudes, suggesting that attitude change for this group was not simply a function of message exposure. Overall, therefore, the evidence suggests that being strongly attached to British national identity had the effect of reducing message processing rather than increasing it.

The second set of hypotheses tested in this chapter related to the role played by national identity *salience* in persuasion. Predictions varied as a function of the elaboration likelihood of the groups of interest. Overall, salience was predicted to either enhance or reduce the quantity of message processing for the sample as a whole (H3). Some limited evidence confirmed a reducing effect for salience (post-message attitudes were less likely to differentiate on the basis of argument quality in the high salience condition) though the main effects of salience and argument quality on post-message attitudes were not significant for any of the groups concerned. Salience appeared to have a differential effect on attitudes in the high and low involvement groups, reducing processing overall for both groups, but biasing processing in opposite directions for each. Post-message attitudes for high involvement participants were slightly more positive in the high salience condition, while those for low involvement participants were slightly more negative in the treatment group. The nature and direction of effects for the strong and weak attachment groups were similar – overall, salience appeared to reduce processing, closing the gap between attitudes associated with argument quality, but processing appeared to be biased in opposite directions for each group. Because the premises underlying H4 and H5 did not hold, however (there were only small differences in the quantity of elaboration between low and high involvement groups and greater message processing observed in the weak attachment group rather than in the strong attachment group), neither hypothesis is supported.

In the same way as it was not possible to control for elaboration likelihood, it was also not possible to control for people's prior attitudes towards the issue under investigation. ELM studies have tended to focus on fictitious issues/ attitude objects, about which it is unlikely that participants will have existing views, making it possible to observe the 'pure' effects of strong and weak arguments on attitudes at high and low levels of elaboration likelihood. In the present study, the effect of the arguments (and argument quality manipulation) on attitudes was confounded with the effect of prior attitudes. The results of this are noticeable in at least three observations in the data.

Firstly, the impact of the persuasive message on attitudes varied as a function of both attitude valence and attitude strength. If participants' attitudes had only been measured *after* message exposure, the standard approach would have been to attribute variation in attitudes to the persuasive effects of the message. However, the present study included a control group who were presented with the message arguments after they reported their attitudes, which provides a measure of prior attitudes against which to compare post-message attitudes. Those with more favourable attitudes towards the euro to begin with (the high involvement group and the weak attachment group) did not change their attitudes as a result of reading the arguments; neither did those with more fixed attitudes (the 'Decideds' compared with the 'Waverers').

Secondly, there was some evidence to suggest that those with more positive and more stable attitudes towards the euro were more likely to distinguish strong arguments from weak arguments, though this did not mean that the arguments had a differentially persuasive impact on post-message attitudes. For example, participants in the weak identity group were more likely to distinguish arguments on the basis of their argument quality, rating strong arguments as stronger and weak arguments as weaker than their counterparts did, yet their post-message attitudes did not vary with argument quality. One explanation for this is that their main motivation for centrally processing the arguments was to establish the validity of the arguments rather than to evaluate the 'correctness' of their attitudes (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

Thirdly, the valence of participants' prior attitudes influenced their evaluation of the persuasive quality of the arguments. Although not reported in the results section, I found that among participants whose attitudes were measured *before* message exposure (the 'pre-message' group), those with more positive attitudes towards the euro rated the arguments as more effective and compelling than those with more negative attitudes.

At first glance, these observations appear to present a serious challenge to the applicability of the ELM to studying real-word issues, as well as to the experimental design on which the model is based (the implications of this are discussed in detail in the concluding chapter of the thesis). Yet the finding that prior attitudes influence elaboration likelihood is to some extent consistent with the findings of previous studies that have investigated the role played by group identity in persuasion (e.g. Mackie et al., 1990; Haslam et al., 1996).

Hypothesis 2 in the present study was based on the assumption (derived from Mackie et al., 1990) that in the absence of information about the messages source, the group relevance of the message topic would influence elaboration likelihood. Thus, people with a strong attachment to British national identity were predicted to be more motivated to read a message about the euro because the topic (introducing a single currency) is highly relevant to that group. This prediction was not borne out in the data. Instead, those with strong attachment were *less* motivated to process the message – particularly under conditions of high identity salience. While these findings disconfirm H2, they also highlight a difficulty with the premise on which the hypothesis was based: the group identity of the message source was not absent in this experiment, rather, it was defined by the valence of the arguments themselves (pro-EMU). Prior attitudes influenced participants' responses to information precisely because those attitudes defined the salient group memberships in the persuasion context. Because those with a strong attachment to their national identity were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards the euro to begin with, being presented with an anti-attitudinal message had the same effect as being presented with an out-group message: central processing was reduced (particularly under conditions of high category salience). Equally, because those with weak attachment tended to hold more positive attitudes towards the euro to begin with, being presented with a pro-attitudinal message had the same effect as being presented with an ingroup message: central processing was enhanced. The findings of study D, therefore, lend further support to the conclusions drawn by social identity theorists regarding the processing-motivating effect of ingroup messages over outgroup messages (van Knippenberg, 1999).

A number of limitations to the methodology used in this study further restricts the extent to which generalisations from these data are possible. Firstly, both the salience and argument quality manipulations were relatively weak, which is one of the most likely explanations for the mixed pattern of results (particularly in relation to H3-5). Although overall, there was a significant difference in how strongly participants identified themselves as British between the high and low salience groups, as well as argument quality ratings, the effect of the manipulations was not apparent when you broke the sample down further by involvement and attachment to British identity. As noted, the effect of argument quality was also confounded with prior attitudes, which may have further diluted the impact of the arguments during persuasion. The priming procedure may also have had mixed effects on participants, perhaps arousing suspicion and was possibly off-putting to the less 'patriotic' participants[35].

Additionally, the fact that there was little evidence of peripheral processing in the data (e.g. among the low-involvement participants) may be a function of the design of the experiment. For example, by presenting the persuasive message as an 'argument evaluation exercise', with the three arguments presented one-at-a-time may have had the effect of increasing elaboration likelihood; the participants were aware they would have to answer questions about the arguments, which may have encouraged them to make the effort to read them carefully. Furthermore, the scrolling design of the questionnaire meant that participants could go back to re-read the arguments while they were completing the questions. In light of these observations, the finding that both high and low involvement participants were engaged in central-route processing is understandable.

One other feature of the design of this study is potentially problematic. Experimental control was achieved by manipulating the order in which participants responded to different measures in the survey questionnaire. As a result of variation in the order of presentation, it is possible that some of the observed effects were artefacts of the design of the questionnaire. One example provides an illustration of this. Overall, evaluations of strong arguments were not significantly different from evaluations of weak arguments. However, breaking the sample down into the 'pre-message' and 'post-message' groups (tables 8.11 and 8.12) revealed a significant difference in argument

[35] It is also noteworthy that the measures of attachment to nation may have been inadequate to the extent that they could not capture variation in the *nature* of participants' attachment, only in the *strength* of attachment.

quality ratings from participants in the pre-message group. According to the postulates of the ELM, this would suggest that participants in the pre-message group were engaged in more intensive processing than those in the post-message group. The design of the questionnaires was such that the 'pre-message' group had to complete most of the other items before reading and evaluating the arguments; those in the post-message groups were asked to read and evaluate the arguments at the start of the questionnaire before completing the other items. Thus, it appears that the act of answering the other questions may have *increased* elaboration likelihood over the course of participation, such that differences in the extent of processing can be attributed in part to the order in which the questions were presented. Further analysis would help to illuminate this, as well as the other observations discussed in this section.

Despite these limitations, the study was not wholly unsuccessful in meeting the aims for which it was intended. The first was to test the predictions of the ELM regarding attitude change and cognitive processing in relation to a real-world issue. Though the evidence in support of the hypotheses was inconclusive, discernable differences between the groups of interest were apparent, both in terms of the effect of the arguments on attitudes and in terms of the extent of cognitive processing. However, the challenges involved in applying the model to an issue like EMU are all too apparent. A regrettable conclusion is that the methodological foundations on which the ELM stands are not sufficiently sophisticated to handle the complexities of studying attitude formation and change in the real world.

The second aim was to examine the effect of raising the salience of national identity in information about the euro, both on persuasion and on the psychological processes by which persuasion is achieved. The tentative finding of this study is that, consistent with the model developed in the introduction to this thesis, raising the salience of British identity in information about the euro serves to decrease effortful processing, as well as possibly to bias it. However, the conclusions we can draw from this are restricted not only by the methodological difficulties encountered in the present study, but also by the fact that the experimental paradigm provided by the ELM may not be the most appropriate vehicle for measuring the phenomena of interest. Future research should be directed towards developing more robust methods of measuring how identity processes influence attitude formation and change among different sub-groups of the population.

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw the thesis to a close by pulling together the different themes and ideas that have been developed, and reaching some conclusions about what we can learn from the empirical findings and where the research might be taken in future. I begin the chapter with a summary of the thesis, revisiting the main aims and research questions and the theoretical basis for the empirical studies undertaken. I then review the key findings of each of the four studies, for each one considering what has been learned, what has been achieved and what was not achieved, and draw conclusions about the contribution they make to our understanding of British attitudes towards the euro and of public opinion processes more generally. This discussion of the relative strengths of the different approaches adopted in the thesis is then followed by a review of the main conclusions from the research, some reflections on the theories and methods used and their suitability to the study of public attitudes towards European integration and an epilogue, in which I consider how the debate surrounding EMU evolved after the empirical research was complete.

9.1 Summary of thesis

The overall aim of the thesis was to investigate the psychological processes underlying British public attitudes towards Economic and Monetary Union in Europe (EMU) over the course of the debate surrounding the preparations for and in the immediate aftermath of the launch of the euro. The main motivation for this focus was to examine the possible reasons for widespread public opposition in Britain at this time to closer integration in Europe and to extend existing work in this area, by adopting a social psychological perspective. Previous studies tended to focus on the correlates of anti-EMU attitudes, on the assumption that these views were fixed and stable. In fact, there are strong grounds for assuming that for a large proportion of the British population, attitudes towards the euro are far from fixed. Poll findings show high levels of 'don't knows' reported by British samples in response to opinion measures about European integration and there is significant variation in the favourability of attitudes between those who are highly knowledgeable about integration and those with little factual knowledge about integration. Moreover, according to polls conducted by MORI during the period of interest, when asked, a majority of the population will admit that they 'could be persuaded to change their mind' about the euro. The approach adopted here took this as its premise and sought to examine not simply the correlates and predictors of attitudes, but the factors that influence the processes by which people's attitudes towards the euro are formed and changed.

A further motivation for choosing to focus on public attitudes towards the euro was because the issue provided an opportunity to apply a range of theoretical approaches to the study of public opinion and to explore their validity in the context of a real-world issue. As others working in this field have argued (e.g. Cinnirella, 1996), the topic of European integration provides a "vehicle" for testing psychological theory. At the time when the proposal for the research was written (in 1999), the issue of British membership of EMU was highly salient on both the political and media agenda and it was widely accepted that a referendum would be held at some point during the life of the programme of research. Such an event would have provided an ideal 'natural experiment' for studying real-life changes in attitudes in response to a political campaign. In the end, this opportunity did not present itself, but nonetheless the chosen substantive focus of the thesis proved to be an effective basis for exploring public opinion processes generic to a range of political issues.

Three existing areas of inquiry into the factors underlying high levels of public opposition towards European integration influenced the chosen focus of the thesis. The first was concerned with the impact on public opinion of the media. In particular, a number of contributors (e.g. Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Anderson and Weymouth, 1998) had studied the way in which events relating to integration had been reported in newspapers and the possible influence this had on public attitudes. Their findings suggested that 'Euroscepticism' in the British press had at least two effects. First of all, it served to reduce the informational content of news about integration, and where factual information did appear it was often dumbed-down and/or factually inaccurate (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). Second of all, eurosceptic discourse in newspapers – which made use of a range of anti-European stereotypes – served to highlight the distance between British readers and their European counterparts by raising the salience of British national identity. Few studies, however, had specified the social and psychological mechanisms by which such effects might impact on public attitudes.

The second area of inquiry underpinning the thesis was concerned with the way in which people's experience of their national identity and the strength of their attachment to Britain influences their beliefs about European integration. Analyses of Eurobarometer data (e.g. Hewstone, 1986; Breakwell, 1996) for example, showed how support for closer integration was moderated by people's concerns about *losing* their national identity. Also found to be important was the *nature* of the attachment – whether sentimental or instrumental – both to national and European identities (Cinnirella, 1993; 1996; Routh and Burgoyne, 1998; Mueller-Peters et al. 1998a). Dowds and Young (1996) distinguished between four distinct versions of national identity based on where people were located on the two dimensions of 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' nationalism (the former encompassing national pride, the latter, xenophobic sentiments). Each type of national identity was associated with different views on European integration and the single currency. Using social identity theory as the theoretical framework for understanding different forms of national identity, these studies focused on the relationship between identity and attitudes. However, few studies have taken into consideration the strength of attitudes towards integration (and their susceptibility to change), or the implication of fluctuations in identity salience for the relationships specified (one exception is Cinnirella, 1996).

The third area of inquiry concerned the extent to which people's knowledge about and interest in issues relating to European integration (what I have referred to throughout as 'issue involvement') influences their attitudes. A number of studies have shown that public *opposition* towards integration appears to be underpinned by low levels of issue involvement. For example, as well as exhibiting low levels of support for European integration, British respondents were also frequently found to be among the least informed in the EU of matters relating to integration (e.g. Pepermans and Mueller-Peters, 1999; Sinnott, 2000). They were also relatively unconcerned about European integration compared with other issues on the political agenda (Worcester, 2000). Similarly, those socio-demographic groups holding more negative attitudes towards Europe (e.g. women, those with lower levels of education and those employed in manual occupations), were also more likely to show low levels of awareness of EU politics (Ahrendt, 1999; Evans, 2003).

One conclusion to be drawn from this is that increasing public involvement in issues relating to European integration will lead to more favourable attitudes towards integrative policy. However, an alternative conclusion is that these findings call into question the validity of attitudinal measures in surveys about European integration. A considerable body of literature suggests that when asked to give their opinion in surveys, people with only a patchy understanding of the question topic are unlikely to be motivated or able to give a carefully considered response (e.g. Converse, 1964; Krosnick, 1991). At best, attitudes underpinned by low levels of political sophistication are likely to be weakly formed and susceptible to persuasion (Krosnick, 1988). Few studies of public attitudes towards European integration have acknowledged the implications of these findings for understanding the nature of attitudes reported in opinion polls (some exceptions include Sinnott, 2000 and Evans, 2003), fewer still have examined the implications of involvement for how attitudes towards European integration are formed and changed.

This thesis represented an attempt to bring together these three branches of research into attitudes towards European integration, through an investigation into the way in which information, identity and involvement influence processes of attitude formation and change in relation to EMU. The three elements were integrated through social psychological theory in the form of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) and Self-categorisation Theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987), which together provide a framework for understanding how attitudes are influenced by information and identity, at varying levels of issue involvement. However, the empirical chapters drew on theoretical insights from a range of disciplines including political science, media and communication and public opinion research, as well as social psychology. The different studies brought together a range of evidence from the media and from survey research to enhance our understanding of the way in which the debate surrounding the single currency progressed in Britain during the 1990s and how public attitudes towards the issue were influenced and expressed. The following sections review the aims and summarise the key findings of my research. For each study, I consider what the findings tell us about the nature of public attitudes towards the euro and discuss the main achievements of the research, its shortcomings and ideas for future studies.

9.2 Summary and discussion of empirical findings

9.2.1 Study A

In study A, the aim was to build up a picture of the 'landscape' (Bauer et al., 2001) of the debate surrounding British membership of the euro since the Maastricht summit in 1991. I examined the amount of coverage devoted to the single currency in newspaper articles over a ten-year period, in order to identify the key events that took place during the course of the debate and the periods in which the issue was highly salient on the media agenda. The study had two objectives: the first to describe the political and media context in which public attitudes towards EMU were formed; the second to explore the relationship between variations in issue salience on the media agenda with variations in issue salience on the public agenda. The theoretical basis for the study was provided by the media agenda setting hypothesis (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), which proposes that fluctuations in the salience of issues in the media have the capacity to direct public attention onto specific issues at certain times, particularly for so-called 'obtrusive' issues (Zucker, 1978) that are highly relevant in many people's lives (e.g. unemployment, education, health services, etc.), or where people have relatively low levels of political involvement.

Studies of agenda setting in relation to European integration have found limited support for an agenda setting effect however (Norris et al., 1999; de Vreese, 2001). Even when the issue of the single currency dominated media coverage of the 1997 general election campaign, people remained relatively unconcerned about it, being more concerned with other campaign issues instead (Norris et al., 1999). The results of the present study broadly supported these findings.

The analysis was aimed at answering a number of questions concerning the amount of coverage the euro issue attracted during the period of investigation, the events relating to the issue that attracted the most attention and public concerns about the issue during the same period. In the first part of the analysis, I looked at the amount of coverage the euro issue attracted in the press by looking at the number of articles containing the search term 'single currency' published monthly in a range of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. This revealed the way in which the issue fluctuated in salience over the course of the debate. The analysis identified the events that generated the most coverage. Comparing the level of coverage across different types of newspaper revealed that broadsheet newspapers shared broadly similar news agendas throughout the period of analysis, while the tabloids analysed varied more in terms of the amount of coverage given to the single currency. In the second part of the analysis, I looked at the relative salience of the issue on the public agenda. The results revealed a close correspondence between public concerns about European issues and coverage of the single currency, but only for a small proportion of the population (no more than 43% at any one time). There was also some limited evidence of a negative relationship between the salience of the single currency debate in the media and the favourability of public support for the EU and EMU.

As with Norris and her colleagues' study, this study showed that the majority of the public remained relatively unconcerned about European issues, despite the extensive press attention given to the debate surrounding the introduction of the single currency at various stages during the 1990s. However, for a limited group of people, the analysis showed that attention to the issue was closely aligned with the level of coverage devoted to the issue in the press. As the amount of coverage increased, so did the proportion of British adults reporting that European integration 'is one of the most important issues facing Britain today'. In this way, the findings of the study illustrate an important characteristic of public opinion, namely that people vary in the importance they attach to particular policy issues - and to their attitudes towards those issues (Krosnick, 1990). As a result, only a subset of people is likely to be concerned about a given issue at any point in time. Thus, the findings of the study are consistent with the so-called 'issue public' hypothesis (Converse, 1964), which argues that the cognitive demands of being well-informed about policy issues are too high for every person to be concerned about every issue. Instead, subgroups of the population can be differentiated according to the importance they attach to particular policy issues over others.

The research undertaken had some limitations. In particular, the relatively crude design of the study provides a somewhat weak basis for drawing firm conclusions about the capacity for the media to set the public agenda of issue concerns (or vice versa). The findings also underline the importance in agenda-setting research of disaggregating the population when looking for possible media effects. Further research would be necessary, for example, to identify the characteristics of the group who consider Europe to be the most important issue facing Britain today, both in terms of their socio-demographic make-up and their issue involvement, but also in terms of their existing attitudes towards integration, and specifically, the single currency. In order to draw more robust conclusions about the possibility of a media agenda setting effect, it would also be necessary to examine patterns of media consumption among different groups of the population.

Nevertheless, the research was successful in achieving its modest aims and has some noteworthy contributions to make besides. Prior to this research, relatively few previous studies of British media reporting on European integration had specified the mechanisms by which information in the press might influence public opinion, focusing instead on the style and content of news reports about Europe. Although primarily descriptive, this study helps to advance the literature in this respect, by making reference to the agenda-setting approach to describe one way in which people's attitudes might be influenced, albeit indirectly, by the media. As noted, the findings were consistent with those of the few other studies (Norris et al, 1999; de Vreese, 2001) that have similarly applied this approach to the study of media communications about Europe.

The research also lends further empirical support to the thesis developed in chapters 1 and 2, which questions the basis of the high levels of public opposition to the euro around which the British debate about joining EMU often centred. Public opinion on the single currency during the 1990s was far from fixed; for the majority of people in Britain it was simply not an issue (see also Worcester, 1999; 2000), despite the extensive media attention it attracted at various points during this period. Finally, the findings of study A are also consistent with the ELM account of persuasion. As the euro issue became more prominent in newspaper reporting, a consistent minority responded by reporting European integration to be one of the most important issues facing the country. The people for whom the issue was considered to be important were those for whom involvement was likely to be greater; their attentiveness to the salience of the euro issue on the media agenda reflecting their increased likelihood of engaging with issue-relevant information. In this way, the study demonstrates the potential value for the discipline of incorporating media analyses into social psychological research. Exploring the social context in which individual psychological processes function provides a method for testing and strengthening social cognitive theory.

9.2.2 Study B

In study B, the focus was on the content of media information. The aim was to explore how opinion-leading newspapers portrayed the debate surrounding EMU and how this may have shaped the way people came to think about it. The research was informed by the literature on framing, which provides an alternative theoretical framework to the agenda-setting approach for understanding the mechanism by which media content can influence public opinion (e.g. Tuchman, 1978; Entman, 1993). Framing refers to the process by which the media make certain attributes of issues or events more salient than others, which according to Entman, influences the "probability that receivers will perceive this information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory" (1993; p.53). This study investigated how the opinion-leading press have framed the single currency issue through an analysis of argumentation in newspaper editorials.

There were two main factors motivating the decision to focus on arguments. Firstly, arguments form the basic building block of persuasive communication; they provide the vehicle through which information changes attitudes. By analysing the structure and content of arguments, I hoped to gain insight into the persuasive quality of information about the euro being circulated by the media, in order to better understand the basis of public attitudes towards the issue. This focus was partly influenced by the debate surrounding the question of what makes an argument persuasive, which has never fully been resolved in the social psychological literature on persuasion and which, as we saw in chapter 2, represents one of the most controversial elements of the ELM paradigm. While Petty and Cacioppo (1986) advocated the use of a recipient-based cognitive definition of 'argument quality', critics have argued in favour of structural message-based definitions of strong and weak arguments, that can be shown to be more objective (e.g. Areni and Lutz, 1989; Boller et al., 1990). The analysis of argument structure proposed by Toulmin (1958), which was the methodological approach I adopted in study B, represents one possible means of determining the relative persuasive quality of arguments (and indeed was the approach used by Boller and his colleagues, 1990).

Secondly, the decision to focus on arguments was influenced by the work of social psychologists who have advocated the study of argumentation as a means to understanding the formation of social representations (Moscovici, 1981; 1984).

Notably, Billig (1987) maintains that arguments provide a model of human thinking. The processes of argumentation and counter-argumentation match the cognitive processes of categorisation and particularisation by which objects are either grouped together with other similar objects or set apart from other objects as different from them. These processes also relate to the twin processes of social representation: anchoring and objectification, by which new and unfamiliar objects are made familiar (Billig, 1993; Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b). In this study, the method of analysis was based on that described by Liakopoulos (2000b), which uses Toulmin's (1958) model to identify structural features of arguments – notably, argument *claims*, *evidence* for claims (or reasons for accepting a claim) and *warrants* (the justification for accepting the link between evidence and claims). Argument claims serve to categorise objects or anchor them in the familiar (Billig, 1993). In this study, I proposed that argument claims made in newspapers' leading articles also serve to make certain issue attributes salient over others. In this way, the focus on editorial arguments was intended to inform our understanding of how the print media frame issues for their readers.

The purpose of the analysis, therefore, was twofold: firstly, to be able to draw conclusions about the relative persuasiveness of media information about the euro on both sides of the debate; and secondly, to identify how the media framed the euro issue by analysing issue-relevant arguments developed in the opinion-leading press over the course of the debate during the 1990s. Leading articles from pro- and anti-EMU broadsheet newspapers (The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph) published at the time of eight key events (identified in study A) were selected for analysis. The analysis involved two stages. The first stage was to code the text according to Toulmin's model, in order to identify the structural components of arguments developed in each leading article (the particular focus was on argument claims, evidence and warrants). The second was to identify the claims made in articles specifically relating to EMU, their supporting evidence and underlying warrants. This allowed the reconstruction of the 'prototypical' arguments about the single currency developed by the pro- and anti-EMU camps over the course of the debate.

Overall, both The Guardian and The Observer, had broadly pro-European outlooks during the period of interest, but their position on EMU was more ambivalent, supporting instead the 'wait and see' strategy that came to characterise Labour's policy on British membership in the late 1990s. This ambivalence manifested itself in a set of argument claims that stressed the importance of the decision to join EMU and the need to make the single currency work, but at the same time urged caution on account of the politics surrounding the project. The claims were backed by a set of reasons emphasising both the potential benefits of a single currency as well as the political and economic risks involved. Throughout the events analysed, the newspapers described the single currency in both favourable and unfavourable terms. In other words, the pro-EMU arguments can be described in attitudinal terms as being 'multi-valenced', because they endorsed both positive and negative evaluations of the single currency. By comparison, the anti-EMU position of The Daily and Sunday Telegraph was unequivocal. The argument claims in relation to the single currency – all of which expressed opposition to EMU - revolved around four main ideas: that the euro was 'dangerous', that it carried economic risks, that EMU was a political project and that EMU was a threat to national independence. The reasons given for accepting these claims were exclusively negative and typically political in nature rather than being based on the economics involved in monetary union. A range of rhetorical embellishments served to strengthen the anti-EMU arguments and the newspapers described the single currency only in unfavourable terms throughout the course of the debate. Thus, from these publications at least, there was no clear communication over the course of the debate emphasising the potential *benefits* of joining EMU for Britain, whereas in the eurosceptic press, the lead for public opinion was unambiguous. In this respect, the anti-EMU arguments had greater structural integrity than the pro-EMU arguments, making them appear more compelling and persuasive than the more ambivalent, multi-valenced position advocated in The Guardian and Observer.

The claims made about EMU in all the newspapers show which attributes of the issue were made most salient over the course of the debate. Both the pro- and anti-European press emphasised the idea that the decision about joining the single currency was not simply economic, but predominantly political. Similarly, all the newspapers highlighted the potential economic and political risks of joining. But while The Daily and Sunday Telegraph claimed that EMU was 'dangerous', 'damaging' and a 'threat', the claims made by The Guardian and Observer emphasised only that the issue was 'important' and that 'Britain's future must be as part of Europe'. In this sense, the newspapers came to frame the EMU issue in different ways. The event-specific arguments developed in each of the leading articles tended to provide 'issue-specific news frames' (de Vreese et al., 2001) for the events being covered. But over time, the positions advocated by the newspapers tended to be portrayed to their respective audiences in terms of generic news frames (Gamson, 1992: Neuman et al., 1992). While The Telegraph came to frame the issue in terms of conflict (between British interests and the objectives of integration), The Guardian / Observer tended to frame the issue in terms of the political and economic consequences of joining EMU.

The method of argumentation analysis adopted here had some limitations. In particular, the coding of event-specific arguments proved to be labour intensive and gave rise to reliability problems, due to disagreement among the coders as to how to code different argument parts. Nevertheless, the approach proved an effective means of reducing the quantity of data in a relatively large sample of newspaper articles, while at the same time remaining close to its structure and content, without the loss of information sometimes considered to be problematic in quantitative approaches to content analysis. The study has some limitations, however, both as an analysis of argument quality, as well as of media framing, in that its focus on media content and corresponding neglect of audience responses to information presents us with only one side of the story. To draw conclusions, for example, about the impact of media information on how people think about issues, it would of course be necessary to supplement the analysis with a study of audience frames, to explore the extent to which they correspond to those found in the media they are exposed to. This also raises the question of whether, in the absence of exposure to the relevant publication, it is possible to infer the presence of media effects at all. Future studies of how argumentation in the opinion-leading press (or indeed, broadcast media) frames political issues should ideally be twinned with a corresponding investigation into how issues are represented among different subgroups of the population (for example, by conducting focus groups and analysing arguments used by participants), along with an analysis of media consumption patterns to assess the extent of exposure to media frames among different groups.

To a certain extent, a similar criticism can be applied to the analysis of argument persuasiveness. Message-based definitions of argument quality may provide a means of objectively assessing the relative strength of arguments according to their structural integrity or the presence or absence of different argument features, yet the persuasive power of arguments depends ultimately on recipient responses and subjective evaluations of how convincing they are. This highlights the fundamental challenge of defining argument quality: the persuasiveness of information lies not only in its content, nor in the cognitive responses of message recipients. Rather, it is located in the interaction between source, message and recipient, and as such, any analysis of argument quality must take all three elements into consideration.

Not discounting these limitations, study B makes an important contribution to our understanding of people's attitudes towards the euro, as well as of public opinion processes more generally. In particular the sheer preponderance of negative arguments about EMU (and reasons not to support British membership) circulated by the press during the period of investigation provides some explanation for the opposition to the euro reported in polls during this time, even if we cannot draw robust conclusions about the relative persuasiveness of information on either side of the debate and its likely impact on underlying attitudes. Some support for this conclusion is provided by Zaller and Feldman's (1992) theory of how respondents formulate responses to attitude measures in surveys, which I briefly introduced in chapter 1. According to their approach, few people hold fully-formed attitudes on political issues; rather, they hold stores of different considerations relevant to the issue that they draw upon when formulating a judgement in the context of a survey interview or self-completion questionnaire. When presented with a request for an opinion, the respondent tends to average across a sample of considerations (p.586) that are most salient at the time to formulate their response to the survey question; if the sample of considerations brought to mind is mainly negative (or positive), then the expressed attitude is also likely to be negative (positive). By contrast, if the sample of considerations is a mix of positive and negative considerations, then the attitude expressed from one request to the next is likely to vary, resulting in response instability. This is especially likely to occur where only one or two considerations are brought to mind, for example among those with low issue-involvement.

