

ADV

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 31 of A Different View

Felipe Nunes
Thomas Bobinger
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Welcome to issue 31 of *A Different View*. A month has gone by since the elections to the European Parliament (EP) in June. The results have told us a lot, but questions remain: Firstly, the center-right won a stunning victory and will continue to provide the EP president. Remarkably this position went for the first time to the Polish conservative and former prime minister Jerzy Buzek. Nonetheless, the Parliament has some doubts about Commission president Barroso. Will he be able to secure a second term in office? And what will he do to improve relations with the EP.

Secondly, the far right and eurosceptics gained a substantial amount of seats. Time will tell if they manage to put together a coherent fraction and whether they can gain any influence in the committees. However, one must point to the paradox that parties that try to achieve the very dissolution of the EU (and therefore of the EP) now sit in Strasburg. The development is at best worrying.

Thirdly, despite a refreshed campaign, the overall turnout was historically low. Discussions about the democratic deficit, deeper integration and the European demos will continue. Experts doubt that the Lisbon treaty which after eight years of work is hardly more than a disappointment in terms of institutional

reform and European identity will fundamentally contribute to a lasting change. New candidates the latest of them Iceland knock on the door of EU membership. It is up to the EP to feel the heartbeat of the European population on this issue, and to ensure independence of national governments when it comes to giving its consent to a new member. The EP will have the responsibility to do its part in shaping the debate and to remind European leaders of the spirit of the founding fathers: the tandem of enlargement and deeper integration.

Surely, all of the above are no easy tasks at first sight. Yet, the EP needs to grow with its responsibilities. In order to contribute to the debate we have put together a selection of articles. In our opinion section Christian Rauh opens the debate about the EP elections by analyzing the low voter turnout. He argues that European political elites fail to politicize citizens. Next, Sven Brendel draws our attention to an issue that has well politicized the masses in the US: the roughly \$ 800 billion stimulus package. The reader is invited to make the comparison with the national stimuli packages in Europe and especially the EU Commission's attempt to conduct a harmonized European approach. The last opinion article by Tobias Franke reflects on the

campaign in the run-up to the EP elections. He defends the idea that the first step to mobilize more people is not a European campaign but some key competences and a new election procedure for the EP.

In the academic section Thomas Oberkirch and Matthias Kranke examine more closely the success of the Austrian and British eurosceptics during the 2009 EP elections. They wonder in particular whether or not protest voting has a role to play in the results. Thomas Bobinger then tackles one of the issues the new EP will have to deal with in the coming five years: security of energy supply. He outlines what is at stake, how much leeway the new parliamentarians might have and what we can and should expect. Finally, Bennet Strang reminds us of the heated debate that took place in Great-Britain in the last years about a possible referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. This article is also meant to get readers thinking about the pro's and con's of the upcoming Irish referendum, which will be the topic in our October issue.

The team of editors wishes you a splendid summer and hopes you enjoy reading the 31st issue of *