The 'considerations' in Zaller and Feldman's model correspond with the pieces of evidence (or reasons) that support an argument claim in Toulmin's (1952) model of argumentation (similarly, they equate with the concept of 'support beliefs' in Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) model of reasoned action). The salience of a given set of considerations at the moment of the survey request is determined by the accessibility of the information in memory (Zaller and Feldman, 1992; p.586). For example, information that has recently been thought about is more likely to be brought to mind when the respondent is presented with the attitude measure (which, according to the authors, accounts for the occurrence of context effects in surveys). Similarly, accessibility is likely to be influenced by the salience of issues or issue attributes in the media (either directly, or indirectly). Thus, one conclusion we might draw from study B is that the media debate surrounding British membership of the euro succeeded in making salient a number of clearly articulated, negative 'considerations' (or reasons for not joining EMU), which in turn were more accessible to survey respondents when they were asked about their attitudes in opinion polls. Future research into the relationship between arguments in the media and public opinion on political issues might usefully build upon this framework, by combining an analysis of media arguments with research into the salient considerations that influence responses to attitude measures in surveys.

9.2.3 Study C

In studies A and B, the focus was on the circulation of information about EMU by the media. In study C, I looked at the impact of information on public attitudes towards the EU and EMU. Using data from a deliberative poll about Europe (that had not previously been analysed in depth elsewhere), I was able to investigate differences in the favourability and strength of attitudes before and after exposure to issue-relevant information (in the form of a range of specially-provided written material and a weekend event involving small group discussions and question-and-answer sessions with experts on both sides of the debate). The twin aims were to examine the effect of information exposure on attitudes towards Europe and the role of issue involvement in attitude change. In particular the study looked at the differences in attitudes between people for whom European integration was an important issue (those who were highly interested and knowledgeable about Europe), and people for whom the issue was unimportant – in other words, people with high and low levels of issue involvement.

Based on the review of the literature presented in chapters 1 and 2, and the findings of study A, there was reason to suppose that people with high involvement in the single currency issue might vary in their attitudes and respond differently to issue-relevant information than people with low involvement. The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) provided a theoretical framework for understanding these differences. Compared with people who are low in issue involvement, those with high involvement are assumed to be more motivated and better able to systematically process information and to integrate it into their existing framework of attitudes and beliefs. They are better able to generate counter-arguments to information that is unconvincing or inconsistent with their existing attitudes. Their attitudes are, therefore, likely to be stronger and more resistant to change. The analysis of data in study C tested these predictions. The sample was divided into participants with low and high levels of involvement, making it possible to examine socio-demographic differences between the two groups (the main predictors of involvement in the issue of European integration) and to look at differences in the strength and valence of attitudes between the two groups, before and after exposure to information.

As predicted, the analysis of the data found significant differences between participants as a function of issue involvement. Firstly, in terms of their attitudes, those with low involvement were less likely to support closer integration in Europe and a single currency and showed greater concern for the possible negative consequences of closer integration. However, a range of evidence attested to the fact that their attitudes were weaker and more labile than those of the highly involved. The low involvement participants were more likely to select the 'Don't Know' response across a range of opinion measures and to claim they felt insufficiently informed to vote in a referendum on Europe. The inter-item correlations for their responses to the attitudinal measures were lower than for the high involvement group (suggesting weaker attitude 'constraint' – Converse, 1964). They were also more likely to change their attitudes after having participated in the weekend deliberation event – their attitudes became more positive, more coherent and the participants were less likely to select the 'Don't know' option after information exposure. Levels of factual knowledge also improved.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of study C about attitudes towards the euro and public opinion generally. Firstly, they demonstrate the extent to which public opinion about European integration is susceptible to change. The most compelling explanation for this is that for a large proportion of the population (according to this study, especially women and those with little personal experience of other European countries), attitudes are underpinned by low levels of interest in and knowledge about the issues involved. Providing people with the opportunity to really engage with the issues appears not only to make them more certain of their attitudes, but in relation to this topic, also more favourable to the idea of closer integration in Europe. In this sense, the findings provide support for the predictions derived from the ELM about the influence of involvement on attitude strength and an individual's susceptibility to persuasion. Secondly, if the deliberative poll is intended to reflect the heightened issue salience of a referendum or other political campaign, then the findings would suggest that the increased availability of information in the run-up to a referendum would be sufficient to effect a change in public attitudes. However, as study A showed, simply increasing the quantity of information available does not guarantee that people will become more concerned about an issue and motivated to process information about it. The likelihood of a person engaging with that information will depend on their prior involvement in that issue.

The findings of study C highlight the need to understand better the psychological processes by which information exerts an influence on attitudes at varying levels of involvement, yet the deliberative poll data are limited in the opportunities they provide for studying them. As we saw in chapter 6, one criticism that has been directed at the deliberative poll methodology (Price and Neijens, 1998; Sturgis, Roberts and Allum, 2005) is that insufficient data are collected over the course of the weekend to draw conclusions about how attitudes are formed and changed. The ELM postulates that differences in attitudes between low and high involvement participants are due to variation in elaboration likelihood and the cognitive routes by which information effects persuasion. However, the 'black box' of the deliberative poll weekend provides no data with which to test explicit predictions derived from the model about the cognitive mechanisms underlying attitude change during the weekend event and about why some people change their attitudes as a result of taking part in the poll and others do not. Future deliberative polls would benefit from gathering a range of paradata during the weekend event to supplement the interview data and provide greater insight into these kinds of questions.

Despite the limitations of the deliberative polling method (as a means to studying psychological processes involved in attitude change), the dataset analysed in study C provided a unique opportunity to examine the applicability of the ELM's central postulates outside of the conventional setting for a persuasion experiment. Of course, the study was not intended as a direct test of the model, given the data were gathered for an altogether different purpose, but it took a first step towards investigating the extent to which the key premises of the model hold in a 'real-world' setting (notwithstanding any criticism of the ecological validity of the weekend event). The results provide some support for the model. The data also provided me with a rare chance to examine the factors underlying attitudes towards European integration in a random probability sample of the population[36] and, therefore, a stronger basis for my conclusions than would have been possible with other sources of data: the fact that they had not been previously exploited by other researchers made these opportunities - and the findings of my analysis – all the more noteworthy.

9.2.4 Study D

A criticism that can be directed at previous research on public attitudes towards European integration is that it has tended to focus on the correlates of attitudes reported in polls (e.g. sex, age, education, knowledge, national identity) as a means to understanding patterns of variation. Yet as the findings of study C confirm, for a large proportion of the population, attitudes about European issues during the period of investigation were far from fixed; people felt uninformed about the issue and were open to persuasion. This question mark surrounding the validity of responses to attitudinal measures in surveys about Europe was the starting point for study D. The aim of the research was to examine the effect of a persuasive message (comprised of arguments identified in the argumentation analysis in study C) on reported attitudes. Two covariates of attitudes identified in previous research formed the focus of the analysis, to see what effect they had on the processes (whether peripheral or central) by which people formed and changed their attitudes in response to information: issue involvement and strength of attachment to British national identity.

A second motivation for study D came from research into the role of identity in persuasion, which has challenged aspects of the ELM. Previous studies have shown that the strength and nature of a person's national identity appears to be an important predictor of their attitudes towards the euro. According to social identity theory, however, the importance attached to a given social identity depends on the salience of that identity at any given moment. In this study I explored the effect of identity salience

[36] As we saw in chapter 1, a large proportion of previous research in this field has relied on Eurobarometer survey data, which are not collected from strict probability samples. Relatively few UK surveys of attitudes towards European integration satisfy these criteria – the British Social Attitudes survey being one exception. More recently, the European Social Survey has provided researchers interested in comparing attitudes across Europe with a new source of high quality data, but regrettably carries relatively few questions relating to integration processes.

on persuasion. Early studies of identity and persuasion wrongly concluded that identity (e.g. of a message source) acts as a peripheral cue in persuasion, but a number of more recent studies (reviewed in chapter 2) have demonstrated that it can, in fact, act as an important motivator for central processing. According to the authors of the ELM, however, any variable in persuasion can act in any of four different ways to bring about changes in attitudes: as an influence on the amount of information elaboration, as a bias on elaboration, as an issue-relevant argument or as a peripheral cue. The role adopted by the persuasion variable depends on the individual's prior involvement in the target issue. Study D examined the role in persuasion played by raising the salience of national identity in communications about the euro.

Study D also provided a further opportunity to test the extent to which the ELM could explain attitude change in relation to a real-world issue. In order to achieve this, however, it was necessary to make several innovative adaptations to the classical ELM method. To gain access to a general population sample (although admittedly, one accessed via a volunteer panel) the experiment was fielded as an Internet survey, using an automatic randomisation tool to assign participants to the different treatment groups. Each treatment varied according to the order in which the questions (including the message arguments) were presented. The study employed two key manipulations: argument quality (based on Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) method) and a procedure designed to prime self-categorisation as 'British' in order to raise the salience of national identity among half the respondents. The questionnaire included sets of questions designed to tap different predictors of attitudes towards the euro – notably, items to measure issue involvement (knowledge about the euro, interest in politics, etc.), strength of national identity and message elaboration (e.g. favourability of cognitive responses to the message; elaboration effort, and so on). These items were then analysed as covariates of attitudes to test hypotheses derived from the ELM about the relationship between information, involvement and identity and public attitudes towards the euro. Because of these adaptations, study D cannot be viewed as a formal test of the ELM. Nevertheless, the unique approach adopted proved to be effective in terms of revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the model as the following discussion shows.

The results of the experiment lent further support to the findings of study C. High involvement participants in the study not only held more favourable attitudes towards the euro, but their attitudes were unaffected by reading the arguments in favour of EMU they were presented with. The attitudes of the low involvement participants on the other hand were less favourable and more susceptible to change as a result of reading the arguments. However, there was only mixed evidence that low involvement participants had engaged in less central-route processing than the highly-involved, and there was no evidence of peripheral processing in either group. Consistent with previous research, the attitudes of participants with strong national identity were more negative than those of participants with weak national identity, but they were also more susceptible to change as a result of reading the message arguments. However, there was some evidence to suggest that being strongly attached to British national identity had the effect of reducing message processing. Manipulating the salience of national identity appeared to reduce the amount of processing across all groups, though the effect observed in this study was not statistically significant.

The finding that those who were less knowledgeable and interested in the single currency issue and those who were more concerned about national identity were more susceptible to persuasion provides further support for the conclusion drawn at the start of the thesis that the responses to attitude measures of survey participants with low involvement are unstable. Weak attitudes appear to be especially sensitive to exposure to persuasive communications, leading to a greater likelihood of response switching and susceptibility to measurement error, such as the context effects observed in study D. The effects observed are also consistent with Zaller and Feldman's (1992) account of the survey response process: making salient a number of positive considerations about the euro made low-involvement participants more likely to express positive attitudes. In this sense, the study is perhaps less informative about processes of persuasion per se than it is more generally about the nature of *measured* attitudes and the effect of information, involvement and identity on the survey response process.

By contrast, the attitudes of those who were more knowledgeable and interested in the issue and of those who were less concerned about their national identity did not change after reading the arguments (though these participants were more likely to distinguish strong arguments from weak arguments). This finding lends further support to the conclusion that in relation to EMU there existed in Britain what Converse (1964) referred to as an 'issue public' (discussed earlier) – in other words, a group for whom the issue was especially important. According to this approach, as issue/attitude importance increases for an individual, the likelihood of persuasion decreases, which was indeed observed in study D. According to Krosnick (1990), persuasion

> *"is unlikely to occur with important policy attitudes, because important attitudes are likely to be highly resistant to change. Extensive linkage to other attitudes, beliefs, values, and psychological elements through a network of associations in memory exerts stabilizing forces (Ostrom and Brock, 1969). Important attitudes are presumably accompanied by large stores of relevant knowledge in memory, which equip individuals to counterargue against attitude-challenging information (Wood, Kallgren, and Priester, 1985)."* (Krosnick, 1990; p.63)

The fact that high involvement participants in the study were more resistant to persuasion is consistent with the predictions of the ELM and suggests that there may be some value in using the model to enhance our understanding of public opinion processes. However, the unanticipated finding that participants' prior attitudes towards the euro moderated the persuasive impact of the arguments presented by influencing elaboration likelihood (message processing was motivated where the arguments presented were pro-attitudinal) and perceptions of argument quality (pro-attitudinal arguments were judged to be stronger than counter-attitudinal arguments) raises concerns about the suitability of the ELM method for the study of persuasion in relation to real political issues. In particular, if the valence of existing attitudes vis-à-vis the attitude object affects the likelihood of information elaboration, then it is not possible to experimentally manipulate participants' involvement in the target issue. Similarly, if participants' existing attitudes and beliefs about the target object determine in part their cognitive responses to the persuasive message, then it is not possible to control for the persuasiveness of the arguments presented. Without the experimental manipulation of argument quality, inferences regarding the depth of the message recipient's cognitive processing are limited. The remainder of this section discusses the implications of these findings in relation to the concept of argument quality.

Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) recipient- or audience-based definition of argument quality has proved adequate for the purposes of most ELM lab studies, in which the target issue is one about which participants hold no prior attitudes, and as long as the two dimensions of argument quality - *strength* and *valence* – are unconfounded (Areni and Lutz, 1988). This is because under these conditions, subjective responses to the advocacy can be described as being relatively 'pure': individual x with no prior attitude to target y can be expected to respond favourably to strong messages about y and negatively to weak messages about y. Assuming these conditions are met, it should be possible to make predictions about any resultant attitude change in accordance with the tenets of the ELM. Yet where argument strength and valence are confounded, messages emphasising the positive attributes of target objects may elicit favourable cognitive responses, irrespective of the number and nature of 'support beliefs' they contain (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1981) or evidence provided in support of the argument claim. In other words, if strong messages about y are actually just messages that highlight the positive attributes of y, then individual x will respond favourably to message y not because it contains more persuasive arguments but because the positive features of the advocacy elicit favourable cognitive responses (Areni and Lutz, 1988). Argument *persuasiveness* is determined by the valence of the target attributes and not by argument strength.

Areni and Lutz's (1988) critique of how persuasive messages had been constructed in ELM studies led others (notably, Boller, Swasy and Munch, 1990) to advocate a definition of argument quality based purely on message-based attributes. Boller et al's approach involved identifying the features of arguments according to Toulmin's model (described in chapter 5) and constructing strong and weak messages on the basis of the structural integrity of the arguments contained in them. Such an approach eliminated the possibility of the valence attributes of messages being confounded with argument strength and of recipients' responses to messages being determined by those valence attributes instead of the actual quality of the arguments in terms of their strength. But as the research presented in this thesis shows, definitions of argument quality based on structural features of arguments do not necessarily predict recipient responses to the arguments. In other words, it seems that argument persuasiveness cannot be evaluated independently from the subjective cognitive responses generated by message recipients.

This problem was identified in challenges to the ELM by social psychologists investigating the role of identity in persuasion and the findings of my own research lend further support to their conclusions. Studies by Mackie, Worth and Asuncion (1990) and McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson and Turner (1994), for example, found that messages attributed to in-group sources were rated as more persuasive by ingroup members than messages attributed to out-group sources (see also Van Knippenberg, 1999 and Haslam et al, 1998). These authors argue that the perceived validity of a message cannot be viewed independently from the *source* of the message, because the way in which information is processed is "profoundly mediated by our group memberships and associated perceptions of reality" (Haslam et al., 1996; p.34). Rather than functioning as a pre-given property of message arguments, persuasiveness is co-determined by the ingroup-outgroup status of the message source (van Knippenberg, 1999). Even when no information about the message source is available, the persuasive impact of the message will depend on the social context in which the message is presented (Crano and Chen, 1998; McGarty et al., 1994; Haslam et al., 1996).

In study D, the identity of the message source was not revealed to participants in the questionnaire itself. The arguments presented were structured in the same way (each consisting of 3 support beliefs or reasons for accepting the claim that Britain should join the single currency. They were also balanced for content, each addressing either economic, political or identity concerns related to joining the euro. The arguments varied only in terms of the profile of favourable, neutral and unfavourable thoughts each elicited among participants in the pilot study and on the basis of different aspects of their persuasive quality, including familiarity, believability, convincingness and persuasiveness. Yet despite controlling – as far as possible – for message-based characteristics that might influence the favourability of participants' cognitive responses to the persuasive message; evaluations of argument quality were influenced by the valence of participants' prior attitudes. This finding no doubt reflects in part identity processes inherent within the persuasion context. Though not made explicit, the in-group-out-group status of the message source was implicit; the arguments could be attributed to the pro-EMU campaign and its proponents. It also suggests that the valence attributes of the advocacy – or how desirable the object of the advocacy is – depends on the message recipient's existing structure of beliefs and attitudes about the target issue. In other words, for real world attitude objects/ issues, it is not possible to separate either argument valence or argument strength from audience characteristics and the social context in which persuasion takes place.

So what makes an argument persuasive? And where does this leave research into persuasion? Based on the findings of this study it seems that for the purposes of studying attitude change in the real world, neither audience/recipient-based definitions of argument quality, nor message-based definitions are wholly adequate. The persuasiveness of an argument lies in the nexus between audience, message and source-based characteristics of the persuasive communication. This equates to the idea of the 'warrant' in Toulmin's (1958) model of argument, which though seldom explicitly articulated in the argument itself, provides the essential justification for the link between argument claims and the reasons for accepting those claims (i.e. determines the persuasiveness of the argument). Warrants are typically inferred by message recipients from the claims and evidence they are presented with and from a set of assumptions the recipient has about the source or likely source of the communication. Based on the work of others who have applied Toulmin's model to the study of argumentative discourse (e.g. Liakopoulos, 2000a; 2000b; van Bavel, 2001), it seems likely that where the identity of the message source is known, the warrant is derived from the understanding between source and recipient about the nature of the world and socially-shared representations about the message topic. A possible avenue for future research, therefore, would be to investigate further the relationship between prior attitudes and the assumptions people hold about the likely source of political information.

In the ELM, the definition of argument quality is a necessary element of the experimental method, for it is by manipulating argument strength that inferences can be drawn about the depth of the message recipient's processing. If argument quality cannot be defined empirically, then the focus of persuasion research must shift away from how information mediates attitude formation and change. One alternative avenue for the future is to divert attention towards thinking about how issue involvement (as it occurs 'naturally' in the real world) and how identity processes influence whether and how people integrate new information into their existing framework of beliefs and attitudes. The present research has gone some way towards demonstrating the potential fruitfulness of such an approach for the study of public attitudes towards political and economic policy. More research is needed, however, to refine the methodological tools needed to meet this challenge.

9.3 Conclusions

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn from the empirical research reported in this thesis about public attitudes towards the euro. First of all, despite the apparent widespread opposition to EMU reported in the results of opinion polls, only a minority of British people attached any importance to the issue over the course of the debate, expressing concern that matters relating to European integration were among the most important issues facing Britain at that time. This finding is consistent with the idea that there exist so-called 'issue publics' (Converse, 1964; Krosnick, 1990); subgroups of the population that can be differentiated according to how much importance they attach to particular policy concerns. Most people in Britain remained relatively unconcerned about EMU throughout the course of the debate and attached relatively little importance to the issue. Their attitudes were underpinned by limited factual knowledge of the issues concerned and a lack of interest in them. As a result, the attitudes reported in surveys were only weakly-formed, making them especially susceptible to the persuasive effects of unbalanced issue-relevant information. This was clearly demonstrated in the results of studies C and D, where low-involvement participants were more likely to adjust their attitudes in response to pro-European/ pro-EMU information[37]. It seems reasonable to conclude that the circulation of negatively-framed information by the media had a similarly persuasive impact on the attitudes reported in opinion polls during this period, which might help to explain the high levels of opposition towards the euro that were recorded.

Study C showed that providing participants with information about European integration helped to strengthen their attitudes and make them more coherent. It also made people's attitudes more favourable towards closer integration in Europe. However, these findings were slightly at odds with those of study A which appeared to show that most people were unaffected by fluctuations in the availability of information. This supports the conclusion that it is not *how much* information is available that is important for attitudes, but people's motivation and ability to process the available information; to think about it and integrate it within their existing framework of attitudes and beliefs (in other words, their 'elaboration likelihood). Motivation and ability to process information is linked to involvement, as was shown in study C. Participants' involvement actually increased over the course of the deliberative poll weekend. Motivation among participants to centrally process information was no doubt enhanced by the special context of the organised event, and ability to centrally process information improved over the course of the event, as reflected in participants'

[37] The extent of attitude lability in study D was such that attitudes were not only sensitive to the arguments presented but also to the order in which the questions were presented in the questionnaires. So-called 'context' or 'question order' effects have been widely documented in the survey methodology literature (e.g. Strack and Martin, 1987; Schwarz and Strack, 1991) and are especially likely to occur where levels of involvement in the survey topic are low and where respondents do not have strongly-formed pre-existing views on the topic (Krosnick, 1991).

improved quiz scores at the end of the weekend. In this context, it seems likely that attitudes were not only temporarily shifted in a particular direction by the valence of the arguments presented, but that they also became more coherent, or 'constrained' (Converse, 1964; Sturgis et al., 2005). This would suggest that the effects of persuasion would have been more enduring compared with the perhaps more temporal shifts in attitudes observed in study D. These findings are especially pertinent to those involved in political campaigning, in particular if there were ever a referendum on the euro, or about any other European policy concern.

The effect of information on attitudes is not only moderated by issue involvement – or people's ability and motivation to process it – but also by people's existing attitudes and beliefs. This effect was observed in study D where those participants with stable (pro-EMU) attitudes to begin with did not change their attitudes as a result of information exposure. This finding is consistent with the results of other studies that have shown that as attitude importance increases, the likelihood of persuasion decreases (e.g. Krosnick, 1990). However, highly-involved participants with stable attitudes were still motivated to centrally process issue-relevant information and to appraise the quality of the arguments they were presented with. Yet their appraisals of argument quality were dependent on the valence of their prior attitudes. In other words, people with pro-EMU attitudes evaluated pro-EMU arguments as more persuasive than anti-EMU ones and people with anti-EMU attitudes evaluated anti-EMU arguments as more persuasive than pro-EMU ones. This finding calls into question one of the central elements of the Elaboration Likelihood Model – that by manipulating the strength of argument quality (e.g. based on the favourability of cognitive responses among a panel of judges) it is possible to assess the extent of participants' message elaboration.

Finally, the results of the empirical studies shed some light on the role played by national identity in attitudes towards the euro. Contrary to the hypotheses tested, participants in study D with stronger attachment to British national identity were less motivated to engage in central-route processing and they were more susceptible to persuasion. Although the effects of raising the salience of national identity in the persuasive communication were not statistically significant, the pattern of effects all pointed towards the same conclusion: raising the salience of national identity *appears* to reduce the amount of processing of group-relevant information. Further research is necessary however to test this hypothesis empirically.

One important contribution made by this thesis to the study of attitudes towards European integration is that it highlights the fluidity of uninformed attitudes and therefore the need to study the dynamics of attitude change rather than just the correlates and predictors of attitudes reported in polls. To understand public opinion it is necessary to identify those people for whom attitudes about a particular policy concern are fixed and stable – i.e. the people for whom those attitudes are important (Krosnick, 1988; 1990) – and the people who attach relatively little importance to those attitudes. Establishing attitude importance and the strength of people's attitudes provides the basis for understanding the susceptibility of attitudes to change and therefore the confidence with which theories about variation in attitudes among different subgroups of the population can be developed.

9.4 Reflections on the theoretical approaches and methods adopted in this thesis

In this thesis I adopted a mixed method approach to the study of public attitudes towards the euro. The motivation for this was mainly pragmatic: based on the literature review, I identified a number of pertinent questions about the role played by information, involvement and identity in public opposition to EMU and the choices of approaches and methods available to me, to a large extent, stemmed automatically from these. To study informational influences on public attitudes, I turned to theories of media communication (agenda-setting, framing); to study the role of involvement in processes of attitude formation and change, I looked to social psychological theories of persuasion (the ELM); whereas to study the role of identity in persuasion, I looked to theories of group processes (social identity theory). Having identified the theoretical approaches that appeared to offer the most insight into my research questions, the decision about which research methods to adopt was – by and large – settled by the traditions associated with each.

The resulting eclecticism largely reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of the field of public opinion research, which over the years has been built up by contributors from political science, sociology and media research, as well as from social and political psychology, resulting in a number of hybrid theories and methods. But it also reflects, in part, a philosophical decision on my behalf not to pursue a programme of research directed from the outset by a single ontological outlook, but one which drew on existing knowledge from a variety of sources and which was guided by practical considerations about which theoretical and methodological 'tools' would be best suited to tackling the particular research questions I wanted to address. My motivation was to use a collection of complementary approaches to enhance our understanding of the psychological processes underlying public attitudes towards the euro, rather than to tackle the problem under the constraints of a single paradigm. Within this, I was also keen to innovate and to attempt new ways of working with existing approaches – a motivation that is reflected in the decision to use argumentation analysis to study media frames and argument quality in study B, and to use a web survey experiment to test predictions from the ELM with a general population sample in study D. The extent to which my approach was successful is borne out in the preceding discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the empirical studies. To be sure, there are other methods I could have used, which with hindsight, would have improved my research or strengthened my conclusions (for example, conducting focus groups to learn more about the arguments about EMU being used by the public would have bridged the gap between the studies of media content and the studies of attitudes). But I believe the research presented here provides a richer insight into public opinion processes than would have been possible had I decided to *only* analyse survey data, to *only* conduct a series of laboratory experiments, or to *only* analyse media content.

Despite the conscious decision to draw upon the theoretical and methodological approaches of other disciplines that have contributed to the study of public opinion, the overall aim of the thesis was to explore the utility of social psychological theory in understanding processes underlying people's attitudes. Taking as its premise the idea that attitudes towards the euro are (or were) only weakly formed and the declared openness of the public to persuasion, I wanted to establish what could be learned from theories of attitude change about how public opinion responds to informational influences communicated by the media. Of the theoretical approaches developed within the field of persuasion research, I was attracted to the ELM because of its focus on 'involvement' as a mediator of informational influence (which has been shown elsewhere to be relevant to understanding political attitudes (e.g. Krosnick, 1988) and which, based on the literature review, was clearly an important variable influencing British attitudes towards the euro). I was also attracted by its clearly-specified methodology and by its overall popularity in and dominance of the field of attitude change research. A vast number of studies have utilised and tested Petty and

Cacioppo's model of persuasion in classical laboratory experiments, finding considerable support for its dual-process account of attitude change, yet relatively few have attempted to examine its applicability to the study of attitudes towards real political issues. In the empirical work I undertook, I wanted to see how well the ELM could explain processes underlying attitudes towards the euro, by testing predictions derived from the model about the role of information and involvement in attitude formation and change. As we have seen, the results of this endeavour were mixed.

By contrast, my interest in Social Identity Theory and Self-categorisation Theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) stemmed from a desire to understand the role played by national identity in attitudes towards European integration. Building on the work of other social psychologists that have adopted these approaches in their studies of social change in Europe (e.g. Breakwell and Lyons, 1996; Cinnirella, 1993; 1996; Hopkins and Reicher, 1996), I chose to focus specifically on the effect of raising national identity salience in information about the euro. The assumption underlying this focus was that in the same way that people's attitudes are not fixed or stable, neither is the influence of group identity on people's attitudes and behaviour, because it depends on the salience of a given category at any given moment. Thus, to understand the relationship between national identity and attitudes towards the euro, it is necessary to understand the role identity salience plays in attitude formation and change. While the social identity approach provides its own account of the relationship between identity and group beliefs (e.g. Chryssochoou, 1996; Bar-Tal, 1998), in the present research, my purpose was to use it *in combination* with the ELM and I saw the two approaches as offering complementary accounts of processes of influence. Though to many, these two approaches are likely to be seen as being far from compatible, deriving as they do from very different traditions within the discipline of social psychology, my motivation for working with both stemmed from seeing each as offering insight into different aspects of the problem I was researching.

Social psychology has a significant role to play in understanding what the public think about different issues and how they form and change their attitudes on the basis of information – either from the media or from members of ingroups and outgroups alike. In many ways, it can be said to offer a *unique* vantage point, because it enables theorists to address the interface between the psychological and the social (Smith and Mackie, 1997), or as Giddens (1984) has described it, the nexus between the individual, the group and society (cited in Breakwell, 1996). According to Lyons and Breakwell (1996), the discipline can only successfully fulfil this role if its theoretical models are tested and refined in complex real-world settings to ensure they are able to cope with the "interactions between societal, interpersonal and individual processes" (p.4).

These observations presuppose a fully-integrated discipline which aims to give equal attention to individual, group and society in its accounts of human cognition and behaviour. Yet historically, this has not been the case, and social psychology has mostly been characterised by divisions resulting from overemphasis on the importance of one part of this triad over the other two (e.g. see Farr, 1996; McGarty and Haslam, 1997; Smith and Mackie, 1997). This is perhaps most pronounced in the chasm between North American social psychological theories (of which the ELM is one) and the approach consolidated in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s (largely dominated by the social identity paradigm). Developed partly in opposition to the dominance of the US tradition with its focus on the individual, social psychologists in Europe developed an approach which sought to address the social context in which human psychological functioning takes place (Tajfel et al., 1984; Hogg and Abrams, 1999). However, division is manifest throughout the discipline, reflected in the contemporary fragmentary nature of theory (Aronson, 1997) and in the rift between advocates of quantitative and qualitative approaches to social psychological research.

According to some (e.g. see Aronson, 1997; Smith and Mackie, 1997), these developments in the discipline have contributed to a kind of impasse for social psychologists. As Aronson has argued, "when artificial barriers are erected and related theories get insulated from each other (...) we decrease our ability to forge vital syntheses – and, consequently, our discipline becomes unnecessarily fragmented and disjointed" (1997; 29). He proposes that the solution lies in placing more emphasis on *synthesis* as opposed to *analysis* and in forging links between old and new theoretical approaches – an outlook which has firmly influenced the approach I chose to adopt in this thesis. Similarly, contemporary methodological approaches recognise the benefits of triangulating (Denzin, 1970; Flick, 1992; Olsen, 2004) different ways of conducting research and of adopting a kind of 'toolbox' approach to choosing methods (Bauer, Gaskell and Allum, 2000), in an effort to bridge the long-standing dichotomy in social scientific research methodology. As I have already stated, I was consciously guided by this principle when selecting the different approaches adopted in this thesis. In my own view, applying social psychological theory to the study of cognition and behaviour in its 'natural' setting demands this kind of synthesis, and coping with the complexity of studying social change requires a sophisticated understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of adopting different theoretical approaches and of using different methods in different contexts. This means that as social psychologists, we share a responsibility not only to become skilled in a range of approaches but to develop sensitivity to the relative strengths of each, and to the heritage within which each has been developed.

As we saw in chapter 1, social scientists from across a range of disciplines have approached the study of public responses to European integration in different ways, tending to focus their analysis at a single level of explanation (individual, group or society). In this thesis, I attempted to integrate a range of approaches incorporating all three levels of explanation in order to take full advantage of the unique vantage point offered by social psychology to address the inter-connectedness of individual psychological and social processes. The benefits of adopting such an approach in the study of European integration are not restricted to those interested primarily in the substantive topic, however. As Cinnirella (1996) has argued, using social change in Europe as an empirical vehicle for examining social psychological theory offers reciprocal benefits for the discipline as well (see also Lyons and Breakwell, 1996; Hopkins and Reicher, 1996). The research undertaken for this thesis provides some evidence in support of this, in its application of social psychological theories of attitude formation and change to the debate surrounding UK membership of EMU. The challenge for the future is to continue this process of refining the theoretical tools of the discipline by testing them outside of the research laboratory.

9.5 Epilogue

One notable limitation of the research findings presented is that they are focused on a very specific substantive issue and one which no longer carries the same political import as it did when the research was carried out. To a certain extent, the same limitation applies to any study focused on a single policy issue, but the debate surrounding British membership of the single currency followed a particularly peculiar trajectory. Issues surrounding EMU dominated the political and media agenda throughout the 1990s (as was shown in study A), defining party politics in the run up to both the 1997 and 2001 general elections. The promise of a referendum on the decision of whether or not Britain should join the euro – what would have been the first vote of its kind in over thirty years – exemplified the seriousness with which the issue was taken by the Government and the urgency of the need to understand the workings of public opinion. The cultural climate at the time was characterised by concerns with the concept of national identity and the meaning of 'Britishness' in the context of closer integration in Europe and the disintegration of the former Soviet bloc, and this Zeitgeist provided a powerful impetus for the research undertaken.

The September 11th 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City had a profound impact on this political and cultural climate, and though the influence of these events arguably took time to dismantle the debate surrounding British membership of EMU, this was ultimately the effect they had. With the Government's decision in 2003 to support the US invasion of Iraq and the shift in media attention onto the so-called 'war on terror', concerns about the single currency eventually subsided. The euro was now the working currency in 12 countries, and Britain – along with the other EU countries that had elected to stay out of the euro – had survived the transition that had taken place, without the negative repercussions on the economy that many had feared. In June 2003, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the 'five economic tests' had not yet been met, and so the Government could not recommend Britain joining the single currency and the issue was effectively 'swept under the carpet' as *the* salient issue in the debate surrounding European integration (Evans, 2003).

More recently, EMU has been usurped as the central issue in the debate surrounding Britain's relationship with Europe by concerns about EU enlargement and the ratification of the EU Constitution. The latter refreshed familiar divisions in the press, but following 'no votes' in referenda held in both France and The Netherlands during 2005, the matter was set aside in much the same way as the debate surrounding British membership of the euro. While the expansion of the European Union in May 2004 from 15 to 25 member states – and most recently, the addition of Romania and Bulgaria on the 1st January 2007 – sparked some media interest, it was generally short-lived and in any case, the focus of attention appears to have shifted. Whereas previously one of the central concerns of the debate was how closer integration between Britain and Europe might impact on British national sovereignty and cultural identity, today the tone of the debate resonates with concerns about the likely impact of enlargement on British society from increased immigration, as well as about the implications of multiculturalism for national security.

So what relevance have the empirical findings presented in this thesis now that the debate surrounding British membership of the euro has effectively run its course (for the time-being at least) and now that political, media and public attention has been diverted to other issues? Despite the fact that the substantive focus of the thesis was in many respects its *raison d'être*, it played a far more significant role as a vehicle through which to examine the utility of different theoretical accounts of the dynamics of public opinion. In this respect, the conclusions drawn here are equally relevant to the study of public attitudes in other domains – notably in relation to political issues, where the concept of 'involvement' holds considerable scope as an explanatory variable for understanding variation in public opinion. Equally, or perhaps even more so in relation to contemporary political debates in Britain, exploring the role played by identity processes in attitude formation and change has a particularly valuable contribution to make to the study of public views on a range of different issues (including, for example, immigration, terrorism and religion).

The empirical research conducted here took an innovative approach to the study of public attitudes, drawing on a range of theories and using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The findings of the research not only enhanced our understanding of the substantive topic, but also provided a number of interesting insights into public opinion processes generally and the nature of people's responses to attitude measures in surveys. Most importantly, the research demonstrated the unique value of a social psychological approach to the study of public attitudes and the benefits for the discipline of testing social psychological theories in real-world contexts. Future studies would similarly benefit from adopting a mix of approaches, but so too would the discipline stand to gain from continuous efforts to bridge the gaps between different fields of research and different theoretical paradigms. Only by moving the discipline forwards in this way can it hope to fulfil its potential to illuminate the complex interactions between psychological and social processes.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1 ***Most important issue facing Britain today: % selecting Europe, Crime, Education, Health and Unemployment by month (1991-2001)***

Date	Europe	Crime	Education	Health	Unemployment
Jan-91	4	5	17	27	34
Feb-91	3	7	17	23	37
Mar-91	5	7	18	24	38
Apr-91	4	15	20	29	48
May-91	5	14	25	51	45
Jun-91	18	9	20	40	52
Jul-91	8	13	17	33	53
Aug-91	6	13	19	34	54
Sep-91	8	23	26	45	54
Oct-91	9	15	21	51	54
Nov-91	32	12	24	42	48
Dec-91	24	15	17	34	41
Jan-92	12	11	24	43	54
Feb-92	9	13	27	49	56
Mar-92	10	12	27	45	55
Apr-92	10	11	27	41	53
May-92	14	15	23	32	57
Jun-92	17	16	21	30	57
Jul-92	10	17	20	28	61
Aug-92	10	14	18	26	64
Sep-92	22	11	17	21	61
Oct-92	19	9	14	27	74
Nov-92	19	12	16	27	71
Dec-92	24	12	15	24	72
Jan-93	8	17	16	28	79
Feb-93	10	33	20	30	81
Mar-93	10	34	18	24	78
Apr-93	9	26	19	24	73
May-93	13	24	19	41	68
Jun-93	9	20	21	37	69
Jul-93	19	24	18	32	66
Aug-93	10	25	21	36	63
Sep-93	7	29	19	32	61
Oct-93	6	33	17	32	61
Nov-93	6	28	23	35	61
Dec-93	6	23	19	34	66
Jan-94	5	31	22	32	61
Feb-94	4	26	22	40	61
Mar-94	12	34	25	35	59
Apr-94	7	33	24	38	60
May-94	12	32	21	35	60
Jun-94	13	30	21	29	66
Jul-94	12	23	20	35	65
Aug-94	9	33	23	36	62
Sep-94	7	33	21	34	59

Oct-94	11	37	22	34	62
Nov-94	14	25	20	40	58
Dec-94	17	22	18	34	55
Jan-95	22	23	22	38	52
Feb-95	25	26	26	36	52
Mar-95	16	24	25	43	51
Apr-95	12	25	33	41	51
May-95	15	25	29	44	53
Jun-95	26	22	29	38	47
Jul-95	12	23	28	39	51
Aug-95	12	24	29	39	52
Sep-95	13	24	30	44	48
Oct-95	17	22	29	45	51
Nov-95	11	25	31	39	52
Dec-95	10	23	32	40	51
Jan-96	14	27	29	41	49
Feb-96	11	24	30	39	48
Mar-96	16	24	31	36	44
Apr-96	20	24	33	34	46
May-96	29	29	30	39	42
Jun-96	28	22	28	33	44
Jul-96	25	29	31	35	43
Aug-96	20	30	27	33	44
Sep-96	23	27	32	35	43
Oct-96	20	41	39	36	37
Nov-96	23	37	42	43	41
Dec-96	38	37	38	42	35
Jan-97	29	22	43	49	36
Feb-97	35	27	45	48	38
Mar-97	33	28	43	49	39
Apr-97	43	27	54	63	28
May-97	30	26	50	57	34
Jun-97	23	24	45	51	39
Jul-97	16	23	49	46	34
Aug-97	21	27	39	47	35
Sep-97	21	28	45	45	35
Oct-97	35	26	36	47	32
Nov-97	31	22	36	47	34
Dec-97	28	16	31	42	31
Jan-98	23	19	37	42	32
Feb-98	16	14	37	50	31
Mar-98	22	13	42	47	34
Apr-98	23	21	39	35	31
May-98	22	20	39	49	30
Jun-98	33	21	33	44	33
Jul-98	22	19	40	45	28
Aug-98	13	21	33	41	36
Sep-98	20	17	31	40	44
Oct-98	23	20	33	38	43
Nov-98	26	17	32	37	35
Dec-98	32	17	26	34	30
Jan-99	27	17	32	49	26
Feb-99	30	19	29	39	26

Mar-99	32	16	29	37	25
Apr-99	15	20	31	34	27
May-99	26	18	27	33	23
Jun-99	37	18	29	35	19
Jul-99	30	16	30	39	21
Aug-99	25	19	30	41	24
Sep-99	23	21	31	39	22
Oct-99	34	16	31	41	17
Nov-99	23	24	29	40	21
Dec-99	32	15	33	41	18
Jan-00	22	24	32	70	20
Feb-00	25	18	32	54	19
Mar-00	20	20	37	57	18
Apr-00	17	16	35	53	21
May-00	19	34	30	45	23
Jun-00	24	23	32	55	17
Jul-00	19	34	34	51	17
Aug-00	24	26	32	49	16
Sep-00	21	13	30	46	10
Oct-00	24	19	25	44	10
Nov-00	27	13	27	46	10
Dec-00	26	26	29	45	7
Jan-01	21	30	32	50	12

APPENDIX B

Table 1 ***Dates and headlines of leading articles included in the argumentation analysis***

Event	**The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph**		**The Guardian/ Observer**	
	Date	**Headline**	**Date**	**Headline**
Maastricht Treaty	02.12.91	Off with her head		
December 1991	03.12.91	A sombre prelude		
			07.12.91	Now the words must form a pattern
	09.12.91	Maastricht: the time of reckoning	09.12.91	Messages behind Maastricht
	12.12.91	Out of the summit and into the light	12.12.91	An ecu for prosperity?
			15.12.91	Out of tune in Europe
Madrid European Council	02.12.95	Painful déjà vu		
December 1995	08.12.95	Say what we want		
	09.12.95	Decus et Tutamen		
			10.12.95	More means better in a wider Europe
	16.12.95	Clarke takes charge	16.12.95	The real Europe debate
	18.12.95	Speak up, Prime Minister	18.12.95	Getting the Euro habit
Dublin European Council	02.12.96	The choice for Major: cop-out or opt-out?	02.12.96	A featureless note
December 1996	04.12.96	Government by the day	04.12.96	United again (for now)
	05.12.96	Sir James's question		
	06.12.96	Blair's continental drift		
	07.12.96	Gorst, Dykes and Clarke	07.12.96	Time to go to the polls
			08.12.96	Lessons in the conservatory highlight
	09.12.96	To what end?	09.12.96	Lessons in the conservatory highlight

	09.12.96	Try leading, Mr Major		
	10.12.96	Blair's federalist agenda		
			12.12.96	Clarke's fine but futile line
	13.12.96	Major's task at Dublin		
			14.12.96	Enter the euro
	15.12.96	Housewives know best		
			17.12.96	When posturing rules
	18.12.96	Poos to the euro		
	31.12.96	Kinkel's interference		
Election 1997	17.04.97	The Tories' moment of truth	17.04.97	Major's hard currency
April/ May 1997	18.04.97	Names and addresses		
	21.04.97	Fighting pound for pound		
	22.04.97	Santer backs Blair		
			27.04.97	Where to spend effort on the single currency
	28.04.97	Kohl's Italian Job		
	01.05.97	Seven into Three doesn't go		
	05.05.97	Mr Clarke and Europe		
	06.05.97	Labour in Brussels	06.05.97	Once more into Europe
	14.05.97	Clarke off-centre		
			24.05.97	Blair takes a lead in Europe
			27.05.97	Jospin's pole position
			30.05.97	Germany jumps the gun
Amsterdam	03.06.97	EMU's French farce		
European Council	04.06.97	Labour's Troy		
June 1997	08.06.97	Not our favourite		
	10.06.97	How they see EMU	10.06.97	Sweetening the euro pill
			12.06.97	Sound money and jobs

			16.06.97	Rethinking the route to Europe
			18.06.97	The real lesson of Amsterdam
Euro-11 Decision April/May 1998	24.04.98	Dutchman or Frenchman		
			29.04.98	Living with the euro
	30.04.98	Strange meeting		
			02.05.98	EMU arrives on time; we must make it work
	04.05.98	The currency of failure		
			05.05.98	Birth pangs of the euro; Chirac's deal is tacky
			21.05.98	Hague's euro dilemma
	22.05.98	Michael Heseltine, extremist		
	26.05.98	Jusy say nej		
	28.05.98	Sir Leon's Britain		
	29.12.98	The truth about EMU		
Euro Launch January 1999	01.01.99	Europe's dream, not ours		
	13.01.99	A federal Europe - it's official		
Danish Referendum September 2000	04.09.00	Common currency		
			10.09.00	A false unity that shackles Blair
			25.09.00	Yes or no; the Danes have done Europe a favour
	23.10.00	Why Tony Blair really won't scrap the pound		

Table 2 *EMU-specific claims*

The Guardian	The Daily Telegraph
"Britain's future must lie in Europe" 9.12.91	"This newspaper believes that the lurch to a single currency is potentially damaging to the cause of European co-operation." 3.12.91
"By opting out of a single European currency (...), Britain will forgo the benefits – while being lumbered with the costs of keeping sterling permanently aligned to a dominant ecu and of convincing he markets that a devaluation is not around the corner." 12.12.91	"There is every reason to believe that the public will continue to see the sense of what is essentially a "wait and see" position by the Government on one of the most far-reaching and hazardous decisions the Community has contemplated in decades." 3.12.91
"If the EC becomes locked into an ecu zone in which the dominating Deutschmark sets the competitive pace, then most of Europe, and not just Britain, will be locked into a slow spiral of decline" 12.12.91	"A POSTPONEMENT of such a critical decision would damage nothing"'.9.12.91
"Britain cannot afford to be left on its own if the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency" 15.12.91	"The uncertainties are legion" 9.12.91
"The implications of the agreement on EMU are huge." 15.12.91	"The path forward is still far from evident." 9.12.91
"As for monetary union, if John Major assumes that all Britain has to do is wait on the sidelines while the venture fails, he is mistaken." 10.12.95	"We do not want closer political or monetary union at present; we have enough to be going on with." 9.12.91
"if Britain were to put its shoulder to the slipping wheel of the EU alongside both countries, then it might be possible to delay the timetable for monetary union" 10.12.95	"we are not merely engaged in protecting our independence, but limiting the injury that could be suffered by others if the Europe of the philosophers runs so far ahead of itself down the federalist road that it falls over its own peoples." 9.12.91
Qualifier: "Of course, the whole idea of a single currency may yet come a cropper. But if it does happen and Britain stays out it is worth remembering that the world won't stand still." 18.12.95	"Given our exposed position on the fringe, the only honest and sensible policy is to continue patiently and forcefully arguing our case, declining to sign up for things we cannot accept at Maastricht - including a single currency and the Social Charter" 9.12.91
"A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe not to stand apart from it. That does not mean becoming a passive partner. But it does mean promoting the benefits of engagement in Europe." 7.12.96	"Mr Major has achieved a notable diplomatic success at Maastricht... It may be argued that the outcome of this EC summit is more important for perils and disasters averted than for the positive benefits it confers." 15.12.91
"a single currency will have immense implications for Britain, whatever the terms on which it is finally agreed and whether or not Britain joins it." 9.12.96	"What we have avoided - immediate bondage in an unhealthy centralisation of monetary, social, defence and foreign policy - is more important than what we have gained." 15.12.91
"...there can be no hiding from the consequences of the single currency, whatever stance Britain takes." 9.12.96	"there may still come a day when Britain faces a straight choice between staying outside a single currency at serious cost to our economy, or opting in at the price of our financial independence." 15.12.91
"It is unquestionably in Britain's interests for the single currency to be the best possible single currency, whether or not we join it." 9.12.96	"the currency must be managed for political rather than economic ends" (for EMU) 2.12.95

"Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain." 14.12.96	"no amount of psychological or economic convergence will make British people happy to accept ecus for their pounds." 9.12.95
"the single currency is a question of unprecedented, magnitude in recent peacetime Europe, as well as one with unpredictable, convulsive implications." 17.4.97	"Monetary union may yet fail. The European Community, it cannot be stressed too often, has more important questions in hand, notably enlargement and the reform of agricultural subsidy. But for Britain, and for the Cabinet, a decision about the single currency cannot be postponed for much longer." 16.12.95
"A single currency to which the big three countries could all belong would be a gain for both Britain and Europe." 27.4.97	"the strains between those who go ahead and those who stay out could tear the single market apart and imperil the whole future of the European Community." 18.12.95
"No economic decision in this parliament is more important than the single currency. It must be thought through long and hard." 27.5.97	"Mr Major's diagnosis of the ills of EMU is correct and the stage has now been reached where he does no one, not even his own quarrelling party, any kindness by trying to disguise it." 18.12.95
"Britain can afford to wait until the single currency has established a bit of a tract record before consigning its economic destiny to it." 10.6.97	"Whether we join a single currency or not, we will, on Mr Major's own analysis, be deeply affected by its consequences." 18.12.95
"Europe's blinkered dash for a single currency, instead of co-ordinating economic policy, is putting the cart before the horse." 10.6.97	"If Mr Major thinks that the timetable for a single currency is not just unrealistic but dangerous, and he clearly does, he must come off the fence and say so" 18.12.95
"Britain may be advised that it can't be at the heart of Europe if it detached from the arteries." 10.6.97	"It is clear, on any proper reading of the Maastricht Treaty, that virtually none of the countries preparing for Economic and Monetary Union will meet the treaty's "convergence criteria" within the timetable." 2.12.96
"The era of "ever closer" institutional union in Europe must close. The new priority must be to deliver popular and practical benefits to Europe's people." 10.6.97	"In the minds of most, EMU is so clearly a political rather than an economic question that they believe the failure to converge is almost irrelevant" 2.12.96
"IT IS surprising how long it has taken for people to realise that even though Britain is not joining European Monetary Union in the first wave, we will nevertheless be faced with the prospect of the euro starting to circulate in Britain of its own accord." 29.4.98	"A single currency built on weak foundations would defeat its own purposes" 2.12.96
"Since the potential risks are so high and because (unlike the rest of the EU) there is no big political momentum in the UK for early entry, Britain's decision to watch and wait is the right one. Let companies and individuals decide to accept the euro or not. The nation can make a collective decision later." 29.4.98	"the release of the Euro design was a moment of the greatest psychological importance." 15.12.96
"The US economy, a single market with a single currency, is Europe's role model. On the evidence of this week's statistics, it seems to have discovered perpetual motion. If emulated in Europe, it could usher in a new golden age." 2.5.98	"it is not in Britain's interests for the Euro to be a disaster." 15.12.96

"Although we have deep worries about the viability of monetary union - both as a project for the 11 founder members and for Britain if she joins later - it is vital to mitigate the chances of failure" 2.5.98	"This newspaper has always warned that, under the pressures of an election campaign, the Cabinet's wait-and-see policy on the **single currency** was unlikely to hold." 17.4.97
"even though we won't know whether EMU will succeed for at least five years because until then Europe's economy will be enjoying a cyclical recovery. But this shouldn't stop us from taking measures now to try to make monetary union work in the long-term." 2.5.98	"the overwhelming majority of Conservatives are now agreed that Britain should not enter a **single currency**." 17.4.97
"Europe has a lot going for it." 2.5.98	"such an important issue transcends party" 17.4.97
"The euro was supposed to take politics out of monetary policy yet its launch has been marred by political fixing of the crudest kind." 2.5.98	"John Major described the **single currency** as the most important peace-time issue this country has faced in living political memory. So it is (or rather it is a part of the most important issue - Britain's relationship with the European Union)." 21.4.97
"If the single currency proves a success, even in the short term, sterling will be forced by the markets to join it." 21.5.98	"the jargon about economic and monetary union, convergence criteria, exchange rate mechanisms and so on concerns the abolition of the pound." 21.4.97
"Forget Gordon Brown's mantra about five tests (…) the euro is not and can never be an 'economic' issue." 25.9.00	"The abolition of the pound means the end of British national independence." 21.4.97
	"It now looks very likely that the euro will be soft rather than hard…. the euro will be constitutionally weak " 28.4.97
	"the Commission's evident readiness to elevate political over economic considerations has robbed the euro's supporters in this country of their last remaining argument. The EU is clearly less interested in monetary stability than in including as many states as possible in the next stage of European construction" 28.4.97
	"other European countries will not meet the Maastricht criteria for monetary union by January 1, 1999." 3.6.97
	"It might be, as EMU nears its critical moment, that the project will be pulled apart by the conflict that always lay at its heart: between the French desire to wrest control of German monetary policy, and the German desire to maintain Teutonic rigour." 3.6.97
	"the launching of the **single currency** is essentially a political undertaking" 24.4.98
	"It is a "myth that the euro is nothing more than a technical instrument for settling accounts. In fact, the **single currency** involves a huge change in the ways in which European states manage their economies."" 24.4.98

	"the **single currency** compels Europe towards full economic and political union." 24.4.98
	"the **single currency**, as now conceived, is both a violation of the Treaty of Maastricht and a hostage to fortune" 30.4.98
	"The euro system is one that can work properly only in good weather. As soon as the European economy hits turbulence, the engines are going to jam." 30.4.98
	"the **single currency** must be born free of political interference" 4.5.98
	"everything touched by Brussels becomes political" 4.5.98
	"Conceived as a political fantasy, it seems destined to end as an economic failure. Britain must stay out of it." 4.5.98
	"there are political, as well as economic, dangers in economic and monetary union - indeed (...) the two are inextricably intertwined" 22.5.98
	"There is no common interest rate that suits all Europe's different economies".22.5.98
	"the **single currency** has always been an explicitly political project." 28.5.98
	"Monetary union is an attempt by the French to create a central European bank by which they can influence German interest rates." 28.5.98
	"It is the economic uncertainty that makes the cession of political authority so risky" 28.5.98
	"The danger of EMU is that, if one nation in the currency zone finds itself suffering economic hardship that it could have avoided with the freedom to manage its own currency, there will be nothing that the politicians will be able to tell their angry electors." 28.5.98
	"Most of us, apparently, assume that our country will be forced by events to join Economic and Monetary Union in the end, but we do not care for it." 29.12.98
	"The euro is an intrusion on our national life that we would rather not have to confront." 29.12.98
	"the **single currency** has serious implications for national sovereignty" 29.12.98
	"EMU has been consciously developed by Europe's political elites as an instrument for achieving full economic and political union, and will therefore lead necessarily to the evisceration of Parliament"

	29.12.98
	“there is nothing inconsistent about opposing the **single currency**, while remaining within the EU” 4.09.00
	“As Lord Owen points out: "Britain has the constitutional right and the economic and political clout to stay in the EU but say 'no' to the euro."” 4.09.00

Table 3 Descriptions of EMU

The Guardian	The Daily Telegraph
"one, a German thing because the Germany economy dominates, is the move towards a single currency" (Maastricht)	"the lurch to a single currency is potentially damaging to the cause of European co-operation" (Maastricht)
"the EMU model preoccupied by the control of inflation (...) has delivered great prosperity and great social responsibility" (Maastricht)	"the uncertainties are legion" (Maastricht)
"the implications of the agreement on EMU are huge" (Maastricht)	"a remarkably ambitious and politically precarious currency reform" (Maastricht)
"the Maastricht agreement is full of ambiguity and uncertainty" (Maastricht)	"it is like extending the spire of a church whose buttresses are in danger of sinking" (Maastricht)
"the Government dislikes monetary union arguing that it is the slippery slide to federalism" (Maastricht)	"the entire process is out of kilter" (Maastricht)
"the Maastricht timetable is now crushingly tight" (Madrid)	"(running) down the federalist road" (Maastricht)
"Britain would have a second currency – a kind of monetary Esperanto" (Madrid)	"heaping the Ossa of over-rigid monetary policy on the Pelion of an unnatural degree of political integration" (Maastricht)
"the euro, adopted by leading countries would be an altogether more serious animal" (Madrid)	"bondage in an unhealthy centralisation of monetary, social, defence and foreign policy" (Maastricht)
"a decision will be taken which, it can truthfully be claimed, will change the face of Europe" (Dublin)	Timetable for monetary union is "rigid" (Maastricht)
"that fateful project" (Dublin)	A "mess" (Maastricht)
"the decision goes to the heart of the European identity" (Dublin)	A "disaster" (Maastricht)
"a single currency will have immense implications for Britain, whatever the terms on which it is finally agreed and whether or not Britain joins it" (Dublin)	"The currency must be managed for political rather than economic ends" (Madrid)
"there can be no hiding from the consequences of the single currency, whatever stance Britain takes" (Dublin)	"the cornerstone of a federal Europe" (Madrid)
"a single currency is in principle a desirable thing for Britain in Europe"	"the headlong rush to federalism" (Madrid)
The "complex and hugely important question of the single currency" (Dublin)	"the federal menace" (Madrid)
"the tortuous road to monetary union for Europe" (Dublin)	"the ratchet of federalism" (Madrid)
"the euro is no longer a figment of the imagination: now, for the first time, there is something to see" (Dublin)	"scrapping the national currencies" (Madrid)
"the member states of a united Europe will never again go to war with each other and will instead bind themselves together in peace by sharing the most powerful of all social cements – a common currency". (Dublin)	"the Euro juggernaut" (Madrid)
"the single currency is a question of unprecedented magnitude in recent peacetime Europe, as well as one with unpredictable, convulsive implications" (Election 97)	EMU is "clearly a political rather than an economic question" (Dublin)
"No economic decision in this parliament is more important than the single currency. It must be thought through long and hard." (Election 97)	A "European dream" (Dublin)
"the potential risks are high" (Euro-11 decision)	A "sinking ship" (Dublin)
"EMU candidates had to don fiscal straitjackets to	A "housewife's headache" (Dublin)

qualify for the single currency" (Euro-11 decision)	
"The single currency (...) is irreversible" (Euro-11 decision)	"all the quaintness of a rain dance and about the same potency" (citing John Major) (Dublin)
"it is a matter of national destiny" (Danish)	"ill-starred plan" (Dublin)
	"hideous new banknote" (Dublin)
	"Europe's new funny money" (Dublin)
	"EMU is the most important issue to face this country since the war" (Election 97)
	The issue "transcends party" (Election 97)
	"John Major described the single currency as the most important peace-time issue this country has faced in living political memory" (Election 97)
	"the jargon about economic and monetary union, convergence criteria, exchange rate mechanisms and so on concerns the abolition of the pound" (Election 97)
	"The abolition of the pound means the end of British national independence." (Election 97)
	"it now looks very likely that the euro will be soft rather than hard" (Election 97)
	"the euro will be constitutionally weak" (Election 97)
	"we now have the likelihood of an inflationary "camembert" currency" (Amsterdam)
	"an inflationary disaster" (Amsterdam)
	"the single currency is essentially a political undertaking" (Euro-11 Decision)
	It is a "myth that the euro is nothing more than a technical instrument for settling accounts. In fact the single currency involves huge change in the ways in which European states managed their economies." (Euro-11 Decision)
	"the single currency compels Europe towards full economic and political union"
	"the single currency, as now conceived, is both a violation of the Treaty of Maastricht and a hostage to fortune" (Euro-11 Decision)
	It means that "some states will be trapped in a fiscal straitjacket" (Euro-11 Decision)
	"conceived as a political fantasy, it seems destined to end as an economic failure" (Euro-11 Decision)
	"there are political, as well as economic, dangers in economic and monetary union" (Euro-11 Decision)
	"the single currency has always been an explicitly political project." (Euro-11 Decision)
	"Monetary union is an attempt by the French to create a central European bank by which they can influence German interest rates" (Euro-11 Decision)
	"risky" (Euro-11 Decision)
	"the euro is an intrusion on our national life that we would rather not have to confront" (Euro Launch)
	"the single currency has serious implications for national sovereignty" (Euro Launch)
	"EMU has been consciously developed by Europe's political elites as an instrument for achieving full economic and political union" (Euro Launch)

Table 4 *Text coded as EMU-relevant evidence from the leading articles (The Guardian/ Observer)*

No.	Positive (pro-EMU)	Negative (anti-EMU)
1	The EMU model preoccupied by the control of inflation - because that is Germany's black hole of history - has delivered great prosperity and great social responsibility (otherwise known as self-discipline). (Maastricht)	Whether it can do that for either the Community we have, or the wider Community that beckons, is beyond firm prediction. Reactions within nations that are not, and cannot be, Germany may tear it apart: with a cost that can be reckoned. (Maastricht)
2	The benefits forgone include not just the savings from not having to buy currencies, but also the prospect of having the new European Central Bank located in Britain, of which there is now no chance. (Maastricht)	At present countries with poor productivity and high inflation may, under the existing Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), devalue their currency to regain competitiveness. This will no longer be possible once there is a single currency. (Maastricht)
3	To the extent that opting out of a single currency agreement reflects doubts about our commitment to full integration, it may also act as a deterrent for the considerable overseas investment which has been attracted to the UK on the assumption that here was a secure manufacturing base for Europe. (Maastricht)	Countries will either have to improve their economic performance or become relatively poor regions within the large single market. (Maastricht)
4	Yet the real argument against hesitation, as everyone knows, stems from the perceived need for a European political order which binds and is built around Germany and (less certainly) France. (Madrid)	In theory, they can compensated by transfers from central Community funds, but the Brussels budget would have to be several times bigger than it is for the assistance to make much impact. Enlarging the budget is on no one's political agenda and, given the urgent cries for help from East Europe and the ex-Soviet Union, is not likely to be. (Maastricht)
5	How pleasant not to have to change pounds into francs into lira and back again! (Madrid)	He has been right to resist provocative and potentially destabilising moves towards an unrealistic level of political unification. And to stand tough in negotiations over some of these matters. (Dublin)
6	Or, less self-interestedly, they see a single currency as likely to end speculation and ease the task of business. (Madrid)	If it is fudged, then the European Union will be forced to bail out any nations which cannot stand the deflationary pace. (Dublin)
7	If that happens then UK savings institutions, keen to expand in the single market opened up by currency union, are bound to promote savings accounts denominated in the euro to anyone in Europe or Britain who wants them. Lots of people in Britain may want to put their savings into a "strong" euro account rather than a devaluation-prone pound. (Madrid)	There have to be some penalties but if the original German plan of automatic fines running into billions of pounds on recalcitrant countries had been accepted, it would have risked a massive social backlash in the guilty countries. (Dublin)
8	But if the Abbey National or Halifax were to offer savings accounts they would almost certainly have a plastic card attached to them. This would make it easier - and cheaper - to make payments when going to Europe on business or for a holiday. (Madrid)	The problem is that if one or more countries decide to let their deficits rise to 4 or 5 per cent of GDP then the burden of coping with it would fall on other countries who would either have to transfer resources (cash) or suffer higher interest rates. (Dublin)
9	Then, observing the emergence of a secondary currency in Britain, Sainsburys or Marks & Spencer may introduce credit or bank cards denominated in euros to be used at check-out points. Other retailers would then want to get in on the act. (Madrid)	To impose fixed fines on countries with heavy deficits by forcing them to hand over more money is a bit like treating haemophilia with bloodletting. (Dublin)
10	It would coincide with interesting new developments in digital technology (like electronic purses able to carry a stock of digital money convertible into other currencies) which by themselves could enable a common European currency to be introduced to Britain by market forces rather than the politicians. (Madrid)	the single currency is a question of unprecedented, magnitude in recent peacetime Europe, as well as one with unpredictable, convulsive implications. (Election 97)
11	...corporations will almost certainly adopt the new Euro-currency in a full-blooded way from the start. Most of their new loans are expected to be denominated in euros (just as they adopted the ecu a few years ago until it became obvious it wasn't going to be the common currency). (Madrid)	even a sound single currency must not be allowed to imply further centralisations, especially of taxation and public expenditure policy, massive issues which must not be allowed to creep on to the European agenda and against which a line must be drawn. (Election 97)
12	They will pay for their European imports in euros and may eventually warm to the idea of paying salaries in euros if	this step, if ever taken, would have diminishing implications for the sovereignty of any British parliament

	there is a demand for it. (Madrid)	and any British government. (Election 97)
13	If farmers receive their subsidies in euros they may well try to pay some of their bills that way as well. (Madrid)	With a hugely volatile pound and an economy which in terms of the business cycle, is several years ahead of the rest of the EU – Tony Blair should be grateful he is watching all this from the sidelines. (Election 97)
14	Seventeen years of British negativism have not merely exhausted Britain's credit in the councils of Europe. They have also helped to create the current vogue in Germany and elsewhere for the more majoritarian, centralist Europeanism which is embodied in the intergovernmental conference proposals which will be discussed at Dublin next week. British abstentionism has promoted what it was intended to prevent. (Dublin)	Not to mention the millennium bug which may scupper the whole operation anyway – (Election 97)
15	If it is a strong currency and Britain stays out, then sterling will be sucked into its orbit. (Dublin)	(There's a danger of) Europe being entrapped by unbendable fiscal constraints bearing little relation to the real world: it may even make monetary union (...) a project that ordinary people could relate to. (Election 97)
16	If it is weak and Britain stays out, then sterling will become overvalued and exports will be hit hard. (Dublin)	One of the serious potential obstacles hasn't yet been seriously considered by governments. It is the twin pressures of changing computer systems to cope with monetary union while simultaneously removing the causes of the "millennium bomb" (arising from the inability of computers with two-digit configurations to know what the date will be at the start of the new century). (Amsterdam)
17	a single currency is in principle a desirable thing for Britain in Europe because of its effect on exchange rate instability, transaction costs, interest rates and - this is a more recent discovery - because of its disciplinary effect on the public finances of other European nations. (Dublin)	One practical factor which will slow the march of the euro is that scarce computer staff will be so tied up with trying to solve the millennium bug that they may not have the resources to convert other systems to the euro. (Euro-11 Decision)
18	that a single currency must work as well as possible, whether or not Britain decides to join it, because a European single currency will profoundly affect our economic and monetary circumstances, whatever our relationship to it. (Dublin)	there is a potentially lethal cost if Britain joined a monetary union which went wrong because (say) European interest rates had to be kept high to stop inflation in France and Germany while the UK economy needed low interest rates to pull it out of recession and high unemployment. (Euro-11 Decision)
19	Britain must take an active and positive part in the negotiations which lead up to any decision because to do otherwise is to renounce control over our own affairs. (Dublin)	The head of the Federal Reserve has a statutory duty not only to keep inflation down but to maintain the highest level of growth consistent with that inflation target. It is this second objective (which EMU doesn't have despite French pressure for it) that has persuaded Alan Greenspan, the revered head of the Fed, to resist market pressures to raise interest rates at the first sign of monetary overheating. So far that has proved very successful. (Euro-11 Decision)
20	to Europhiles the images are on a different plane: they are windows of opportunity, bridges of reconciliation and gateways to a new age in which the member states of a united Europe will never again go to war with each other and will instead bind themselves together in peace by sharing that most powerful of all social cements - a common currency. (Dublin)	Second, Europe must realise that one of the reasons why the United States works as a single currency area (apart from having a single language) is that it has very flexible labour markets. (Euro-11 Decision)
21	People will start to take out euro-denominated plastic cards when they visit Europe: some will want euro-savings accounts: others will want their mortgages backed by the "strong" euro - which may lead to some salaries being paid in euros in order to avoid having to repay a mortgage in a strong currency (the euro) out of wages paid in what might be a depreciating one (sterling). (Dublin)	When Boeing sheds thousands of workers, they jump into their cars to work elsewhere. That is not possible in Europe where technical and cultural barriers prevent people from finding jobs readily in other countries. (Euro-11 Decision)
22	Companies like BMW which by then will be paying all their Continental subsidiaries in euros will probably be only too happy to offer similar facilities to its Rover employees in Britain. (Dublin)	America is also able to allocate extra money to distressed parts of the country suffering disproportionate unemployment on a scale that a united Europe is unlikely to match. (Euro-11 Decision)
23	By that time shops like Tesco and Sainsbury - thanks to advances in electronic money - will be able to accept payments in either currency. (Dublin)	The euro was supposed to take politics out of monetary policy yet its launch has been marred by political fixing of the crudest kind. If this is what a European Central Bank

		freed from political interference is, then goodness knows what an interventionist model would look like.
24	(There are) huge potential advantages of a single European currency in terms of living standards, fiscal stability and economic growth. (Election 97)	The City was expecting investors to sell euro-currencies yesterday and move into the pound or the dollar on the grounds that political interference in ECB's affairs was bound to make Europe's new currency weaker than the Deutschmark on which it has been modelled. But these fears were offset by the prospect that German interest rates may rise to prove that the concept of sound money isn't being swept aside. (Euro-11 Decision)
25	(John Major) was right to compel those who oppose him to face up to the risks which British exclusion from the project may entail. (Election 97)	(some of) the central problems of the ECB: like giving it a remit compelling it to take account of unemployment as well as inflation, and making it politically accountable to European electors. The fact that ECB tenure has been fixed for the next 12 years only underlines the scale of the problem. (Euro-11 Decision)
26	You wouldn't think from all the talk of Euro-sclerosis that the EU as an economic unit has a trade surplus with the rest of the world that improved every year from 1993 to 1996 when it was equivalent to 1.8 per cent of the entire GDP of the EU. (Amsterdam)	The single currency will happen on January 1 and is irreversible. William Hague believes it will rapidly lead to supranational control over taxation and spending, en route to the political union which is the true driving force behind the rush to EMU.
27	Nor would you think from all the talk of globalisation and losing out to Asian markets that Europe is around 90 per cent self-sufficient in what it produces. By and large EU countries export to, and import from, each other. (Amsterdam)	Hague's fierce rhetoric is undercut by his caution. That does not give his critics the right to dismiss his critique of Europe's ponderous economic and political characteristics, nor the deflationary impact euro and its "one size fits all" interest-rate policy could have on jobs in many parts of the union. (Euro-11 Decision)
28	Put these two facts together and you get a strong argument for an EU-wide expansion – perhaps through co-ordinated tax changes as well as jointly lowering interest rates – to boost employment without risking running into a major balance of payments crisis. (Amsterdam)	The foundations of the European house were neglected by the architects. It has to have people's adherence, heart and mind. And people live still inside nation states with all their dense (and sometimes oppressive) allegiances, histories and predilections. (Danish)
29	Big companies and financial institutions are already swinging over to the euro in a big way out of self-interest. (Euro-11 Decision)	But in what member state are people not now confused, if not downright hostile? (Danish)
30	Pilkington, the glass company, told MPs it was converting all its systems to using the euro because it would eliminate differences in production costs in different European plants. (Euro-11 Decision)	
31	ICI said that euro cash would spread throughout the economy and Siemens added that even if Britain did not join the single currency, "the euro will come through the back door" because companies and people who are paid in euros will want to spend them in the UK. (Euro-11 Decision)	
32	Sainsbury's says that just as it accepts Irish Punts in its stores in Northern Ireland, so it will accept all types of European payments from 2002 (when euro notes and coins start to circulate). (Euro-11 Decision)	
33	Suddenly, there's no need to cash surplus foreign currency when you return from that European holiday. (Euro-11 Decision)	
34	Members of the public will find it in their self-interest to think in terms of the euro because it will enable them to locate places in Europe where prices (henceforth denominated in the same currency) are cheaper. (Euro-11 Decision)	
35	MPs were right to point out that there could be a cost to not joining the euro if things go wrong for us (as much as 1 per cent of GDP by 2005) and that a true evaluation of the "success" of monetary union will take at least five years because of the need to study the effects over a full business cycle. (Euro-11 Decision)	

36	The US economy, a single market with a single currency, is Europe's role model. On the evidence of this week's statistics, it seems to have discovered perpetual motion. If emulated in Europe, it could usher in a new golden age. (Euro-11 Decision)	
37	The American economy, fuelled by its commanding lead in the information technology revolution, is now in its seventh successive year of inflationless growth. (Euro-11 Decision)	
38	Even if Britain doesn't join EMU, she will have to track the Maastricht criteria under pain of being punished by the money markets for deviation. If Britain eventually does join then the whole economic strategy will have to shift from monetary policy (solely the job of the central bank) to fiscal policy. That means that the UK will have to maintain a borrowing requirement much less than the Maastricht ceiling (3 per cent of GDP) in order to have the flexibility to cut taxes or increase spending when the UK economy gets out of sync with the rest of Europe. (Euro-11 Decision)	
40	The 11 candidates for EMU have a combined GDP of almost 80 per cent of the US and a balance of payments surplus where America has a deficit. At the moment it looks like a second division competitor to the US. Maybe the biggest thing going for EMU is the unexpected. (Euro-11 Decision)	
41	A little over five years ago people were despairing of America which seemed to be falling seriously behind Japan in the technology race. But the US fought back and now looks unreachable. (Euro-11 Decision)	
42	For some, for example Italians and Germans, Europe has been a kind of better self; national leaders have advanced the European cause with, often, popular acclaim. (Danish)	

Table 5 *Text coded as EMU-relevant evidence from the leading articles (The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph)*

No.	Positive (pro-EMU)	Negative (anti-EMU)
1		there is room for a degree of confusion besides which the transaction costs, which at present burden the conversions between different European currencies, will seem footling. (Maastricht)
2		The Continental passenger arriving at Heathrow will be able to pay for his London taxi with pictures of 11 foreigners including, let us imagine, Aristotle, Herge, Rembrandt, Eamon de Valera, Caruso, Colette, and whoever may be Luxembourg's most famous son or daughter. (Maastricht)
3		The matter may even be complicated further by the fact that regions of countries, claiming for themselves Scotland's ancient right to print its own notes, will celebrate the heroes of Catalonia, Languedoc or Schleswig-Holstein. This cultural diversity, one must suspect, will prove too much for the traditionally uncertain temper of the London cabby. (Maastricht)
4		Dr Klaus is right: premature decisions are worse than decisions postponed; in the latter case at least, there is more evidence to go on. (Maastricht)
5		The uncertainties are legion - the possibility of a coup in the Soviet Union being only one. (Maastricht)
6		An even greater irony is that an economic Community which has proved itself only too adept at shuffling off necessary action should be stampeding into structural reforms whose wisdom is dubious and over which there is no substantial urgency. (Maastricht)
7		A Community which cannot agree on subsidies for suckler cows or sheep wants to superimpose on the chaos of its farming policies a remarkably ambitious and politically precarious currency reform. (Maastricht)
8		the entire process is out of kilter. No one in their right mind would have chosen to start from here. (Maastricht)
9		we are not merely engaged in protecting our independence, but limiting the injury that could be suffered by others if the Europe of the philosophers runs so far ahead of itself down the federalist road that it falls over its own peoples. (Maastricht)
10		What we have avoided - immediate bondage in an unhealthy centralisation of monetary, social, defence and foreign policy - is more important than what we have gained. (Maastricht)
11		the country's political elite sticks doggedly to policies which have little to do with domestic economic requirements and everything to do with their determination to dump the franc and join a single European currency in 1999. (Madrid)
12		the currency must be managed for political rather than economic ends. (Madrid)
13		This policy means cutting borrowing to meet criteria laid down by the Maastricht Treaty, and maintaining an overvalued currency (which does much to keep unemployment at 11.5 per cent compared with Britain's 8.1 per cent). (Madrid)
14		The franc is vulnerable, but will doubtless be given

		sufficient support, if necessary, by the Bundesbank, for Germany knows that without France, the single currency is a dead letter. (Madrid)
15		In the coming months and years, British taxpayers' money will be spent on a campaign of proselytisation to win round the unconvinced and the apathetic. (Madrid)
16		The Brussels commission will proceed as if the social and economic problems caused by Maastricht's convergence criteria did not exist. (Madrid)
17		The European Community, it cannot be stressed too often, has more important questions in hand, notably enlargement and the reform of agricultural subsidy. But for Britain, and for the Cabinet, a decision about the single currency cannot be postponed for much longer. (Madrid)
18		The strains of a single currency would stretch the community's already taut budget to breaking point. (Madrid)
19		Its introduction could sabotage the prospects of those Eastern European countries waiting to join the EC. (Madrid)
20		Above all, and of most interest to ourselves, how would those who stay outside a single currency protect their interests vis-a-vis those who sign up? (Madrid)
21		It is clear, on any proper reading of the Maastricht Treaty, that virtually none of the countries preparing for Economic and Monetary Union will meet the treaty's "convergence criteria" within the timetable. (Dublin)
22		In some cases - that of Italy, for example - there is not the faintest hope of getting anywhere near the targets. (Dublin)
23		In the minds of most, EMU is so clearly a political rather than an economic question that they believe the failure to converge is almost irrelevant: the project must go forward. (Dublin)
24		The famous "opt-out" from EMU which Mr Major secured at Maastricht was designed for just such an eventuality as this, to ensure that this country was not irretrievably committed to a project whose success was uncertain. (Dublin)
25		Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, has said all along that convergence must really take place. (Dublin)
26		A single currency built on weak foundations would defeat its own purposes (Dublin)
27		It is not Conservative Party opinion: the number of constituency associations which would vote for EMU tomorrow could be counted on the fingers of one hand. (Dublin)
28		It is not business or industry, although some of the larger and more corporatist firms like the idea of a single currency. (Dublin)
29		It is not even backbench Tory opinion in the Commons: the number of irreconcilable Euro-enthusiasts hardly reaches double figures. (Dublin)
30		The small band of persistent sceptics such as Peter Lilley and Michael Howard has been joined by the broader, unideological mass - people like the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, and the Welsh Secretary, William Hague. (Dublin)

31		Nor is it reasonable to keep businessmen guessing about whether or not they will have to face the costs of transition. (Dublin)
32		for instance, that the opt-out remains alive, but that the fudging of the convergence criteria makes it unlikely that a Tory government could recommend the project (Dublin)
33		Mr Major emphasised yesterday that there was no question of Britain joining stage three of Economic and Monetary Union if the criteria were fudged (Dublin)
34		They can see the banknote which has all but destroyed the Conservative Party, and may soon replace the pound. (Dublin)
35		As Peter Shore said in the Commons debate on Europe last week, our freedom to borrow and tax will be severely constrained by involvement in EMU. (Dublin)
36		"Are we really saying," the veteran Labour sceptic asked, "that we are no better than a rate-capped local authority? Do we really think that we do not have the good sense to make the correct economic judgment for our people and our nation year by year?" (Dublin)
37	Rebuttal: In the same debate Kenneth Clarke defended the Maastricht criteria on the grounds that "they take as their underlying principles our own guiding principles on macro-economic policy". (Dublin)	But why, then, do we need the help of supranational institutions to enact our own home-grown principles? (Dublin)
38		The economies, interests and prejudices - admirable and not - of the EU's 370 million people in 15 countries, defy circumscription by the architects of Europe's new funny money. (Dublin)
40		There is such a thing as a European culture, but its political expression is not robust enough to subsume distinctive national characteristics (Dublin)
41		If Europe were genuinely united, it should be possible for the various denominations of banknote to feature, say, Charlemagne, Pope Innocent III or Martin Luther. (Dublin)
42		For years, the issue of "Europe" has been rendered almost unintelligible by the mumbo-jumbo used by its architects, but it has gradually become clear to people that the jargon about economic and monetary union, convergence criteria, exchange rate mechanisms and so on concerns the abolition of the pound. (Election 97)
43		If it turns out that our true government is located elsewhere - in Brussels or Frankfurt - what is a British general election for? (Election 97)
44		Although it suits the Labour Party to express a certain scepticism, the New Labour heart (if there is such a thing) is with Brussels, and Brussels is with New Labour. There is no Euro-sceptic reason for voting Labour. (Election 97)
45		If Paul Sykes, the millionaire philanthropist, is right, there are fewer than 30 Tory candidates in winnable seats who will not declare their opposition to a **single currency** and take Mr Sykes's money for their campaigns. (Election 97)
46		It is now clear that the French have won the argument: the continuing slide of the mark against both sterling and the dollar is evidence that the markets, at least, are in no doubt that the euro will be constitutionally weak. (Election 97)
47		The Commission's interim ruling is, in these terms, remarkably convenient: five countries were judged likely to have deficits of exactly three per cent of GDP - the

		figure needed to qualify for EMU.
48		The Italian government, whose deficit was forecast at 3.2 per cent, is understandably outraged: it has come from much further behind than other members, and independent studies predict that Spain, France and Germany itself will also have excessive deficits in 1997. (Election 97)
49		the Commission's evident readiness to elevate political over economic considerations has robbed the euro's supporters in this country of their last remaining argument. The EU is clearly less interested in monetary stability than in including as many states as possible in the next stage of European construction. (Election 97)
50		other European countries will not meet the Maastricht criteria for monetary union by January 1, 1999. (Amsterdam)
51		Most forecasters believe France and Germany will be between half and one percentage point adrift on the key three per cent budget deficit criterion; and the French deficit could be as much as 4.5 per cent of GDP, according to a leaked French government memo. (Amsterdam)
52		It is also true that the French have just elected a government which seems likely to make matters worse. Lionel Jospin's entire appeal to the electorate was that he would scrap the austerity of "Maastricht" without scrapping the treaty itself. (Amsterdam)
53		Helmut Kohl and Theo Waigel, his finance minister, know that the euro must be shown to be as solid, as non-inflationary, as bomb-proof, as the Deutschemark: otherwise they could face a revolt from a German public whose suspicions have already been rightly excited by the attempt to revalue the Bundesbank's bullion. (Amsterdam)
54		It might be, as EMU nears its critical moment, that the project will be pulled apart by the conflict that always lay at its heart: between the French desire to wrest control of German monetary policy, and the German desire to maintain Teutonic rigour. (Amsterdam)
55		we now have the likelihood of an inflationary "camembert" currency, as France and Germany ignore the other's blemishes, turn off the light, and leap into bed. Many Labour MPs will be strongly tempted by the "euro for growth". And yet it is the Government's official policy, correctly, that EMU cannot be fudged. Will Mr Blair use Britain's voice and veto to insist that the treaty's criteria be observed? Or will he allow Europe to drift to an inflationary disaster? That may be the first big test of his statesmanship. (Amsterdam)
56		France's socialist government was elected only two weeks ago on a specific promise not to proceed with monetary union if doing so would mean spending cuts and job losses. (Amsterdam)
57		A government which runs an excessive deficit will be faced with a fine of between 0.2 per cent and 0.5 per cent of its GDP for each year that it fails to take remedial action. (Amsterdam)
58		All that the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, has won is a banal statement to the effect that the EU recognises the importance of jobs. (Amsterdam)
59		The skirmish over the stability pact is the latest engagement in a quiet but fierce conflict between France and Germany over Europe's money. (Amsterdam)
60		For decades the French have sought to loosen the Bundesbank's tight monetary policy, primarily by binding Germany into a monetary union with relatively inflation-prone Latin countries. (Amsterdam)
61		The Germans, on the other hand, have been reluctant to

		dilute the strength of the mark - as have the other members of the D-mark bloc. (Amsterdam)
62		So does the deal on the stability pact mean that the euro will be a hard currency after all? No. Yesterday's decision must be set against a series of signals from the EU and national governments that the Maastricht criteria will not be rigidly interpreted. (Amsterdam)
63		Despite a slight rise in the value of the mark yesterday, the money markets seem to have no doubt that the euro will be inflationary. (Amsterdam)
64		the launching of the **single currency** is essentially a political undertaking (Euro-11 Decision)
65		the myth that the euro is nothing more than a technical instrument for settling accounts. In fact, the **single currency** involves a huge change in the ways in which European states manage their economies. (Euro-11 Decision)
66		Last year's Stability Pact, which imposed spending restraints on profligate governments, has already set the precedent for centralised EU control of budgetary and tax policy. (Euro-11 Decision)
67		there will be intrusions into the ways in which member states can run their pension systems. (Euro-11 Decision)
68		the **single currency** compels Europe towards full economic and political union. (Euro-11 Decision)
69		The French know that the ECB is going to be a work in progress, shaped by events, and they are determined to ensure that it conducts its affairs in their interest. (Euro-11 Decision)
70		Few member states have met the "convergence criteria" laid down in the treaty as necessary conditions for sustainable monetary union. (Euro-11 Decision)
71		the **single currency**, as now conceived, is both a violation of the Treaty of Maastricht and a hostage to fortune. (Euro-11 Decision)
72		Far from reducing their national debts to 60 per cent of GDP, the majority have allowed them to rise over the past seven years by an average of 15 per cent. (Euro-11 Decision)
73		The debts of Italy and Belgium are over twice the limit. (Euro-11 Decision)
74		Several countries have engaged in flagrant trickery to keep their annual budget deficits below the ceiling of three per cent of GDP, but they have been allowed to get away with it. (Euro-11 Decision)
75		After ceding control over interest rates to the ECB, they will find they cannot offset the effects of recession by cutting taxes or increasing expenditure. (Euro-11 Decision)
76		This does not mean that the euro will collapse under a mountain of debt, of course, but it does mean that some states will be trapped in a fiscal straitjacket. (Euro-11 Decision)
77		The euro system is one that can work properly only in good weather. As soon as the European economy hits turbulence, the engines are going to jam. (Euro-11 Decision)
78		Even its most fervent supporters agree the **single currency** must be born free of political interference. (Euro-11 Decision)

79		The politicians who conceived it promised to allow their fledgling currency to be adopted by independent foster parents at the European Central Bank. (Euro-11 Decision)
80		Only by making such a commitment were they able to convince the markets the euro would not be undermined by inflation. (Euro-11 Decision)
81		events at this weekend's summit in Brussels have demonstrated that Europe's leaders are unwilling and unable to keep their word. (Euro-11 Decision)
82		everything touched by Brussels becomes political. (Euro-11 Decision)
83		It was clearly spelt out that the governor of the central bank would serve for an eight-year term; a period that, it was felt, would insulate the incumbent from political pressures. (Euro-11 Decision)
84		Many of the 11 countries which agreed this weekend to merge their currencies have met the convergence criteria for national debt and government borrowing only by dint of the most flagrant fiscal fiddles. (Euro-11 Decision)
85		The most likely outcome is that this further evidence of political interference will undermine confidence in the euro. (Euro-11 Decision)
86		Today, 10,000 City workers wait at their desks on a Bank Holiday, preparing to deal with the fallout from this latest fudge. (Euro-11 Decision)
87		The markets will sell marks and francs, and buy pounds and dollars. (Euro-11 Decision)
88		A stronger pound will make life even more difficult for our beleaguered exporters. (Euro-11 Decision)
89		Conceived as a political fantasy, it seems destined to end as an economic failure. (Euro-11 Decision)
90		There is no common interest rate that suits all Europe's different economies. (Euro-11 Decision)
91		there are political, as well as economic, dangers in economic and monetary union - indeed, that the two are inextricably intertwined. (Euro-11 Decision)
92		Therefore a country that joins the **single currency** could find, if its employment was high, that rates rose. (Euro-11 Decision)
93		Under these circumstances, Mr Hague warned, there could be civil unrest. (Euro-11 Decision)
94		Mr Hague's, Lord Hurd said that "a European monetary policy which produced . . . barricades in the streets of Paris, Naples, or Leipzig would not be able to shelter behind the text of a treaty or a stability pact". (Euro-11 Decision)
95		THE forces of federalism are fighting back. As soon as William Hague ended the eight-year fudge of the Tory line on EMU, retaliation was inevitable. (Euro-11 Decision)
96		He pretends that the plan is a mechanical "completion of the single market", whereas the **single currency** has always been an explicitly political project. (Euro-11 Decision)
97		Monetary union is an attempt by the French to create a central European bank by which they can influence German interest rates. (Euro-11 Decision)
98		British membership would remove the ability of a British government to manage the economy in the national interest. (Euro-11 Decision)

99		As Sir Leon says himself, in words that might have been lifted from Mr Hague's speech, "there is no doubt in my mind that EMU will not be sustainable without significant further structural reforms in Europe's labour and product markets". (Euro-11 Decision)
100		During his time in the Brussels Commission, his colleagues have promulgated a spate of measures making EU labour markets less flexible, less capable of absorbing the shock of a one-size-fits-all monetary policy. (Euro-11 Decision)
101		The danger of EMU is that, if one nation in the currency zone finds itself suffering economic hardship that it could have avoided with the freedom to manage its own currency, there will be nothing that the politicians will be able to tell their angry electors. (Euro-11 Decision)
102		To say that Britain must join, because otherwise she will be "left out", is not to show any particular confidence in EMU, but a lack of confidence in Britain. Sir Leon should admit it: he is a Brito-sceptic. (Euro-11 Decision)
103		there is nothing inconsistent about opposing the **single currency**, while remaining within the EU. (Euro Launch)
104		THE Government faces an uphill task persuading the public to vote for abolition of the pound in a future referendum. (Euro Launch)
105		Most of us, apparently, assume that our country will be forced by events to join Economic and Monetary Union in the end, but we do not care for it. (Euro Launch)
106		But his Government faces the likelihood that this ambivalence will remain unchanged, at best, for months or years to come. (Euro Launch)
107		Britons will not be able to see, feel or spend the new currency on trips to the Continent. (Euro Launch)
108		The euro will merely be an invisible accounting unit for bonds, stocks and bank accounts until 2002. (Euro Launch)
109		The European Central Bank has set itself an ambitious target of 4.5 per cent annual growth in the broad money supply, a target that it can scarcely ignore after telling the international markets that this would be the guiding light of monetary policy. (Euro Launch)
110		Further interest rate cuts in the first half of next year are out of the question. (Euro Launch)
111		Indeed, the ECB may be compelled to raise rates to restrain monetary expansion that is already pushing through the limits. (Euro Launch)
112		The risk is that the euro will appreciate rapidly, becoming seriously overvalued during the course of 1999. (Euro Launch)
113		The effect will be compounded by huge portfolio shifts from US dollars into euros by Asian central banks and international investors. (Euro Launch)
114		Economic growth has already stalled in Germany and Italy. (Euro Launch)
115		While there is little risk of outright recession, the core EMU states face a period of protracted stagnation. (Euro Launch)
116		Unemployment will not come down significantly from its double-digit levels in Germany, France and Italy. (Euro Launch)
117		It could start creeping back up again. (Euro Launch)

118		The current ceasefire between Europe's socialist governments - which were not in power when the Maastricht rules were written - and the unelected, unaccountable and ultra-orthodox bankers in Frankfurt is certain to give way to a raging battle for control of economic policy. (Euro Launch)
119		Only a third of voters are aware that the **single currency** has serious implications for national sovereignty. In other words, they do not yet realise that EMU has been consciously developed by Europe's political elites as an instrument for achieving full economic and political union, and will therefore lead necessarily to the evisceration of Parliament. (Euro Launch)
120		They do not know this because the debate has been conducted in such a dishonest manner in this country, as if the purpose of the euro were lower "transaction costs" or exchange rate stability. (Euro Launch)
121		In Britain, unlike in Europe, the anti-EMU case will be made by influential businessmen and the dominant wing of a major political party. (Euro Launch)
122		The public clearly believes that the Government has already made its decision to join EMU, and there is perceptible irritation that ministers are not coming clean on the issue. (Danish)
123		In fact, many - probably the majority - of those opposed to monetary union do not necessarily wish to withdraw from the EU. (Danish)
124		As Lord Owen points out: "Britain has the constitutional right and the economic and political clout to stay in the EU but say 'no' to the euro." (Danish)

APPENDIX C

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P1471 April/May 1995

BRITAIN IN EUROPE

SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

O.U.O
Ser. No. 301-04
Card 03 305-06

INTERVIEWER: ENTER SERIAL NUMBER:	☐☐☐☐☐

To selected respondent:

The questions inside are about your views on Britain's place in Europe.

We would like you to answer each question simply by placing a tick (✓) in one box for each question. The questionnaire should not take very long to complete, and we hope that you will find it interesting and enjoyable. The answers you give will be treated as confidential and anonymous.

Please return the questionnaire to the interviewer when you have finished.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

Social and Community Planning Research is an independent social research institute registered as a charitable trust. Its projects are funded by government departments, local authorities, universities and foundations to provide information on social issues in Britain.

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Q.1 Firstly, a few questions about Britain's relationship with the European Union (sometimes referred to as the European Community).

As a member state, would you say that Britain's relationship with the European Union should be ...

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

	(✓)
... much closer,	1
a little closer,	2
a little less close,	3
much less close,	4
or is it about right?	5
(Can't choose)	8

307

Q.2 How much more or less influence in the world do you think that closer links with the European Union would give Britain?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

	(✓)
Much more influence	1
A little more influence	2
A little less influence	3
Much less influence	4
It would make no difference	5
(Can't choose)	8

308

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Q.3 And how much stronger or weaker economically do you feel that closer links with the European Union would make Britain?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

	(✓)	
Much stronger economically,	1	
A little stronger economically	2	
A little weaker economically	3	309
Much weaker economically	4	
It would make no difference	5	
(Can't choose)	8	

Q.4 Which of the following do you think Britain's long-term policy should be?

*PLEASE TICK ONE **BOX** ONLY*

	(✓)	
Britain should leave the European Union (EU),	1	
Britain should stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU's powers,	2	
Things should be left as they are	3	310
Britain should stay in the EU and try to increase the EU's powers	4	
Britain should stay in the EU and work towards the formation of a single European government	5	
(Can't choose)	8	

Q.5 And here are three statements about the future of the pound in the European Union. Which one comes closest to your view?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	1	
Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in Britain	2	
The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	3	311
(Can't choose)	8	

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Q.6 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**(Can't choose)**	
a. Unless Britain keeps its own currency, it will lose control of its own economic policy	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	312
b. The EU countries should be more than just a trading bloc - their governments should make joint decisions on other things too	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	313
c. Britain does not get enough out of the European Union, in comparison to what it puts in	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	314
d. All things considered, Britain is a lot better off <u>in</u> the EU than out of it	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	315
e. Lots of good British traditions will have to be given up if we strengthen our ties with the EU	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	316
f. The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the European Union	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	317
g. Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the European Union	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	318
h. Only the Germans have anything to gain from a single European currency	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 8	319

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Q.7 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(Can't choose)	
a. If we left the European Union, Britain would lose its best chance of real progress	1	2	3	4	5	8	320
b. In a united Europe the various nations will lose their culture and their individuality	1	2	3	4	5	8	321
c. Competition from other countries in the European Union is making Britain more modern and efficient	1	2	3	4	5	8	322
d. If we stay in the EU, Britain will lose too much control over decisions that affect Britain	1	2	3	4	5	8	323
e. There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the European Union	1	2	3	4	5	8	324

Q.8 Do you think that the British public has enough information on which to vote in a referendum on whether or not Britain should strengthen its links with the European Union?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
Yes, enough information	1	
No, not enough	2	325
(Can't choose)	8	

Q.9 And how about you? Do you feel that you have enough information on which to vote in a referendum on whether or not Britain should strengthen its links?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
Yes, enough information	1	
No, not enough	2	326
(Can't choose)	8	

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.10 How much are you in favour or against having a referendum where the British public would vote on whether or not Britain should strengthen its links with the European Union?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY* (✓)

Strongly in favour	1
In favour	2
Neither in favour nor against	3
Against	4
Strongly against	5
(Can't choose)	8

327

Q.11 If there were a referendum about Britain's ties with Europe, how likely is it that you would vote in it?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY* (✓)

Definitely would not vote	1
Unlikely to vote	2
Quite likely to vote	3
Very likely to vote	4
Definitely would vote	5
(Can't say)	8

328

Q.12 If you were to vote in a referendum about Europe, how would you vote in it?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY* (✓)

To strengthen links with the European Union	4
To weaken links with the European Union	5
To keep things just as they are	6
(Can't choose)	7

329

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.13 Some say that more decisions should be made by the European Union. Others say that more decisions should be made by individual governments. Do you think decisions about each of the following should mostly be made by the European Union or mostly by individual governments?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE	**Should be mostly made by the EU**	**Should be mostly made by individual governments**	**Should be made by both equally**	**(Can't choose)**	
a. Decisions about taxes?	1	2	3	8	330
b. Decisions about controlling pollution?	1	2	3	8	331
c. Decisions about defence?	1	2	3	8	332
d. Decisions about the rights of people at work?	1	2	3	8	333
e. Decisions about immigration?	1	2	3	8	334

Q.14 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**(Can't choose)**	
a. British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	1	2	3	4	5	8	335
b. Britain should sign up to the EU rules for protecting people's rights at work (the Social Chapter)	1	2	3	4	5	8	336
c. The European Union should expand its membership to include some of the ex-Communist countries of Eastern Europe	1	2	3	4	5	8	337
d. The European Union has too many petty rules and regulations which affect the way we live	1	2	3	4	5	8	338
e. If we signed up to the EU rules for protecting people's rights at work (the Social Chapter), this would cost Britain jobs	1	2	3	4	5	8	339

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.15 Please tick one box to show which comes closest to your view about the following statement?

Britain should do all it can to unite fully with the European Union

PLEASE TICK ***ONE*** *BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
Definitely	1	
Probably	2	
Not sure	3	340
Probably not	4	
Definitely not	5	
(Can't choose)	8	

Q.16 And please tick one box to show which comes closest to your view about the following statement?

The European Union should be no more than just a trading bloc

PLEASE TICK ***ONE*** *BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
Definitely	1	
Probably	2	
Not sure	3	341
Probably not	4	
Definitely not	5	
(Can't choose)	8	

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.17 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**(Can't choose)**	
a. Taxpayers all over Europe are paying too much towards the costs of running the European Union	1	2	3	4	5	8	342
b. Only businessmen are benefitting from Britain being a member of the EU	1	2	3	4	5	8	343
c. If we had a single European currency, British mortgage rates would be more likely to rise	1	2	3	4	5	8	344
d. EU rules are fairer to British farmers than to farmers in most other European countries	1	2	3	4	5	8	345
e. Passport controls within the EU should be removed altogether	1	2	3	4	5	8	346

Q.18 Who do you think is benefitting most at the moment from Britain's membership of the European Union? Please tick one box to show which comes closest to your view?

*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY*

	(✓)	
Britain is benefitting most	1	
Other European countries are benefitting most	2	347
Both are benefitting equally	8	

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q19 How united or divided do you feel each of the three major parties are on their policy towards Europe?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE	Very united	Some-what united	Neither united nor divided	Some-what divided	Very divided	(Can't choose)	
a. The Conservative party?	1	2	3	4	5	8	348
b. The Labour party?	1	2	3	4	5	8	349
c. The Liberal Democrats?	1	2	3	4	5	8	350

Q20 Finally, a quick quiz about Europe. For each of the following, please tick one box to show whether you think it is true or false, or whether you don't know?

	True	False	Don't know	
a. The European Union has recently expanded to 15 members	1	2	8	351
b. Switzerland is to join the European Union	1	2	8	352
c. Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels	1	2	8	353
d. Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years	1	2	8	354
e. Of the three major British parties, the Liberal Democrats are the least in favour of the European Union	1	2	8	355

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

Please hand this completed questionnaire back to the interviewer

SPSS output from Analysis of Variance, including post-hoc Scheffé tests (q1, q5, q12 and q15)

Q1

Oneway

Descriptives

involved involvement continuum

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00 closer	127	2.7080	.65346	.05799	2.5933	2.8228	1.25	4.00
2.00 less close	54	2.6821	.69629	.09475	2.4920	2.8721	1.00	4.00
3.00 about right	17	2.5735	.71679	.17385	2.2050	2.9421	1.25	3.75
4.00 dont know	24	1.9861	.72301	.14758	1.6808	2.2914	.67	3.25
Total	222	2.6134	.70744	.04748	2.5198	2.7069	.67	4.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

involved involvement continuum

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.251	3	218	.860

ANOVA

involved involvement continuum

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.862	3	3.621	7.914	.000
Within Groups	99.743	218	.458		
Total	110.605	221			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: involved involvement continuum
Scheffe

(I) q1_2007 recoded for table 6.6	(J) q1_2007 recoded for table 6.6	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00 closer	2.00 less close	.02591	.10989	.997	-.2837	.3355
	3.00 about right	.13448	.17469	.898	-.3577	.6267
	4.00 dont know	.72189*	.15055	.000	.2977	1.1461
2.00 less close	1.00 closer	-.02591	.10989	.997	-.3355	.2837
	3.00 about right	.10857	.18811	.954	-.4214	.6386
	4.00 dont know	.69599*	.16594	.001	.2285	1.1635
3.00 about right	1.00 closer	-.13448	.17469	.898	-.6267	.3577
	2.00 less close	-.10857	.18811	.954	-.6386	.4214
	4.00 dont know	.58742	.21442	.060	-.0167	1.1915
4.00 dont know	1.00 closer	-.72189*	.15055	.000	-1.1461	-.2977
	2.00 less close	-.69599*	.16594	.001	-1.1635	-.2285
	3.00 about right	-.58742	.21442	.060	-1.1915	.0167

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

involved involvement continuum

Scheffe[a,b]

q1_2007 recoded for table 6.6	N	Subset for alpha = .05 1	2
4.00 dont know	24	1.9861	
3.00 about right	17		2.5735
2.00 less close	54		2.6821
1.00 closer	127		2.7080
Sig.		1.000	.891

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 31.525.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Q5

Oneway

Descriptives

involved involvement continuum

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	43	2.8295	.79348	.12100	2.5853	3.0737	1.25	4.00
2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	64	2.8555	.54701	.06838	2.7188	2.9921	1.75	4.00
3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	105	2.4317	.68639	.06698	2.2989	2.5646	.75	4.00
8.00 (Cant choose)	9	2.1019	.76009	.25336	1.5176	2.6861	.67	3.25
Total	221	2.6184	.70866	.04767	2.5245	2.7123	.67	4.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

involved involvement continuum

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.694	3	217	.047

ANOVA

involved involvement continuum

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.572	3	3.857	8.462	.000
Within Groups	98.913	217	.456		
Total	110.485	220			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: involved involvement continuum
Scheffe

(I) q5 Future of the pound	(J) q5 Future of the pound	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	-.02601	.13313	.998	-.4011	.3491
	3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	.39771*	.12224	.016	.0533	.7421
	8.00 (Cant choose)	.72761*	.24748	.037	.0303	1.4249
2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	.02601	.13313	.998	-.3491	.4011
	3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	.42372*	.10707	.002	.1221	.7254
	8.00 (Cant choose)	.75362*	.24035	.022	.0764	1.4308
3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	-.39771*	.12224	.016	-.7421	-.0533
	2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	-.42372*	.10707	.002	-.7254	-.1221
	8.00 (Cant choose)	.32989	.23450	.578	-.3308	.9906
8.00 (Cant choose)	1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	-.72761*	.24748	.037	-1.4249	-.0303
	2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	-.75362*	.24035	.022	-1.4308	-.0764
	3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	-.32989	.23450	.578	-.9906	.3308

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

involved involvement continuum

Scheffe[a,b]

q5 Future of the pound	N	Subset for alpha = .05 1	2
8.00 (Cant choose)	9	2.1019	
3.00 The pound should be kept as the only currency for Britain	105	2.4317	2.4317
1.00 The pound should be replaced by a single European currency	43		2.8295
2.00 Both the pound and a new European currency should be used in	64		2.8555
Sig.		.395	.180

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 25.076.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Q12

Oneway

Descriptives

involved involvement continuum

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
4.00 To strengthen links with EU	98	2.7976	.68906	.06961	2.6595	2.9358	1.25	4.00
5.00 To weaken links with EU	42	2.6925	.63424	.09787	2.4948	2.8901	1.25	4.00
6.00 To keep things just as they are	44	2.5966	.64071	.09659	2.4018	2.7914	1.25	3.75
7.00 (Cant choose)	40	2.1229	.67436	.10663	1.9072	2.3386	.67	3.75
Total	224	2.6179	.70601	.04717	2.5250	2.7109	.67	4.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

involved involvement continuum

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.195	3	220	.900

ANOVA

involved involvement continuum

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.219	3	4.406	9.898	.000
Within Groups	97.936	220	.445		
Total	111.155	223			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: involved involvement continuum
Scheffe

(I) q12 How would vote in referendum	(J) q12 How would vote in referendum	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
4.00 To strengthen links with EU	5.00 To weaken links with EU	.10516	.12305	.866	-.2415	.4518
	6.00 To keep things just as they are	.20103	.12108	.433	-.1401	.5421
	7.00 (Cant choose)	.67470*	.12519	.000	.3220	1.0274
5.00 To weaken links with EU	4.00 To strengthen links with EU	-.10516	.12305	.866	-.4518	.2415
	6.00 To keep things just as they are	.09587	.14393	.931	-.3096	.5014
	7.00 (Cant choose)	.56954*	.14741	.002	.1543	.9848
6.00 To keep things just as they are	4.00 To strengthen links with EU	-.20103	.12108	.433	-.5421	.1401
	5.00 To weaken links with EU	-.09587	.14393	.931	-.5014	.3096
	7.00 (Cant choose)	.47367*	.14576	.016	.0630	.8843
7.00 (Cant choose)	4.00 To strengthen links with EU	-.67470*	.12519	.000	-1.0274	-.3220
	5.00 To weaken links with EU	-.56954*	.14741	.002	-.9848	-.1543
	6.00 To keep things just as they are	-.47367*	.14576	.016	-.8843	-.0630

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

involved involvement continuum

Scheffe[a,b]

q12 How would vote in referendum	N	Subset for alpha = .05 1	2
7.00 (Cant choose)	40	2.1229	
6.00 To keep things just as they are	44		2.5966
5.00 To weaken links with EU	42		2.6925
4.00 To strengthen links with EU	98		2.7976
Sig.		1.000	.529

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 48.935.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Q15

Oneway

Descriptives

involved involvement continuum

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1.00 agree	104	2.7909	.67200	.06590	2.6602	2.9216	1.25	4.00
2.00 disagree	50	2.8000	.66624	.09422	2.6107	2.9893	1.00	4.00
3.00 dont know/not sure	70	2.2310	.63293	.07565	2.0800	2.3819	.67	3.67
Total	224	2.6179	.70601	.04717	2.5250	2.7109	.67	4.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

involved involvement continuum

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.165	2	221	.848

ANOVA

involved involvement continuum

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.250	2	7.625	17.571	.000
Within Groups	95.905	221	.434		
Total	111.155	223			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: involved involvement continuum
Scheffe

(I) q15_2007 recoded for table 6.6	(J) q15_2007 recoded for table 6.6	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00 agree	2.00 disagree	-.00913	.11337	.997	-.2885	.2702
	3.00 dont know/not sure	.55991*	.10184	.000	.3089	.8109
2.00 disagree	1.00 agree	.00913	.11337	.997	-.2702	.2885
	3.00 dont know/not sure	.56905*	.12198	.000	.2684	.8697
3.00 dont know/not sure	1.00 agree	-.55991*	.10184	.000	-.8109	-.3089
	2.00 disagree	-.56905*	.12198	.000	-.8697	-.2684

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

involved involvement continuum

Scheffe[a,b]

q15_2007 recoded for table 6.6	N	Subset for alpha = .05: 1	2
3.00 dont know/not sure	70	2.2310	
1.00 agree	104		2.7909
2.00 disagree	50		2.8000
Sig.		1.000	.997

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 68.335.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

SPSS output from factor analysis of attitude statements

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Q6A Britain will lose control of economic policy	.399	.443
Q6C Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.385	.400
Q6E British traditions would have to be given up	.501	.564
Q6H Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.343	.385
Q7B Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.455	.497
Q7D Britain will lose control over decisions	.501	.558
Q14A British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.310	.343
Q14D EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.309	.294
Q17A Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.369	.366
Q6DD Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.584	.676
Q6FF The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU	.188	.217
Q6GG Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU	.263	.319
Q7AA If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress	.452	.570
Q7CC Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient	.280	.325
Q7EE There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU	.269	.311
Q14CC The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries	.203	.202

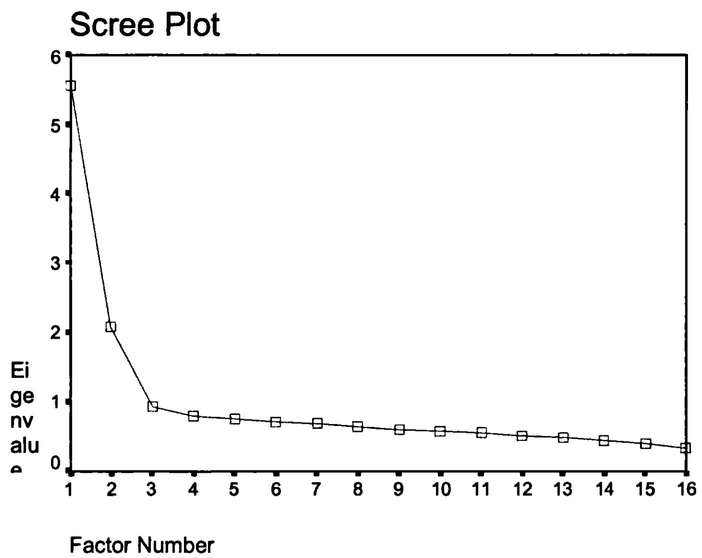
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.561	34.758	34.758	5.008	31.301	31.301	4.613
2	2.065	12.905	47.663	1.460	9.128	40.429	3.122
3	.930	5.809	53.473				
4	.785	4.906	58.379				
5	.755	4.722	63.101				
6	.715	4.470	67.570				
7	.686	4.289	71.859				
8	.645	4.030	75.889				
9	.597	3.734	79.623				
10	.568	3.551	83.175				
11	.549	3.433	86.608				
12	.500	3.127	89.734				
13	.480	2.999	92.733				
14	.450	2.814	95.547				
15	.390	2.436	97.982				
16	.323	2.018	100.000				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.



Goodness-of-fit Test

Chi-Square	df	Sig.
193.114	89	.000

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor	
	1	2
Q6DD Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.762	.307
Q7D Britain will lose control over decisions	.727	
Q6E British traditions would have to be given up	.692	-.292
Q7B Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.653	-.266
Q6A Britain will lose control of economic policy	.617	-.249
Q6C Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.609	
Q17A Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.583	
Q6H Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.564	-.258
Q7AA If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress	.562	.505
Q14A British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.532	-.244
Q14D EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.502	-.204
Q7CC Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient	.484	.301
Q14CC The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries	.414	
Q6GG Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU	.362	.434
Q7EE There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU	.366	.421
Q6FF The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU	.253	.391

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. 2 factors extracted. 5 iterations required.

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor	
	1	2
Q6E British traditions would have to be given up	.762	
Q7B Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.712	
Q7D Britain will lose control over decisions	.697	
Q6A Britain will lose control of economic policy	.671	
Q6H Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.636	
Q6C Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.605	
Q14A British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.601	
Q17A Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.577	
Q14D EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.547	
Q7AA If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress		.734
Q6DD Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.357	.611
Q6GG Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU		.584
Q7EE There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU		.572
Q6FF The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU		.497
Q7CC Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient		.496
Q14CC The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries		.340

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Structure Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
Q6E British traditions would have to be given up	.750	.277
Q7D Britain will lose control over decisions	.741	.387
Q7B Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.705	.268
Q6A Britain will lose control of economic policy	.665	.255
Q6C Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.630	.305
Q6H Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.619	.212
Q17A Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.602	.294
Q14A British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.584	
Q14D EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.542	.207
Q6DD Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.602	.754
Q7AA If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress	.344	.754
Q6GG Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU		.563
Q7EE There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU		.557
Q7CC Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient	.345	.554
Q6FF The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU		.456
Q14CC The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries	.324	.415

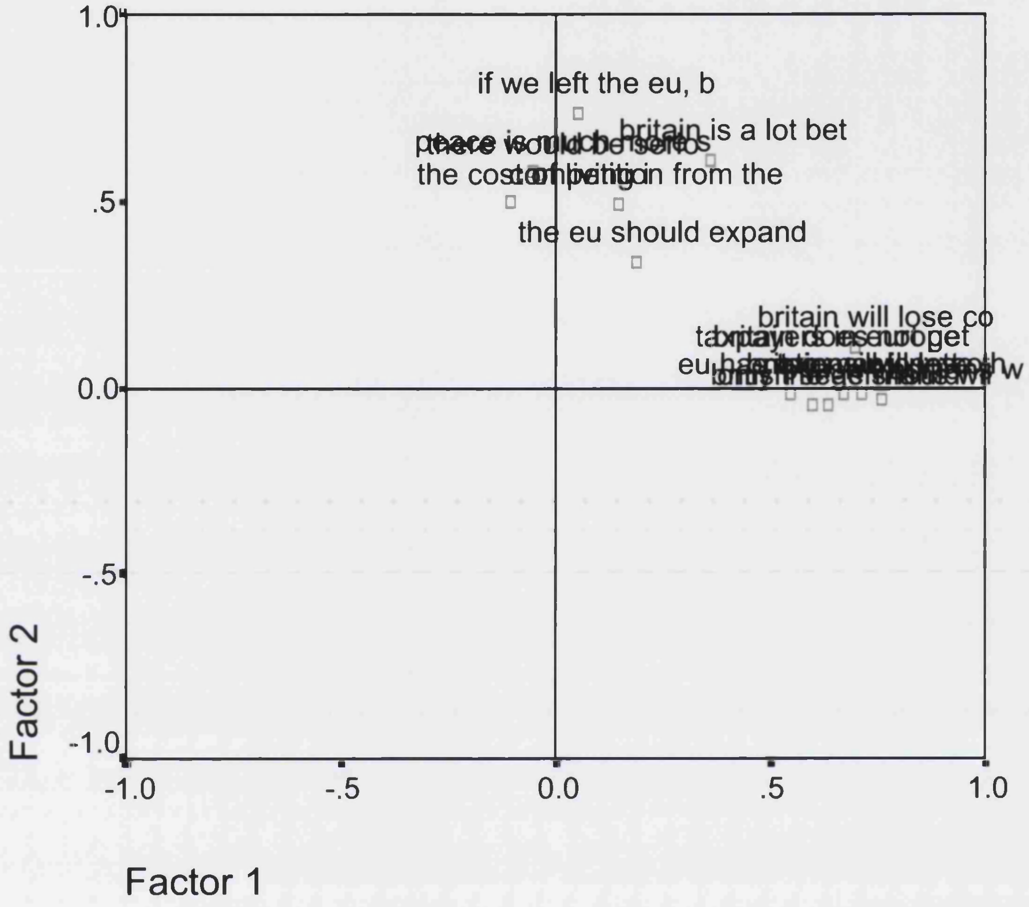
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2
1	1.000	.401
2	.401	1.000

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor Plot in Rotated Factor Space



Factor Score Coefficient Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
Q6A Britain will lose control of economic policy	.139	-.016
Q6C Britain does not get enough out of the EU	.115	.010
Q6E British traditions would have to be given up	.202	-.028
Q6H Only the Germans will gain from single currency	.120	-.022
Q7B Nations will lose their culture and individuality	.164	-.019
Q7D Britain will lose control over decisions	.180	.030
Q14A British seas should only be open to British fishing boats	.106	-.020
Q14D EU has too many petty rules and regulations	.089	-.010
Q17A Taxpayers in Europe are paying too much for EU	.104	.010
Q6DD Britain is a lot better off in the EU than out of it	.110	.337
Q6FF The cost of living in Britain would rise significantly if we left the EU	-.021	.118
Q6GG Peace is much more secure because Britain is a member of the EU	-.017	.159
Q7AA If we left the EU, Britain would lose its chance of real progress	-.002	.314
Q7CC Competition from the EU is making Britain more modern and efficient	.018	.134
Q7EE There would be serious unemployment in Britain if we left the EU	-.014	.154
Q14CC The EU should expand its membership to include Eastern European countries	.023	.076

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor Scores Method: Regression.

Factor Score Covariance Matrix

Factor	1	2
1	1.345	1.158
2	1.158	1.276

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor Scores Method: Regression.

APPENDIX D

Arguments about the euro

On the following pages are 5 examples of arguments in favour of the UK joining the single European currency, the 'euro'.

For my PhD research, I am looking at what people think about the different kinds of arguments in favour of joining the euro.

Please help me by answering the questions about each of the arguments to show what you think about them. Try to answer the questions, **regardless of what your own views about the euro are**. Your answers are completely anonymous and will be treated confidentially.

Instructions are given throughout the booklet, to help you respond. Do not spend too long working through the questions. I am interested in your immediate responses. The questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you very much for participating in this research.

If you have any questions about my research,
please contact me –

Caroline Roberts
Room S384, Department of Social Psychology,
London School of Economics
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE
C.E.Roberts@lse.ac.uk Tel: 020 7955 7703

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED, PLEASE DROP THE BOOKLET INTO THE POST BOX OUTSIDE THE SOCIAL PSCYHOLOGY OFFICE (S302), OR POST IT TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Initial Reactions to arguments about the euro

**Below are five arguments in favour of the UK joining the euro.
For each one...**

1. **Read the argument carefully.**
2. **Write in the box what you first thought about the argument when you read it, NO MATTER WHAT you thought. E.g. some words, phrases or sentences.**

I am interested in your initial reactions. Don't worry about what you write about or how much you write, but please write something in the box provided to show what your first thoughts about the argument were. Your responses will be treated entirely confidentially, and they are completely anonymous.

There are no correct answers. This is about what you think.

1. ***Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.***

What did you think when you first read this argument? Please write in the space provided the first thought (e.g. a word, a phrase or a sentence) that came into your head:

2. *There are huge potential advantages of joining the single European currency in terms of living standards, fiscal stability and economic growth. British exclusion from the project could entail many risks.*

3. *In the modern world, Britain can't afford to go it alone – we're better off in Europe. In the euro, we could be even more prosperous and powerful. Britain's place in Europe is central to our prosperity and standing. Joining the euro could guarantee our economic stability by strengthening our relations with our biggest trading partners.*

4. *Foreign investors choose Britain because we are a gateway to the European Union and remaining isolated from the euro would make us less attractive to them. This investment makes our country more prosperous. As the gateway to Europe and a bridge to the rest of the world, Britain plays a unique and pivotal role in global affairs.*

5. *We are rightly proud of Britain and confident in our national identity. Britain would still be Britain if we voted to join the euro, and the Queen's head would still be on our coins.*

Evaluating arguments about the euro

On the following pages are the five arguments you have just read. Please answer each of the questions about them. First of all, you are asked to use the scales provided to show what you think about each of the arguments.

Each scale consists of a set of two opposing adjectives or descriptions that could apply to the arguments. Put a circle around one of the numbers (between 1 and 7) on each scale to show how closely you think the description fits the argument.

Example:

The UK should join the euro because the weather is better on the continent.

Weak	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**Strong**
	Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely	

If you thought that the argument in the example was quite a weak argument in favour of the UK joining the euro, you would show this by putting a circle around the number '2' on the scale.

I am interested in what you think about each of the arguments. You should give your first impressions only and not try to work out if there is a 'correct' answer or an answer that makes most sense.

Please turn over the page to the first argument...

1. Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.

a) Put a circle around a number on each of the scales below to show how well you think the words at either end 'describe' the argument. The numbers mean the following:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely

Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Complicated
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Heard it before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Never heard it before
Makes sense to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't make sense to me
Convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconvincing
Relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant to me

b) How persuasive do you personally think this argument is in favour of the UK joining the euro? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Persuasive	Quite Persuasive	Slightly Persuasive	Neither Persuasive nor Unpersuasive	Slightly Unpersuasive	Quite Unpersuasive	Extremely Unpersuasive

c) How much do you agree or disagree with the view expressed in this argument? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agree Completely	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Disagree Completely

2. ***There are huge potential advantages of joining the single European currency in terms of living standards, fiscal stability and economic growth. British exclusion from the project could entail many risks.***

a) Put a circle around a number on <u>each</u> of the scales below to show how well you think the words at either end 'describe' the argument. The numbers mean the following:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely

Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Complicated
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Heard it before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Never heard it before
Makes sense to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't make sense to me
Convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconvincing
Relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant to me

b) How persuasive do you personally think this argument is in favour of the UK joining the euro? Please tick <u>one</u> box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Persuasive	Quite Persuasive	Slightly Persuasive	Neither Persuasive nor Unpersuasive	Slightly Unpersuasive	Quite Unpersuasive	Extremely Unpersuasive

c) How much do you agree or disagree with the view expressed in this argument? Please tick <u>one</u> box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agree Completely	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Disagree Completely

3. ***In the modern world, Britain can't afford to go it alone – we're better off in Europe. In the euro, we could be even more prosperous and powerful. Britain's place in Europe is central to our prosperity and standing. Joining the euro could guarantee our economic stability by strengthening our relations with our biggest trading partners.***

a) Put a circle around a number on <u>each</u> of the scales below to show how well you think the words at either end 'describe' the argument. The numbers mean the following:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely

Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Complicated
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Heard it before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Never heard it before
Makes sense to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't make sense to me
Convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconvincing
Relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant to me

b) How persuasive do you personally think this argument is in favour of the UK joining the euro? Please tick <u>one</u> box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Persuasive	Quite Persuasive	Slightly Persuasive	Neither Persuasive nor Unpersuasive	Slightly Unpersuasive	Quite Unpersuasive	Extremely Unpersuasive

c) How much do you agree or disagree with the view expressed in this argument? Please tick <u>one</u> box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agree Completely	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Disagree Completely

4. *Foreign investors choose Britain because we are a gateway to the European Union and remaining isolated from the euro would make us less attractive to them. This investment makes our country more prosperous. As the gateway to Europe and a bridge to the rest of the world, Britain plays a unique and pivotal role in global affairs.*

a) Put a circle around a number on each of the scales below to show how well you think the words at either end 'describe' the argument. The numbers mean the following:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely

Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Complicated
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Heard it before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Never heard it before
Makes sense to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't make sense to me
Convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconvincing
Relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant to me

b) How persuasive do you personally think this argument is in favour of the UK joining the euro? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Persuasive	Quite Persuasive	Slightly Persuasive	Neither Persuasive nor Unpersuasive	Slightly Unpersuasive	Quite Unpersuasive	Extremely Unpersuasive

c) How much do you agree or disagree with the view expressed in this argument? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agree Completely	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Disagree Completely

5. *We are rightly proud of Britain and confident in our national identity. Britain would still be Britain if we voted to join the euro, and the Queen's head would still be on our coins.*

a) Put a circle around a number on each of the scales below to show how well you think the words at either end 'describe' the argument. The numbers mean the following:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely

Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Complicated
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Heard it before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Never heard it before
Makes sense to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't make sense to me
Convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconvincing
Relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant to me

b) How persuasive do you personally think this argument is in favour of the UK joining the euro? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Persuasive	Quite Persuasive	Slightly Persuasive	Neither Persuasive nor Unpersuasive	Slightly Unpersuasive	Quite Unpersuasive	Extremely Unpersuasive

c) How much do you agree or disagree with the view expressed in this argument? Please tick one box only.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agree Completely	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Disagree Completely

Finally, please could you respond to the last few questions by simply ticking the box that best describes your own view or by putting a circle around one of the numbers like you did before:

1. **Which of the following best describes your view of UK participation in the single currency, the 'euro'?**

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Generally in favour, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy
- ☐ Generally opposed, but could be persuaded in favour if I thought it would be good for the British economy
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

2. **The issue of whether or not the UK joins the euro....**

Means nothing to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Means a lot to me
Is significant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is insignificant
Is boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is interesting
Matters to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Doesn't matter to me
Is something I am interested in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is something I am not interested in
Is irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is relevant

You have reached the end of the booklet. Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this research.

Thank you for taking part in this research

Cognitive Responses to Arguments about the Euro – Coding Frame

Rate cognitive responses to the arguments along the following dimensions:

Polarity Dimension

1 = Favourable thoughts

2 = Neutral thoughts

3 = Unfavourable thoughts (i.e. counter-argumentation)

Origin Dimension

1 = Message-oriented thoughts (statements that are direct restatements of the communication – i.e. message recall)

2 = Modified message-oriented thoughts (statements that are reactions to, qualifications of, or illustrations of the material in the communication – i.e. elaborations of, or replies to, message arguments)

3 = Recipient-generated thoughts (statements expressing ideas or reactions not traceable directly to the communication – e.g. responses pertinent to the issue but not to a specific argument in the message)

Target Dimension

(Provides information about the effect of the persuasive appeal on the recipient's focus of attention.)

1 = Message-topic thoughts (statements pertaining to the topic of the appeal or to arguments either stated or implied in the message)

2 = Source-thoughts (statements pertaining to the topic of the communicator and his or her style of communication)

3 = Audience thoughts (statements pertaining to the recipients or potential recipients of the persuasive appeal, including oneself and significant others).

Table 1 *Questionnaire Items used in Study D*

Measures	Item No.	Variable Name	Question Wording	Response Categories
	1	manipu1	What would you say are the best things about living in Britain compared with other European countries?	OPEN
Salience manipulation				
	2	manipu2	What characteristics do you most like about living in Britain compared with other European countries?	OPEN
	3	manipu3	How typical of British people in general would you say you are?	1= Not at all typically British 2= Not very typically British 3= Fairly typically British 4= Very typically British
	4a	manipu4	Of all the nations in the world, Britain stands out	1= Strongly disagree 2= Slightly disagree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Slightly agree 5= Strongly agree
	4b	manipu5	I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world	1= Strongly disagree 2= Slightly disagree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Slightly agree 5= Strongly agree
	5a	manipu6	To what extent would you say you feel proud of Britain in each of the following? Its economic achievements	1= Not proud at all 2= Not very proud 3= Somewhat proud 4= Very proud

	5b	manipu7	Its history	1= Not proud at all 2= Not very proud 3= Somewhat proud 4= Very proud
Attitude	6	euroatt1	How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the 'euro', are?	1= Very negative 7= Very positive
	7	euroatt2	Which of the following statements best describes your view of UK participation in the single currency, the 'euro'?	1= Strongly support 2= Generally in favour, but could be persuaded against if I thought it would be bad for the British economy 3= Generally opposed, but could be persuaded in favour if I thought it would be good for the British economy 4= Strongly oppose 5= Don't know
	8	reason	What is the main reason why you hold this view about the euro? Please type your answer in the box below.	OPEN
Involvement	9	polinter	How interested would you say you are in politics generally?	1= Not at all interested 7= Very interested
	10	eurointe	How interested would you say you are in the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union?	1= Not at all interested 7= Very interested
	11	euknow	How knowledgeable would you say you are about Britain's relationship with the EU?	1= Not at all knowledgeable 7= Very knowledgeable
	12	euroinfo	How well informed do you feel about the pros and cons of joining the single currency?	1= Not at all well informed 7= Very well informed
	13		Here is a quick quiz about the European Union.	

			For each of the following statements, please click on one of the circles to show whether you think it is true or false, or whether you are not sure. Don't worry if you don't know an answer - just click 'Not sure'.	
	13a	quiz1	Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels (False)	1= True 2= False 3= Not sure
	13b	quiz2	Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years (true)	1= True 2= False 3= Not sure
	13c	quiz3	The European Parliament is located in Strasbourg (true)	1= True 2= False 3= Not sure
	13d	quiz4	Switzerland is to join the European Union (false)	1= True 2= False 3= Not sure
	13e	quiz5	The President of the European Commission is directly elected by citizens of the member states (false)	1= True 2= False 3= Not sure
Personal relevance	14	holiday	Have you visited any European countries since 1st January 2002?	1= Yes 0= No
		Austria		1= Yes 0= No
		Belgium		1= Yes 0= No
		Denmark		1= Yes 0= No
		Finland		1= Yes 0= No

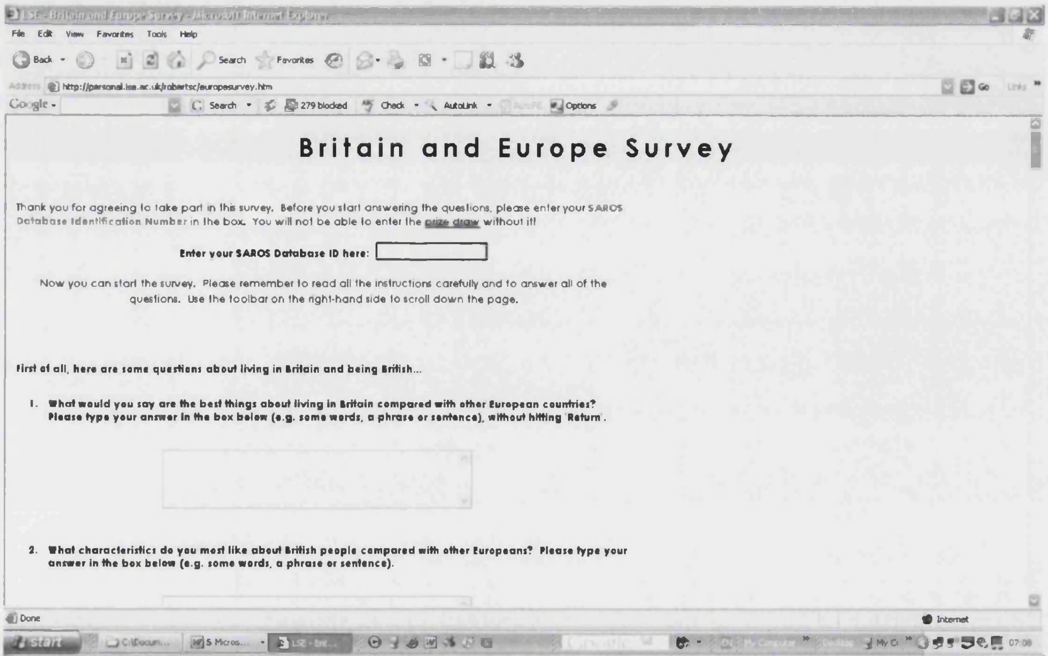
		France		1= Yes 0= No
		Germany		1= Yes 0= No
		Greece		1= Yes 0= No
		Ireland		1= Yes 0= No
		Italy		1= Yes 0= No
		Luxembourg		1= Yes 0= No
		Holland		1= Yes 0= No
		Portugal		1= Yes 0= No
		Spain		1= Yes 0= No
		Sweden		1= Yes 0= No
		Othhols		1= Yes 0= No
	15	language	Can you speak any European language(s) other than English?	2= Yes, fluently 1= Yes, a little 0= No
National identification	16	pride	To what extent would you say you feel proud to be British?	1= Not at all proud to be British 7= Very proud to be British
	17a	identit1	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	1= Strongly disagree 2= Slightly disagree

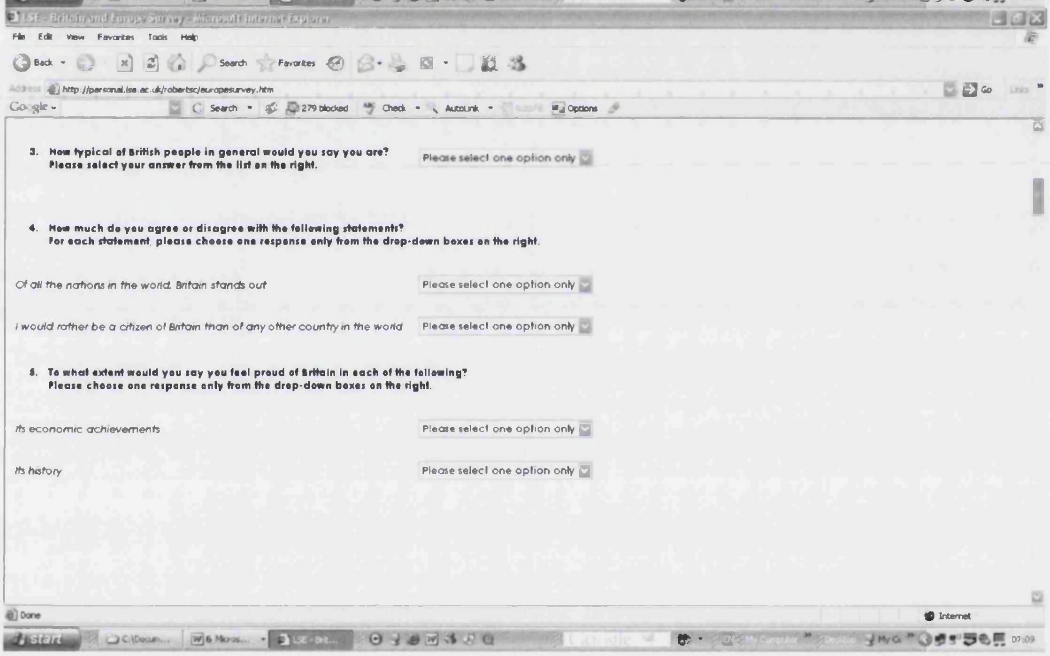
			It is important to me to be British	3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Slightly agree 5= Strongly agree
	17b	identit2	I identify with British people	1= Strongly disagree 2= Slightly disagree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Slightly agree 5= Strongly agree
	18a	arglike	Considering the 3 arguments individually… …which one did you like the best?	1= Argument 1 2= Argument 2 3= Argument 3 4= None of them 5= Don't know
	18b	arghate	…which one did you disagree with the most?	1= Argument 1 2= Argument 2 3= Argument 3 4 = None of them 5= Don't know
	19a	elab1	Considering all 3 arguments together… To what extent do you feel they made their point effectively?	1= Not at all effectively 7= Very effectively
	19b	elab2	To what extent do you feel they were convincing?	1= Not at all convincing 7= Very convincing
	20	elab3	To what extent did you agree or disagree with the arguments?	1= Disagree completely 7= Agree completely
	21	effort	To what extent were you trying hard to evaluate the arguments?	1= Not very hard 7= Very hard
Demographic characteristics	22	sex	Are you…?	0= Female 1= Male

23	age	What is your age?	OPEN
24	educate	What is your current and highest level of education?	1= Secondary 2= Secondary – A-level 3= First degree 4= Certificate/ Diploma 5= Vocational qualification 6= Masters/ Doctorate
25	job	Which one of the following options best describes the sort of work you do? If you are not working now (e.g. you are retired, unemployed or on maternity leave), please tell us what you did you in your last job. Please select one option only from the list below.	1= Professional or higher technical work 2= Manager or senior administrator 3= Clerical 4= Sales or services 5= Foreman or Supervisor 6= Skilled manual work 7= Semi-skilled or unskilled manual work 8= Full-time student 9= Voluntary/ Unpaid work 10= Other 11= Have never worked
	othjob	Other:	OPEN
26	ethnic	How would you describe your ethnic background?	1= Bangladeshi 2= Black African 3= Black Caribbean 4= Black other 5= Chinese 6= Indian 7= Irish 8= Pakistani 9= White

				10= Other 11= Decline to answer
	27	nation	Which of the following would you normally use to describe your nationality?	1= UK citizen 2= British 3= English 4= Northern Irish 5= Scottish 6= Welsh 7= Other
		othnat	Other:	OPEN
	28	region	In which of the following regions is your permanent address?	1= The North West 2= The North East 3= Yorkshire and The Humber 4= The West Midlands 5= The East Midlands 6= London 7= Eastern 8= The South West 9= The South East 10= Northern Ireland 11= Scotland 12= Wales 13= Overseas
Political orientation/ civic engagement	29	news	Which one of the following daily newspapers do you most regularly read?	1= The Express 2= The Daily Mail 3= The Mirror 4= The Daily Star 5= The Sun 6= The Daily Telegraph 7= The Financial Times

			8= The Guardian 9= The Independent 10= The Times 11= The Scotsman 12= The Glasgow Herald 13= The Western Mail 14= Other local daily 15= Other 16= None of these – I don't read a daily paper
30	party	Which political party are you most inclined to support?	1= Conservative 2= Green 3= Labour 4= Liberal Democrats 5= Plaid Cymru 6= Scottish National Party 7= UKIP 8= Other
	othparty	Other:	OPEN
31	vote	If there were a referendum tomorrow on whether Britain should be part of a single European currency, how likely is it that you would get along to vote?	1= Definitely will not vote 7= Definitely will vote


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
Britain and Europe Survey
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. Before you start answering the questions, please enter your SAROS Database Identification Number in the box. You will not be able to enter the prize draw without it!
Enter your SAROS Database ID here:
Now you can start the survey. Please remember to read all the instructions carefully and to answer all of the questions. Use the toolbar on the right-hand side to scroll down the page.
First of all, here are some questions about living in Britain and being British...
1. What would you say are the best things about living in Britain compared with other European countries? Please type your answer in the box below (e.g. some words, a phrase or sentence), without hitting 'Return'.
2. What characteristics do you most like about British people compared with other Europeans? Please type your answer in the box below (e.g. some words, a phrase or sentence).
Done
Internet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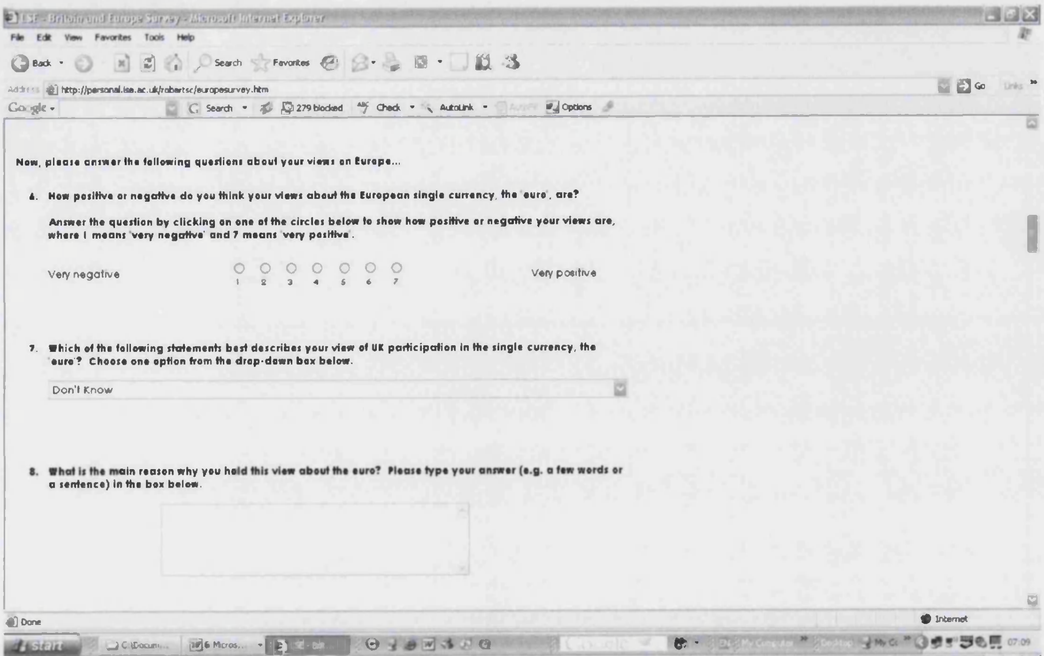
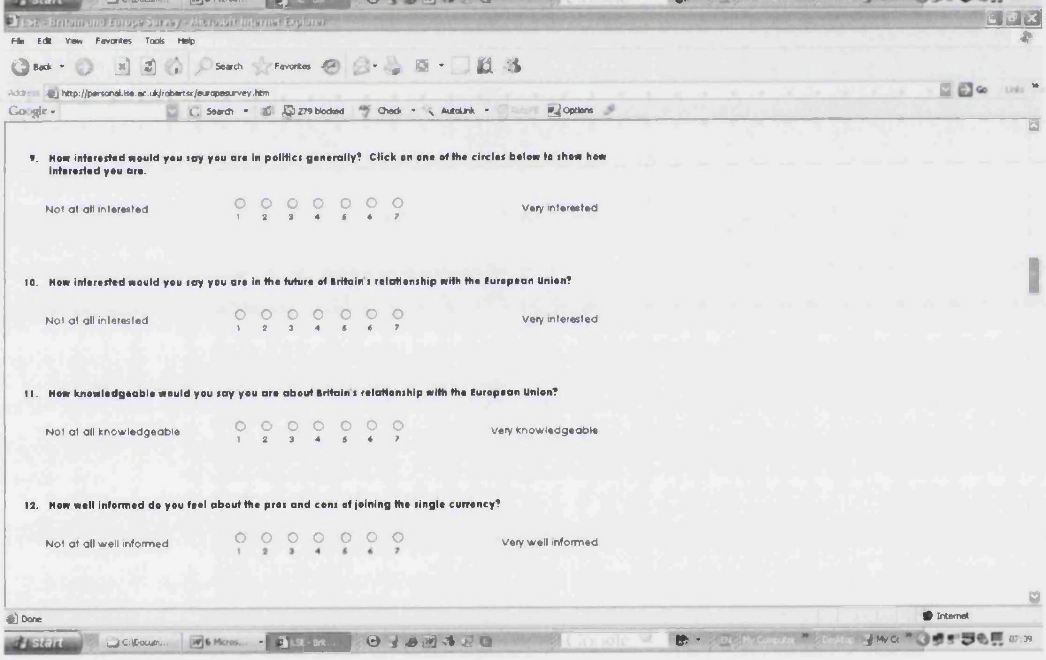
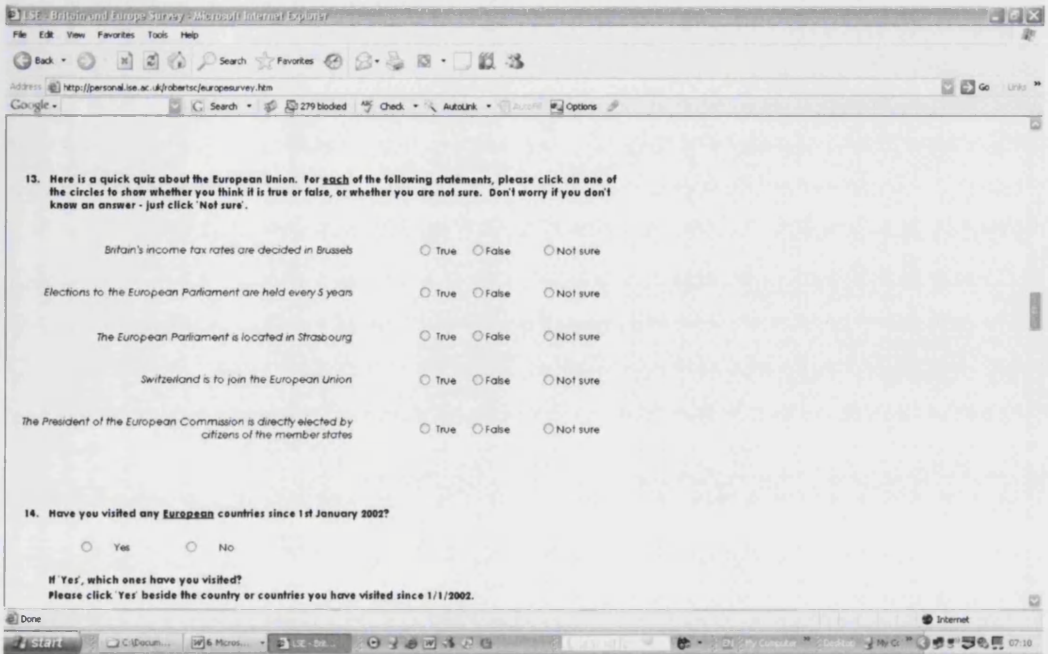
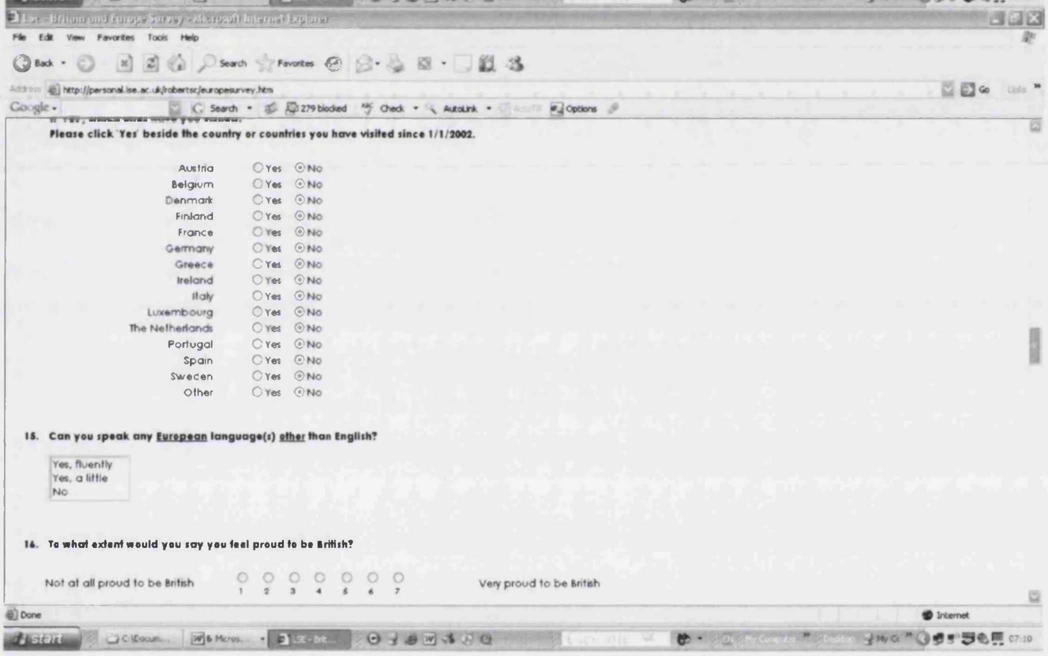
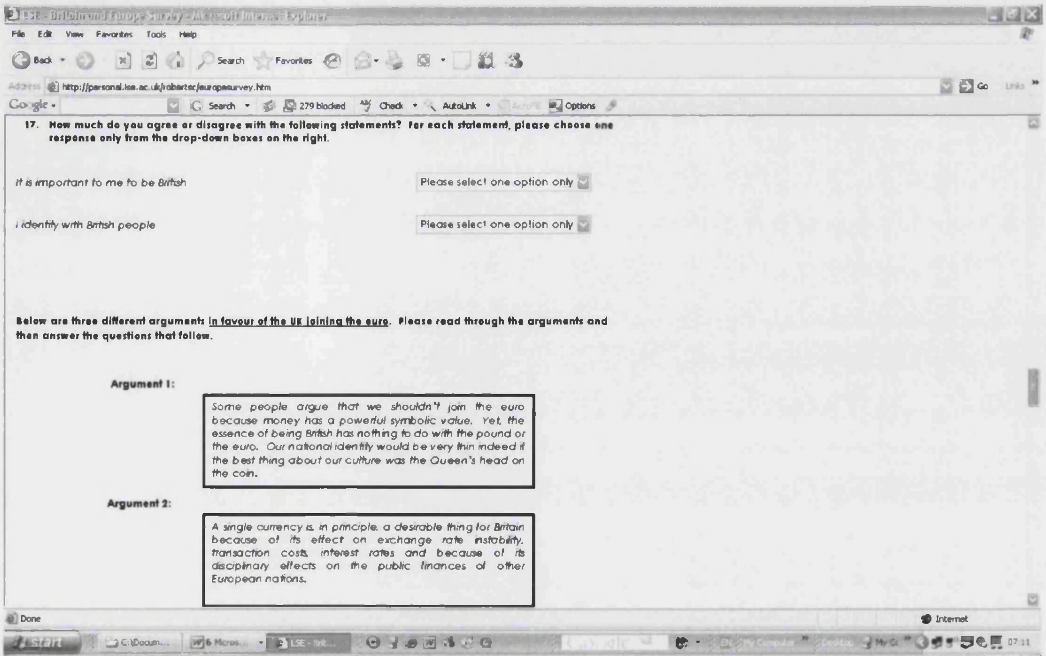
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
3. How typical of British people in general would you say you are? Please select your answer from the list on the right.
Please select one option only
4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? For each statement, please choose one response only from the drop-down boxes on the right.
Of all the nations in the world, Britain stands out
Please select one option only
I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world
Please select one option only
5. To what extent would you say you feel proud of Britain in each of the following? Please choose one response only from the drop-down boxes on the right.
Its economic achievements
Please select one option only
Its history
Please select one option only
Done
Internet


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
Now, please answer the following questions about your views on Europe...
6. How positive or negative do you think your views about the European single currency, the 'euro', are?
Answer the question by clicking on one of the circles below to show how positive or negative your views are, where 1 means 'very negative' and 7 means 'very positive'.
Very negative
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very positive
7. Which of the following statements best describes your view of UK participation in the single currency, the 'euro'? Choose one option from the drop-down box below.
Don't Know
8. What is the main reason why you hold this view about the euro? Please type your answer (e.g. a few words or a sentence) in the box below.
Done
Internet


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
9. How interested would you say you are in politics generally? Click on one of the circles below to show how interested you are.
Not at all interested
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very interested
10. How interested would you say you are in the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union?
Not at all interested
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very interested
11. How knowledgeable would you say you are about Britain's relationship with the European Union?
Not at all knowledgeable
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very knowledgeable
12. How well informed do you feel about the pros and cons of joining the single currency?
Not at all well informed
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very well informed
Done
Internet


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
13. Here is a quick quiz about the European Union. For each of the following statements, please click on one of the circles to show whether you think it is true or false, or whether you are not sure. Don't worry if you don't know an answer - just click 'Not sure'.
Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels — True False Not sure
Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years — True False Not sure
The European Parliament is located in Strasbourg — True False Not sure
Switzerland is to join the European Union — True False Not sure
The President of the European Commission is directly elected by citizens of the member states — True False Not sure
14. Have you visited any European countries since 1st January 2002?
Yes No
If 'Yes', which ones have you visited?
Please click 'Yes' beside the country or countries you have visited since 1/1/2002.
Done
Internet
start
07:10


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm
Please click 'Yes' beside the country or countries you have visited since 1/1/2002.
Austria Yes No
Belgium Yes No
Denmark Yes No
Finland Yes No
France Yes No
Germany Yes No
Greece Yes No
Ireland Yes No
Italy Yes No
Luxembourg Yes No
The Netherlands Yes No
Portugal Yes No
Spain Yes No
Sweden Yes No
Other Yes No
15. Can you speak any European language(s) other than English?
Yes, fluently
Yes, a little
No
16. To what extent would you say you feel proud to be British?
Not at all proud to be British 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very proud to be British
Done
Internet
start
07:10



17. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? For each statement, please choose one response only from the drop-down boxes on the right.

It is important to me to be British — Please select one option only

I identify with British people — Please select one option only

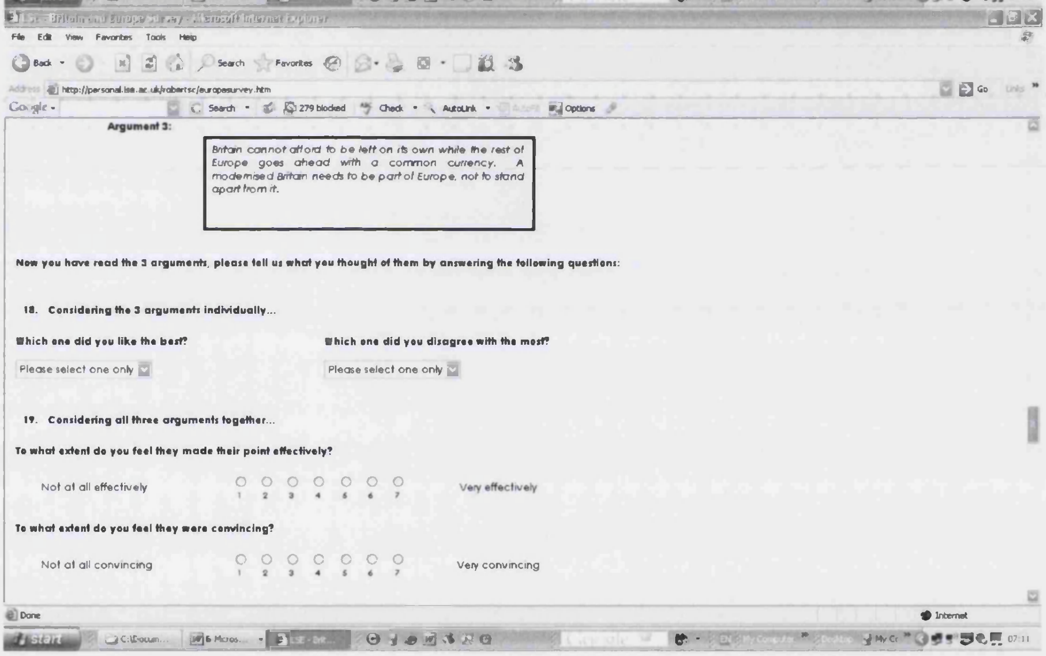
Below are three different arguments <u>in favour of the UK joining the euro</u>. Please read through the arguments and then answer the questions that follow.

Argument 1:

Some people argue that we shouldn't join the euro because money has a powerful symbolic value. Yet, the essence of being British has nothing to do with the pound or the euro. Our national identity would be very thin indeed if the best thing about our culture was the Queen's head on the coin.

Argument 2:

A single currency is, in principle, a desirable thing for Britain because of its effect on exchange rate instability, transaction costs, interest rates and because of its disciplinary effects on the public finances of other European nations.



Argument 3:

Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.

Now you have read the 3 arguments, please tell us what you thought of them by answering the following questions:

18. Considering the 3 arguments individually...

Which one did you like the best? — Please select one only

Which one did you disagree with the most? — Please select one only

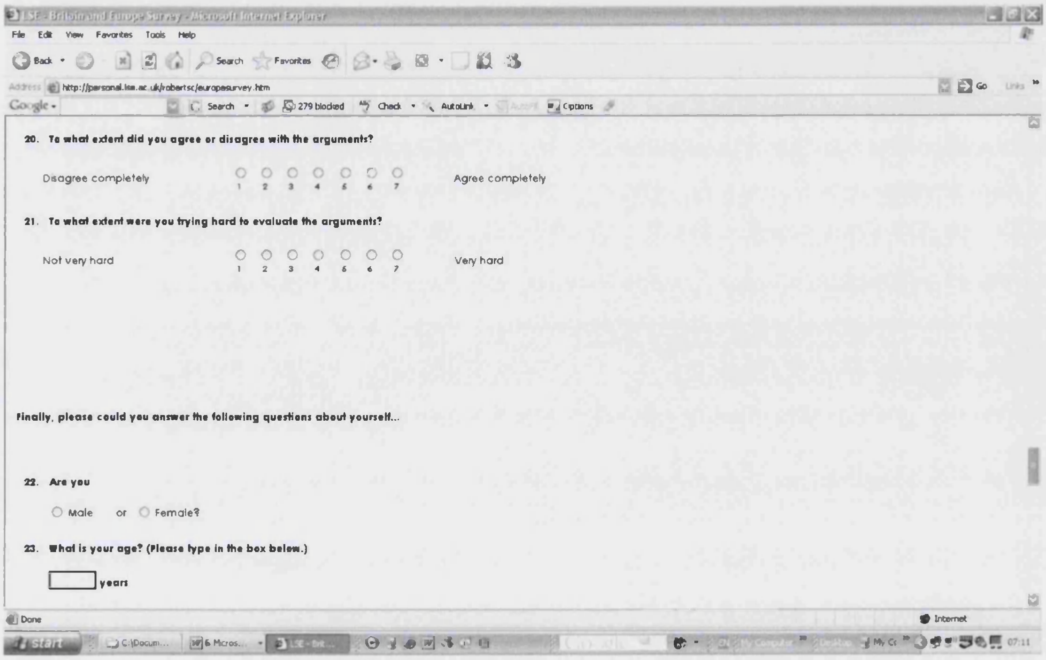
19. Considering all three arguments together...

To what extent do you feel they made their point effectively?

Not at all effectively ○1 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5 ○6 ○7 Very effectively

To what extent do you feel they were convincing?

Not at all convincing ○1 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5 ○6 ○7 Very convincing


LSE - Britain and Europe Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey.htm

20. To what extent did you agree or disagree with the arguments?

Disagree completely ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 Agree completely

21. To what extent were you trying hard to evaluate the arguments?

Not very hard ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 Very hard

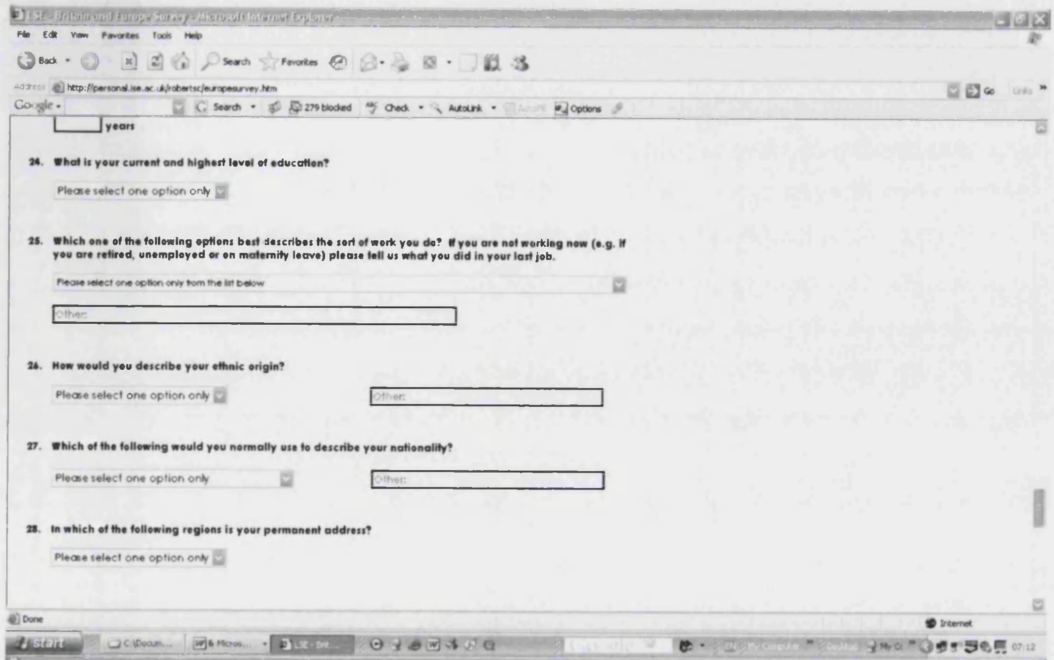
Finally, please could you answer the following questions about yourself...

22. Are you

○ Male or ○ Female?

23. What is your age? (Please type in the box below.)

[ ] **years**



years

24. **What is your current and highest level of education?**

Please select one option only

25. **Which one of the following options best describes the sort of work you do? If you are not working now (e.g. if you are retired, unemployed or on maternity leave) please tell us what you did in your last job.**

Please select one option only from the list below

Other:

26. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

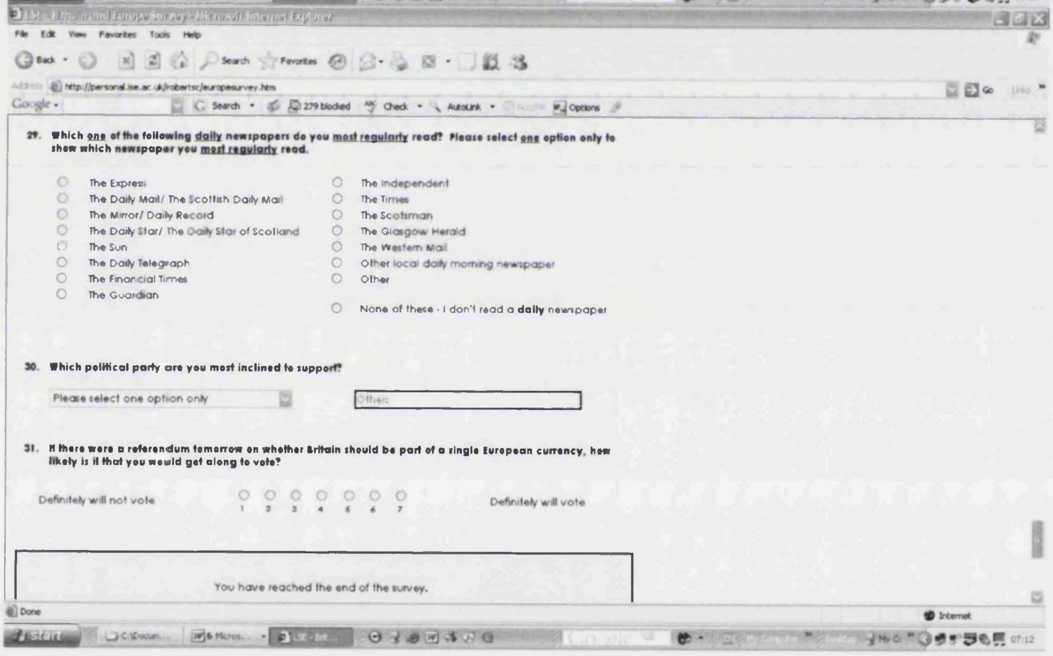
Please select one option only   Other:

27. **Which of the following would you normally use to describe your nationality?**

Please select one option only   Other:

28. **In which of the following regions is your permanent address?**

Please select one option only



29. **Which one of the following daily newspapers do you most regularly read? Please select one option only to show which newspaper you most regularly read.**

- The Express
- The Daily Mail/ The Scottish Daily Mail
- The Mirror/ Daily Record
- The Daily Star/ The Daily Star of Scotland
- The Sun
- The Daily Telegraph
- The Financial Times
- The Guardian
- The Independent
- The Times
- The Scotsman
- The Glasgow Herald
- The Western Mail
- Other local daily morning newspaper
- Other
- None of these - I don't read a **daily** newspaper

30. **Which political party are you most inclined to support?**

Please select one option only   Other:

31. **If there were a referendum tomorrow on whether Britain should be part of a single European currency, how likely is it that you would get along to vote?**

Definitely will not vote 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely will vote

You have reached the end of the survey.

Email invitation used in study D (pilot survey)[38]

Dear ……

I am writing to invite you to take part in a quick survey. It should take less than 10 minutes of your time, and there is a £50 prize draw for all entries submitted before the end of Monday 24th February.

Unlike our usual commercial projects, this survey is on behalf of an academic researcher at LSE, it is about European issues. No level of knowledge or expertise is required or assumed, if you are over 18 and a British citizen you can participate (if you are not please feel free to forward to anyone who is, that way you will get entered in the draw!)

As ever we do not pass on ANY of your personal information to our client – they will collect some demographic data at the end but this is viewed in aggregate only, and cannot be linked to your personal details. You will need to enter your Saros ID number, which is

69926

At the start of the survey, this is the only information that will be returned to us, as it represents your entry to the draw.

To enter the survey, please click here:
http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey_home.htm

If you cannot click on the above link for any reason, please copy <ctrl+a> and paste <ctrl+c> the whole URL into your browser window. Thanks very much for reading, and hope you can spare a few moments to complete the survey,

Best wishes,

Maya and the Saros team
www.sarosresearch.com

****

You received this message as you are a registered member of the saros research database, please mail/forward to unsubscribe@sarosresearch.com if you no longer wish to receive research invitations from us
****

[38] The same letter was used for the main survey, except the incentive offered was £100 in a prize draw.

Report of the pilot study

In order to pre-test the methodology of the persuasion survey, an extensive pilot study was carried out. The pilot provided an invaluable opportunity to verify the validity of the survey measures, and to ensure the experimental design was appropriate to testing the research hypotheses. The focus of this appendix is to describe the measures that were included in the pilot questionnaire and the initial analysis of these measures conducted to assess their validity. As with the main survey, the pilot survey was internet-based, and was designed for online completion. The survey can be viewed at the following URL: http://personal.lse.ac.uk/robertsc/europesurvey_home.htm (last accessed April 2007). The experimental design of the main survey remained unchanged after piloting, and is, described in chapter 7.

Method

Participants

The link to the pilot survey was sent to 1500 people on the Saros database. People contacted were sent a personalised email from Saros, inviting them to participate in the research if they were over the age of 18, and citizens of the United Kingdom. The final response rate was 24.5%, a total number of 367 cases. Data from 358 cases are analysed here. It is the policy of Saros not to send out reminders about the survey, so the sample received one contact only, and was asked to complete the survey within a specified period of two weeks. A prize draw to win £50 was offered as an incentive to participate. Saros data protection policy also meant that it was not possible to seek information regarding non-respondents. However, the experimental design of the survey, using random allocation to one of eight conditions, meant that non-response was less problematic than in sample survey research, except in terms of achieving a sufficient quantity of participants in each condition, to maximise the power of the experiment.

The table below shows the number of participants participating in each of the 8 conditions. Because of the nature of the random allocation procedure that was used, it was unlikely that equal numbers would be achieved in each of the conditions. Attempts were made to control for this during the fielding of survey, by adjusting the relative likelihood of respondents being allocated to particular conditions. However, the resultant discrepancy in the total number of cases in each cell led to the decision for the main survey to adopt an alternative procedure of randomising allocation to the different conditions.

Table 1 – Achieved samples by experimental group

Pre-Message Attitude				*Post-Message Attitude*			
Strong		Weak		Strong		Weak	
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
55	56	34	47	41	47	37	50
(n=367)							

The sample characteristics (including demographic information, political affiliation and newspaper readership) are shown in table 2 below.

Table2 – Socio-demographic makeup of pilot sample

Variable	**Categories**	**n (Total n= 358)**	**%**
Sex of respondent	Males	106	29.6
	Females	252	70.4
Age of respondent		Min: 18 Max: 70 Mean: 35	
Level of education	Secondary	68	19
	Secondary – A-level	73	20.4
	First degree	93	26
	Certificate/ Diploma	54	15.1
	Vocational qualification	39	10.9
	Masters/ Doctorate	31	8.7
Occupation	Professional/ Higher technical	63	17.6
	work	57	15.9
	Manager/ Senior administrator	72	20.1
	Clerical	28	7.8
	Sales or services	5	1.4
	Foreman or Supervisor	12	3.4
	Skilled manual work	13	3.6
	Semi-skilled or unskilled manual	36	10.1

• For the purposes of the pilot study, 'other' responses were not coded

	work	19	5.3
	Full-time student	51	14.2
	Voluntary/ Unpaid work	2	0.6
	Other*		
	Have never worked		
Ethnicity	Bangladeshi	1	.3
	Black African	2	.6
	Black Caribbean	2	.6
	Black other	0	0
	Chinese	0	0
	Indian	6	1.7
	Irish	4	1.1
	Pakistani	1	.3
	White	324	95
	Other	15	4.2
	Decline to answer	3	.8
National identity	UK citizen	23	6.4
	British	191	53.4
(How do you describe your nationality?)	English	105	29.3
	Northern Irish	2	.6
	Scottish	19	5.3
	Welsh	11	3.1
	Other	7	2.0
Region	The North West	39	10.9
	The North East	15	4.2
	Yorkshire and the Humber	32	8.9
	The West Midlands	21	5.9
	The East Midlands	31	8.7
	London	60	16.8
	Eastern	14	3.9
	The South West	33	9.2
	The South-East	88	24.6
	Northern Ireland	0	0
	Scotland	16	4.5
	Wales	7	2
	Overseas	2	.6
Newspaper readership	The Express	11	3.1
	The Daily Mail	51	14.2
	The Mirror	23	6.4
	The Daily Star	2	.6
	The Sun	52	14.5
	The Daily Telegraph	17	4.7
	The Financial Times	10	2.8
	The Guardian	23	6.4
	The Independent	15	4.2
	The Times	20	5.6
	The Scotsman	2	.6
	The Glasgow Herald	3	.8

	The Western Mail	1	.3
	Other local daily	15	4.2
	Other	15	4.2
	None of these – I don't read a daily paper	98	27.4
Political party affiliation	Conservative	83	23.2
	Green	17	4.7
	Labour	111	31
	Liberal Democrats	96	26.8
	Plaid Cymru	1	.3
	Scottish National Party	5	1.4
	UKIP	8	2.2
	Other	37	10.3

Procedure

Cover story:

Respondents were directed to a home page for the survey that displayed the 'cover story' for the experiment. This was described as follows:

"This research is being carried out in the Department of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics. It is part of an ongoing project evaluating the different arguments people use for and against joining the single currency, the 'euro'. This particular study looks at arguments in favour of the UK joining the euro - arguments from newspapers, websites and euro campaign material. We are asking people to assist in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments in favour of the introduction of the euro in the UK. Because your personal views about Britain and Europe (for example, whether you think we should join the euro or not) might influence what you think of the arguments, it is necessary to gather some additional information about you. For this reason, we have included lots of different questions that ask your opinions about Britain creating stronger links with Europe, how interested you are in European politics and some questions about how you feel about living in Britain and being British.

The cover story was intended to prepare people for the fact that they would be presented with different arguments in favour of joining the euro. However, the real purpose of presenting the arguments was to examine the persuasive influence of information on attitude change. Thus, half the respondents were asked to read and evaluate the arguments at the start of the survey, and then to respond to the other measures, whilst the other half of the sample received the questions at the onset, followed by the arguments. Some additional procedural instructions were provided to participants on the home page. A button saying 'Start the survey' then directed participants at random to one of the eight versions of the questionnaire.

Message presentation:

A pre-test of an earlier version of the survey had presented respondents with a number of arguments in the form of a single message (as is the method adopted by authors of the ELM, and others working within the model). Respondents were asked to read through the message before evaluating it on a number of different scales. Comments from participants in this earlier pilot agreed that this task was off-putting and overly arduous (in the context of an online survey), and so it was decided that to facilitate the task, the paragraph would be broken down into the three separate (strong or weak) 'arguments' of which it had been composed. These were the arguments that had been investigated in an earlier study designed to establish argument quality in order to develop strong and weak messages for the experiment. In order not to unnecessarily add to the time it would take participants to complete the survey, just three arguments were included. It is acknowledged that presenting the persuasive message in this way is likely to have had an impact on elaboration likelihood (by encouraging people to spend time reading the arguments more carefully). However, the advantages of this approach from the point of view of retaining participants were assumed to be greater than any loss of validity in the experiment resulting from not presenting an 'ELM-style' message. Using this format also supported the cover story, as the task would appear less like an attempt at persuasion, and more like a straightforward task to evaluate different arguments in favour of joining the euro.

The presentation of the arguments was balanced, so that in both the strong and weak conditions, respondents received, firstly, an argument with a national identity frame, secondly, an argument with an economic frame and, thirdly, an argument with a political frame. The three arguments receiving the highest 'persuasiveness' ratings and eliciting the greatest proportion of favourable thoughts in the argument quality questionnaire were chosen as the 'strong' arguments. By comparison, 'weak' arguments received amongst the lowest ratings in persuasiveness and were associated with a large proportion of counterarguments (see chapter 7). The arguments are shown in figure 1. After reading through the messages, respondents were asked to answer a number of questions relating to the arguments, intended to measure elaboration. These are described below.

Figure 1 Strong and weak messages

Strong Argument 1:

Some people argue that we shouldn't join the euro because money has a powerful symbolic value. Yet, the essence of being British has nothing to do with the pound or the euro. Our national identity would be very thin indeed if the best thing about our culture was the Queen's head on the coin.

Strong Argument 2:

A single currency is, in principle, a desirable thing for Britain because of its effect on exchange rate instability, transaction costs, interest rates and because of its disciplinary effects on the public finances of other European nations.

Strong Argument 3:

Britain cannot afford to be left on its own while the rest of Europe goes ahead with a common currency. A modernised Britain needs to be part of Europe, not to stand apart from it.

Weak Argument 1:

Some people argue that we shouldn't join the euro because the pound is a major national symbol for Britain. We are rightly proud of Britain and confident in our national identity. But Britain would still be Britain if we voted to join the euro, and the Queen's head would still be on our coins.

Weak Argument 2:

Joining the euro would be better for shoppers because prices would be lower. Everybody knows that everyday consumer goods are much cheaper in the rest of Europe than in Britain.

Weak Argument 3:

Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency now, it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain. It is inevitable.

Identity salience manipulation:

Six items were included in the pilot survey, intended to prime self-categorisation as British, and thereby, positive ingroup evaluations by artificially raising the salience of British national identity. The procedure employed was broadly based on that used by Brown, Vivian and Hewstone (1999) and Mummendey, Klink and Brown (2001). Because the focus of the study was on the impact of raising salience of national identity on elaboration, in the high salience conditions, respondents received the priming procedure immediately prior to being presented with the persuasive message. First of all, respondents were asked to make a positive evaluation of their nation (Great Britain) in comparison to other (unspecified) European countries (i.e. to engage in an intergroup comparison (Mummendey et al., 2001). In two open questions, respondents were asked, a) 'What are the best things about living in Britain?' and b) 'What characteristics do you like most about British people?' Following these two open questions, four closed questions, in the form of attitude statements with 5-point Likert scale response categories (ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'). These items were intended to reinforce respondents' positive ingroup evaluations, by attempting to draw attention to intergroup differences and decreasing ingroup and outgroup heterogeneity. They are shown in table 3.

Table 3 ***Salience manipulation and manipulation check***

Salience Manipulation:

1. *Of all the nations in the world, Britain stands out*
2. *The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the British*
3. *Generally speaking Britain is a better country than most other countries*
4. *I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world*

Manipulation Check:

5. *It is important t o me to be British*
6. *I identify with British people*
7. *To what extent would you say you feel proud to be British?*
   (Not at all proud to be British – Very proud to be British)

Three additional questions were included in all eight versions of the questionnaire, intended as a manipulation check. These included two measures of ingroup identification, and an additional measure of positive ingroup evaluation.

Survey measures

1) Attitudes towards the euro

The main dependent variable under investigation in the study was a self-rated attitudinal measure of how negative or positive respondents' views of the European single currency. The item used a seven-point scale, ranging from 'Very negative' to 'Very positive' on which respondents were required to rate their views on the euro. The use of the 'semantic differential' style of measure was intended to be somewhat vague, in order to allow the detection of relatively small difference in means. In contrast to the relative ambiguity of this task, a second measure of attitude was included, developed by the Social Research Institute at MORI, was highly specific in differentiating those who were decided in their opinion on the euro (as either 'strongly in favour' or 'strongly opposed'), and those who were undecided and open to persuasion (either in favour or against joining, if they thought it would be good or bad for the British economy). This item was included because identifies a group described as the 'waverers', who form the 'battleground' (Mortimore and Atkinson, 2003) for campaigning for a euro referendum.

In addition to these measures, respondents to the pilot survey were given an open question asking the main reason why they held their view of UK participation in the euro (referring to the MORI item described above). The rationale for including this item was two-fold. Firstly, there is little existing data on the arguments people use to justify their position on the euro. Obviously, this holds considerable scope for qualitative research. The purposes of including the item in the pilot, however, was to develop a closed measure for use in the main survey, in order to identify the main 'arguments' respondents use in favour or against joining the euro, providing an obvious point of comparison with media effects studies presented earlier in the thesis. The open responses from the pilot survey were coded, and a closed question was included in the main survey.

2) Issue involvement

In the ELM, involvement refers to the *motivation* and *ability* of the individual to elaborate on issue-relevant information. With respect to political issues, one of the key factors influencing *motivation* to engage with information is the level of interest a person has in the issue and the degree of personal relevance the issue holds for them (e.g. EMU may be of greater personal relevance to those who travel regularly to Euroland countries). In terms of ability – whilst it is likely that a person's level of education will be important in influencing elaboration – in relation to the issue specifically, ability to elaborate on issue-relevant information will depend on people's existing knowledge about and understanding of the issue. Thus, the survey used multiple indicators for issue involvement intended to tap into these two dimensions of elaboration likelihood. The items were developed from the measures employed in the secondary analysis of the deliberative poll data described in the previous chapter. They included four items asking respondents to use semantic differential-style 7-point scales (as before, with the attitude item) to rate a) how *interested* they are in politics generally as well as, specifically, in the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union;

and b) how knowledgeable they are about Britain's relationship with the EU, and how well-informed they are about the pros and cons of joining the single currency.

In addition to these 4 rating scales which measured subjective evaluations of interest and knowledge, respondents were asked to answer a 5-item quiz on Europe developed from that used in the deliberative poll survey. The rationale behind measuring both 'subjective' and 'objective' levels of knowledge was largely underpinned by previous research by Mueller-Peters et al. (1998a), which found that people were not always very successful in judging how knowledgeable or well-informed they were of the issues surrounding economic and monetary union. Additionally, however, given the difficulties associated with 'objectively' assessing knowledge in the context of a survey, it was essential that multiple indicators be used. The quiz was intended only as a crude measure of people's awareness of factual information about European integration and the euro, and was not intended to undermine the significance of the representations that underlie the attitudes people express in opinion research of this kind.

In addition to the questions relating to levels of interest in and knowledge about the euro issue, a further component of involvement measured in the survey was that of personal relevance. There is a range of ways in which EMU can hold varying degrees of personal relevance for different people, for example, depending on whether they are homeowners; those running small businesses, etc. To examine all such variables is obviously beyond the scope of the present research. However, given the significance of recent European travel experience and the ability to speak European languages in predicting varying levels of involvement in the deliberative poll study, these two variables were included in the present survey. The former was addressed by asking respondents whether they had travelled to any European countries since the launch of the euro (and if so, which countries), and the latter was addressed by an item asking if the respondent could speak any European language(s) either fluently, a little or not at all.

All these items were used to calculate an overall score of 'involvement'. This was calculated simply as the sum of scores on each of the items. Each correct response to the quiz was scored 1; respondents scored 1 if they had travelled to any Euroland country since the introduction of notes and coins in January 2002; respondents scored 2 if they spoke another European language fluently and 1 if they spoke another European language a little. Issue involvement was, thus, scored out of a total of 32 points. Scores were scaled so that they ranged between 0 and 100, and the sample was split into two equal groups, representing low and high involvement participants.

3. Argument Elaboration

To test the predictions of the ELM, a number of measures of argument elaboration were included. These were based on Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) account of the methodology, which describes how using manipulations of argument quality and measures of message elaboration (such as though-listing techniques or message recall tasks) enable the researcher to drawn conclusions about whether central or peripheral route processing has taken place, and, if central, whether this processing has been relatively objective or relatively biased. Once again, using the online survey method imposed a number of constraints as far as simply replicating Petty and Cacioppo's method was concerned and it was necessary to adapt their techniques and operationalise their measures in such a way as would be suitable for an online self-completion questionnaire.

Five measures of argument elaboration were included. Firstly, respondents were asked to identify which of the three arguments they had liked the best. Response alternatives included the options 'None of them' and 'Don't know', as well as a choice between arguments 1, 2 and 3. This item and the subsequent one, which asked respondents which of the arguments they had 'disagreed with the most', was intended as a means of capturing cognitive responses to the arguments. The former measured whether any of the arguments had elicited favourable thoughts amongst respondents, whilst the latter was intended to capture the experience of counter-argumentative thoughts elicited by the arguments.

Secondly, two items taken directly from Petty and Cacioppo (1986) asked a) which of the arguments respondents found most convincing and b) which respondents felt had made their point the most effectively. The rationale behind the inclusion of these two items was to obtain a measure of whether respondents had carefully considered the cogency of the message arguments by providing an overall evaluation of message quality (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; p.46-47). Instead of providing respondents with an ordinal sale, however, once again, a choice was offered between each of the three arguments, 'None of them', or 'Don't know'.

4. Demographic measures and political engagement

As is shown in table 2, a number of demographic items and measures of political engagement were included to allow analysis of the data across different groups. These items were also included to enable comparison of the achieved sample with those of random sample surveys carried out by opinion research organisations (e.g. MORI, and the EC's Eurobarometer survey).

Results

A preliminary analysis of the (majority of) data from the pilot survey (n=358) was conducted in order to examine the appropriate of the measures and the effectiveness of the different manipulations. The analysis shall be presented in the following order: 1) main message effects; 2) argument quality effects; 3) involvement; 4) national identity manipulation; 5) message elaboration.

Main message effect:

One-way analysis of variance revealed a strong, significant difference between the pre- and post-message attitudes, indicating a clear persuasive effect of being exposed to arguments in favour of joining the euro. Mean scores on the attitude measure before message exposure were 3.44, whilst those after message exposure were 4.12 ($F_{1,356}$ = 15.45, p<0.001).

Argument quality effect:

The ELM predicts that strong arguments will be more persuasive than weak arguments. Firstly, the main argument quality effect was investigated. Strong arguments produced greater attitude change than weak arguments. The difference between pre- and post-message attitudes in the weak message condition was 0.42, whereas that in the strong message condition was 0.91. The difference was not found to be significant (p=.161; observed power=0.288). Nevertheless, the ELM predicts that this effect will be moderated by individuals' prior level of involvement in the issue, with greater differentiation between strong and weak arguments expected amongst high involvement participants. Using a crude summed score on the involvement measures (see below), the sample was divided into high and low involvement groups to explore this effect. Mean attitude change (calculated as the difference between pre- and post-message attitudes) for low and high involvement groups, in the strong and weak argument conditions are shown in table 4. However, the interaction effect of pre- and post-message attitude*argument quality*involvement was not found to be significant using ANOVA ($p=0.97$; observed power = 0.05). Thus, it was concluded that whilst differences were observed, and in the anticipated direction, the observed power of the experiment was not sufficient to draw conclusions regarding the size of the effect and whether or not it was a result of sampling fluctuation, or real differences in the population. However, the differences observed were taken as evidence for an argument quality effect, and it was decided that the manipulation had been successful. The larger sample size in the main survey will provide a more powerful test of the effect.

Table 5 ***Mean attitude change by argument quality and involvement***

	Argument Quality	
Involvement	**Weak**	**Strong**
Low	0.41	0.77
High	0.48	0.87

Measuring involvement:

Interest and subjective knowledge:

As was detailed above, multiple indicators for issue involvement were used in the survey. Correlations between the first four items are shown below. Taken together as a scale, reliability analysis yielded an alpha of .85. Mean scores on the item are shown in table 5. – unsurprisingly, respondents were generally quite interested in Britain's relationship with the EU. Figure 2 shows the extent of the skew, but it is not severe. Figure 3 shows the distribution of scores on the four items taken together, and shows a normal distribution.

Figure 3 Interest in Europe

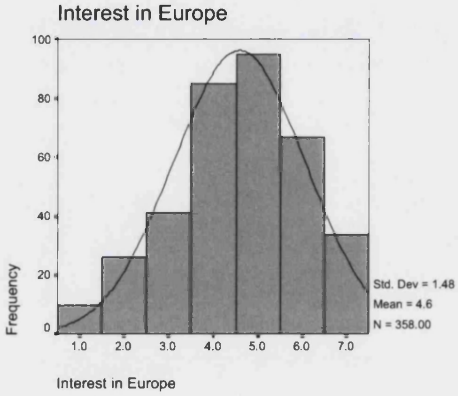
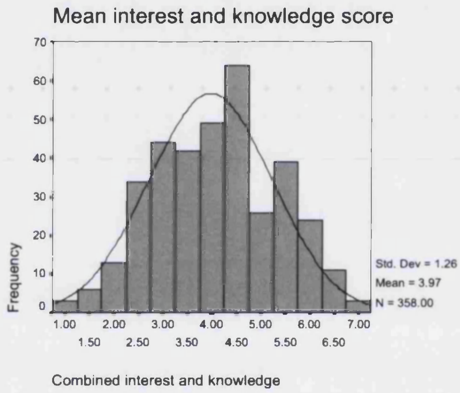


Figure 4 Involvement score



Correlations

		Interest in politics	Interest in Europe	Knowledge about Europe	Informed about euro
Interest in politics	Pearson Correlation				
	N				
Interest in Europe	Pearson Correlation	.613**			
	N	357			
Knowledge about Europe	Pearson Correlation	.647**	.635**		
	N	357	358		
Informed about euro	Pearson Correlation	.496**	.453**	.631**	
	N	357	358	358	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 Mean scores on involvement variables

Item	Mean score (n=357)	Standard Deviation
How interested would you say you are in politics generally?	3.99	1.68
How interested would you say you are in the future of Britain's relationship with the EU?	4.59	1.47
How knowledgeable would you say you are about Britain's relationship with the EU?	3.64	1.42
How well informed do you feel about the pros and cons of joining the single currency?	3.66	1.50

Objective levels of knowledge:

Table 6 Distribution of responses to knowledge quiz

Quiz item	Correct	Incorrect	Not Sure
1. *Switzerland is to join the European Union (false)*	42.2	15.4	42.5
2. *Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years (true)*	53.9	9.8	36.3
3. *Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels (false)*	77.7	4.7	17.6
4. *One Euro is worth less than one Pound Sterling (true)*	81.8	11.5	6.7
5. *One of the government's economic tests states that we will not be able to join the euro unless it is good for British consumers (false)*	28.2	34.9	36.9

Table 6 shows the results of the knowledge quiz. Recoding 'don't know' responses as 'incorrect' allowed analysis of the items together as a scale. Mean scores for the five items, and item-total statistics are shown in table 7. Reliability analysis of the five-item knowledge scale yielded a value for Cronbach's alpha of just 0.47. Examining the item-total statistics provides some indication as to which items might be contributing to this poor scale performance. Both quiz items 4 and 5 have low corrected item-total correlations, indicating that they discriminate poorly between respondents on the scale as a whole. The value for alpha that could be achieved by removing the items is close to the achieved alpha, suggesting that neither item adds much to the reliability of the scale as a whole. Respondents found item 4 particularly easy, with 82% correctly answering the question. Item 5, by comparison, was particularly difficult for respondents. Just 28% correctly responded 'false', whilst 37% indicated they were not sure what the answer was.

Table 7 ***Item statistics for knowledge quiz***

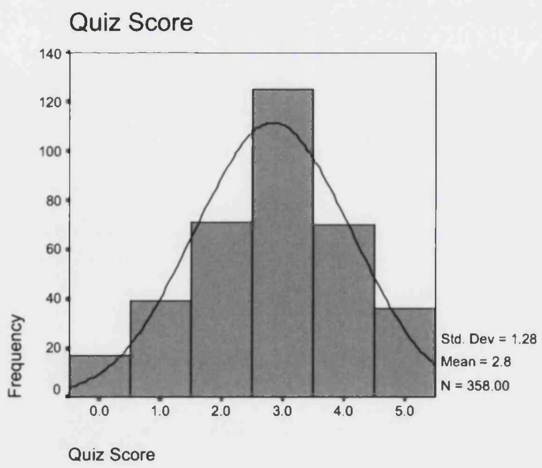
Quiz item	Mean	Corrected Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1. *Switzerland is to join the European Union (false)*	.423	.288	.390
2. *Elections to the European Parliament are held every 5 years (true)*	.539	.251	.419
3. *Britain's income tax rates are decided in Brussels (false)*	.778	.350	.353
4. *One Euro is worth less than one Pound Sterling (true)*	.818	.191	.453
5. *One of the government's economic tests states that we will not be able to join the euro unless it is good for British consumers (false)*	.282	.189	.459

Including at least one easy item can be beneficial for a knowledge scale of this kind – for example, by putting the item at the start of the scale, it could help to 'relax' respondents. If the item loads highly on the scale as a whole (as indicated by the item-total correlations), it means it has the power to discriminate well between respondents of varying levels of knowledge. Such, a rationale would justify the inclusion of item 3, for example. However, in the case of item 4, it seems that the question is of little value, either in its own right, or for the scale as a whole. Similarly, item 5 appears to be of little value to the scale, but this time because of the difficulty respondents experienced with it. Whilst this would be no justification for excluding the item per se, it does seem that the ambiguity of the item might be contributing to the large number of incorrect responses. The fact that a high proportion of respondents were not able to answer the question correctly is in-keeping with the findings of other research that has shown that the majority of British people are unable to name any of the government's five economic tests. On the other hand, whilst the statement is false – none of the tests directly concern the interest of British consumers – it could also be argued that the economic tests have British consumers in their interests. Thus, it could be argued that there is no clear right or wrong answer to this question.

Whether or not this is indeed the case, it was decided that the two items (4 and 5) should be removed from the scale and replaced in the main survey by two other items. The two replacement items were taken from a scale developed and tested by Allum (unpublished), and were both found to be good discriminators on the scale in which they were included, as well as being neither especially difficult nor easy for his respondents.

Figure 5 shows the almost perfectly normal distribution of scores on the knowledge quiz scale as a whole, in spite of the problems associated with the reliability of the scale.

Figure 5 Distribution of responses to quiz items



Personal relevance:

Fifty-seven per cent of the sample stated that they could speak at least one other European language a little, compared with 33.5% who could speak no other languages at all, and just 10% who could speak another European language fluently. Fifty-five per cent (n=197) of the sample had visited another European country since 1st January 2002 (when euro notes and coins were introduced, and just one of these people had *only* been to Sweden, where the euro has not yet been adopted (others travelling to Denmark and Sweden had also visited other Euroland countries).

In order to calculate an overall score for involvement, it had been intended to create a scale from the subjective involvement measures, objective knowledge measure and the measures of personal relevance. However, examining the correlations between all sets of variables indicated that there was little justification for calculating involvement in the issue on the basis of personal experience of travelling in Euroland, or the ability to speak foreign languages (although both of these variables were positively and significantly correlated with knowledge and interest in the issue). Thus, it was decided to calculate an overall 'involvement score' on the basis of responses to the four subjective measures of interest and knowledge and the quiz score. All these scores were positively and highly correlated with each other. Principal component analysis of the five measures extracted a single component with an eigenvalue higher than 1, accounting for over 60% of the total variance. Figure 6 shows the distribution of scores on the subjective involvement measure and figure 7 shows that for the overall involvement measure (calculated as the sum of the subjective and objective measures).

Figure 6 Distribution of scores on subjective involvement measures

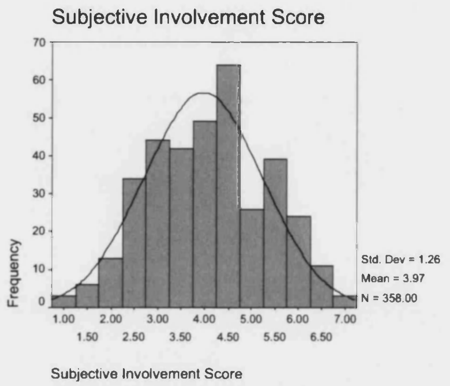
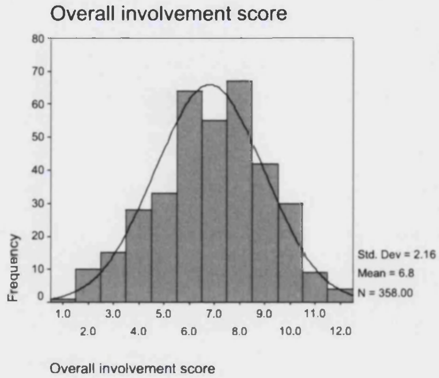


Figure 7 *Distribution of scores on overall involvement index*



From the involvement score (which can be viewed as a continuum from low to high involvement in the euro issue, as postulated in the ELM), it was possible to divide the sample into high and low involvement groups.

National Identity Manipulation:

To check whether the national identity salience manipulation had worked or not, responses to the three items included in all versions of the survey as manipulation checks were analysed. Table 8 contains means scores on the three items in the low and high salience conditions. Independent samples t-tests indicated that only the difference between groups on the first item was statistically significant (t=-2.06, d.f.= 356, p=0.005). Raising the salience of national identity appears to have had the effect of reducing levels of identification and positive ingroup evaluation. This finding runs counter to the expected effect of raising identity salience, which was that people would identify more strongly with their national ingroup, and consequently, rate that group more favourably. Why?

Table 8 ***Scores on salience manipulation check variables***

Item	**Low Salience Condition**	**High Salience Condition**
It is important to me to be British (coded 1-5)	3.87	3.52
I identify with British people (coded 1-5)	3.78	3.69
To what extent do you feel proud to be British? (coded 1-7)	4.93	4.68

One explanation for this somewhat counter-intuitive finding is that owing to external events, being British does not present ingroup members with the opportunities for positive self-esteem that it might have do at other points in time. The pilot survey was fielded at a time when public opposition to military action against Iraq was at its highest, and with it, very high levels of anti-British and anti-American sentiment in Europe. The first weekend when the survey was in the field saw the staging of the largest peace demonstration in this country ever (15^{th} February 2003). In other words, people were filling out the survey at a time when the public were not feeling especially proud to be British. Completing the priming procedure in the survey, therefore, could have had the effect of making those in the high salience condition reflect on their national identity and to negatively evaluate in the context of the events current at that time. In this sense, the responses of those in the low salience condition can be seen to represent a baseline level of national identification. This explanation is supported by responses to the open questions in the salience manipulation, many of which contained negative comments about living in Britain today.

However, an alternative explanation exists, and that is that the incongruous findings are a possible artefact of the design of the survey. In the high salience conditions, national identification (the manipulation check) was measured immediately following the priming procedure, and immediately prior to the presentation of the arguments. In the low salience conditions, however, the national identification measures were included along with the demographic items at the end of the survey (i.e. after message presentation). The decision to do this was based on the concern that the three manipulation checks in themselves might have the effect of raising national identity. Because the control condition aimed to ensure that the category British was not artificially primed in any way prior to message evaluation, it seemed appropriate to include the measure later in the survey. By contrast, it seemed sensible to check the success of the manipulation immediately after priming. The outcome of this decision, however, is that it is not possible to compare the three items intended to check the success of the manipulation, as it is not possible to know the cause of any resultant difference between the high and low salience conditions. What we are essentially comparing is national identification before and after message exposure. In other words, the observed difference in national identification/ positive ingroup evaluation could be a function of exposure to the message arguments.

If it is, indeed, the case that reading arguments about the euro has the effect of raising the salience of national identity, and priming positive ingroup evaluation (over and above any artificial method of achieving this), then one explanation might be that the way in which people think about the issue of the single currency is implicitly based on the ingroup/outgroup distinction of "Britain *and* Europe". There are two possible ways of checking whether this is the case. The first involves checking for any differences in identification between the strong and weak message conditions. If the messages are influencing British identification, then we might expect some difference on the basis of argument quality. Analysing data only from those respondents in the low salience conditions, a t-test was conducted to compare means on the identification measures between strong and weak argument conditions. No difference between the two conditions was found. However, the strong and weak message conditions were balanced such that both started with an argument framed around national identity, so it is possible that both strong and weak messages had an equal influence on national identification. A second check for a message effect on identity salience involves looking for any differences between high and low involvement participants, who, according to the ELM, would be expected to respond differentially to persuasion attempts in terms of extent to which engage with the message arguments. Any differences in elaboration might manifest themselves as differences in ingroup identification (if the messages are indeed 'persuading' people to feel more British). A t-test comparing differences between high and low involvement participants in the low salience condition found that high involvement participants had higher scores on all three measures of identification, but none of the differences were statistically significant (unsurprising given the minimal power associated with a sample of this size). Such a finding might well be consistent with a message elaboration (or indeed, issue elaboration) effect on national identification. That is to say, *thinking* about the issue of the euro raises the salience of national identity.

In short, the design of the survey confounds national identification measures with message exposure, and it is not possible on the basis of the data gathered from the pilot survey to decide whether or not the manipulation was successful in raising the salience of national identity (there are no pre-message, pre-manipulation measures of national identification). It seems likely that both explanations are true. On the one hand, asking respondents to reflect on what it means to be British at a time when people are more accountable for that identity than ever before may well have had the effect of tempering people's pride in being a member of that category. On the other hand, it seems that it is also likely that, as hypothesised, thinking about Europe in and of itself, has the effect of raising national identity salience, and with it, enhancing positive ingroup evaluations.

Given the problems associated with the priming procedure, it was not appropriate to conduct any extensive analyses explicitly exploring the effect of national identity salience on message elaboration and attitude change. Because of this, it was not possible to make a fully informed decision about whether or not it was it was appropriate to retain the identity manipulation in the design of the study. Therefore, the decision was made to retain the manipulation, but to modify it as much as possible so as to maximise the likelihood of respondents in the high salience condition making positive ingroup evaluations (regardless of external events!), and to rectify the problem of confounding the manipulation with message exposure by measuring ingroup identification at the same point in the survey (either both before or both after the presentation of the arguments). In the end, it was decided to locate the manipulation checks immediately before message exposure, so as to have a direct measure of the impact of the manipulation, unrelated to any possible message effect on identification. The salience manipulations employed in the main survey are described in chapter 8.

Argument Elaboration:

The final aspect of the survey design that was assessed through analysis of the data from the pilot study was the measures of argument elaboration that were specially developed for use in the context of the online survey method. All the measures of argument elaboration were intended to capture the extent to which respondents had engaged in thoughtful message processing, and the *direction* of this processing (i.e. whether it was relatively objective or relatively biased).

In order to test the ELM, it is important to assess how much message processing participants are engaged in. As we saw earlier, the present survey employed three different measures of elaboration.

1) Self-reports of effort

Self-reported elaboration effort was measured on a seven-point scale. As expected, the mean score for high involvement participants (5.10) was significantly higher than for low involvement participants (4.36) – $t = -4.35$, d.f.=244; $p<0.001$. Low salience participants did not engage in significantly less effort than high salience participants, however, suggesting that raised identity salience did not measurably reduce to quantity of argument elaboration (independent of levels of involvement).

2) Measures of favourable thoughts and counter-argumentation

The first two items focused on whether respondents had reacted positively or negatively towards the arguments – in other words, on the cognitive responses elicited by the message amongst respondents. According to the ELM, 'strong' arguments will elicit more favourable cognitive responses than 'weak' messages, which will be more inclined to encourage counter-argumentation. Furthermore, this effect will be moderated by involvement, with low-involvement participants being less likely to differentiate strong and weak arguments. The second two items focused on the overall persuasiveness of the different arguments, and again, it was anticipated that high involvement participants would be better judges of the persuasiveness of the arguments than low involvement participants. In order to explore differences in the ratings of arguments by high involvement participants across the strong and weak argument quality conditions, frequencies of responses to the four main message elaboration measures were examined. As predicted, by comparison with low involvement participants, high involvement respondents were more likely to identify one of the three arguments as being either more likeable, counter-arguable, more convincing or more effective. Low involvement participants being more likely to select 'none of them' or 'don't know' in response to the four items. However, no differences in response patterns amongst only high involvement participants were found between the strong and weak argument conditions.

It is likely that the finding that there was no difference between the strong and weak argument conditions is a result of poor design of these four measures. Being categorical variables, the items do not provide a useful means by which to compare messages on the basis of argument quality, although they do provide a (albeit somewhat crude) measure of the extent of elaboration. For this reason, it was decided that the measures of overall message cogency would be converted to ordinal scales, as prescribed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), and the cognitive response measures would be excluded from the main survey altogether. Losing these two measures was not considered problematic, given that the design already includes the argument quality manipulation central to the procedure for assessing the extent of cognitive processing advocated by Petty and Cacioppo (1986; 44). In addition, a further measure was added which asked respondents to indicate the degree to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the message arguments (taken together). This measure was intended to provide a further means by which to explore the influence of the persuasion variable (identity salience) on message processing, in conjunction with the manipulation of argument quality.

Peripheral cues:

If raising the salience of national identity works as a peripheral cue in the persuasion context, then it ought to have the ability to affect attitudes in the absence of any arguments. One way to test this idea would be to look to see if there is a difference between attitudes in the high and low salience conditions, prior to message processing. Unfortunately, the present design does not allow such a test. Comparing attitudes in the high and low salience conditions after message processing gives some indication of the influence of salience on attitudes, but not independent of message presentation. Mean euro attitude in the high salience condition was 3.99, and 4.22 in the low salience condition (not significant) – a difference in-keeping with the present theory that predicts that highly salient national identity will be associated with less positive attitudes towards the euro. The decision was taken to ensure that the design of the main survey would enable a comparison of pre-message attitudes across high and low salience conditions (i.e. to manipulate identity salience prior to the measurement of attitudes).

Summary of design decisions taken on the basis of findings from the pilot study:

To summarise, the piloting of the survey resulted in the modification of the design and measures of the study in the following way:

Design:

The basic 2*2*2*2 experimental design of the study was retained for the main survey. The additional measures of involvement were seen to be a satisfactory means of providing an intrinsic blocking factor in the design, comparing low and high involvement participants. This design entailed the use of eight versions of the questionnaire, varying in terms of the ordering of questions and the presence or absence of the identity manipulation (6? additional items) in the high and low salience conditions.

Because of the problems experienced when checking the success of the identity salience manipulation using the design employed in the pilot study, it was necessary to change the time at which ingroup identification and positive ingroup evaluation were measured. It was decided that in order to be able to isolate the effect of the manipulation from any message influence of identification, it would be better to include the manipulation check *before* message presentation (in all conditions). Similarly, in order to provide a means of examining the potential influence of national identity on attitudes as a peripheral cue, high salience conditions would start with the priming procedure, immediately followed by attitude measurement in the pre-message conditions. Thus, question-ordering in the main survey was as shown in figure 8 (for both strong and weak message conditions).

Figure 8 Question ordering for the main experiment

Pre-Message/ High Salience Conditions	**Pre-Message/ Low Salience Conditions**	**Post-Message/ High Salience Conditions**	**Post-Message/ Low Salience Conditions**
1. Salience manipulation 2. Attitudes 3. Involvement 4. National identification 5. Argument elaboration 6. Demographics 7. Political engagement	1. Attitudes 2. Involvement 3. National identification 4. Argument elaboration 5. Demographics 6. Political engagement	1. Salience manipulation 2. National identification 3. Argument elaboration 4. Attitudes 5. Involvement 6. Demographics 7. Political engagement	1. National identification 2. Argument elaboration 3. Attitudes 4. Involvement 5. Demographics 6. Political engagement

Measures:

Attitudes: All attitude measures would remain unchanged with the exception of that asking the reasons why respondents held their particular view on the euro. A closed question for this variable was developed for the main survey on the basis of responses to the open question in the pilot.

Arguments: Strong and weak argument conditions would remain unchanged.

Involvement: All measures would remain unchanged except for the replacement of 2 of the quiz items by two items pre-tested elsewhere by Allum (unpublished). The involvement continuum for the main survey would be calculated on the basis of responses to the subjective involvement rating and the quiz score. The 'personal relevance' measures would be included for the purposes of comparison with alternative data sources.

Salience manipulation: Owing to the possibility that the priming procedure employed in the pilot study had had the effect of reducing positive ingroup evaluations and the degree of ingroup identification, a number of modifications were made to the procedure which had the aim of maximising the likelihood of self-categorisation. Table 9 shows the new priming procedure, intended to raise the salience of British national identity by achieving the following:

1) Drawing attention to intergroup differences
2) Decreasing ingroup and outgroup heterogeneity
3) Increasing the typicality of outgroup exemplars
4) Specifically evoking category cues
5) Making the category British more accessible to respondents than other categories (e.g. through frequent references to the category)
6) Increasing the 'fit' between stimulus input and the respondents' category specifications (Brown et al., 2000)
7) Increasing the accessibility of stereotypes

In addition to the modifications to question wording, symbols intended to specifically evoke category cues were included on the home page of the survey and next to the priming procedure in the high salience conditions. These symbols included a Union Jack flag, a point coin and the Queen's head (from a coin), repeated as a pattern forming a banner across the page.

Table 9 ***Modified priming procedure based on the results of the pilot***

1) *What would you say are the best things about living in Britain compared with other European countries? e.g. You may think the best thing about living in Britain is the BBC, the countryside, or the weather! Please write your answer in the space provided below.*

2) *What characteristics do you most like about British people compared with other Europeans? e.g. Some say British people are very polite, or that the Brits have a good sense of humour! Please write your answer in the space provided below.*

3) *Now, thinking about living in Britain and being British, how typical of British people would you say you are? (Very typically British, Fairly typically British, Not very typically British, Not at all typically British)*

4) *Now think of one other European country and name one stereotype that you associate with that country. e.g. French people are romantic*
   Dutch people are liberal

5) *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*
   'Of all the nations in the world, Britain stands out'

6) *'I would rather be a British citizen than a citizen of any other European country'*

Manipulation check: The measures of national identification remained unchanged in the main survey, apart from the order in which they appeared in different versions of the survey.

Argument elaboration: The two 'cognitive responses' variables were not included in the main survey. Overall message cogency measures were modified so that respondents would rate the strength of all three arguments taken together on two 7-point scales. An additional item asking how much respondents agreed or disagreed with the arguments was included to facilitate the analysis of the objectiveness of message processing. The self-rated elaboration effort measure was retained.

Demographics and political engagement: All measures in this section remained unchanged.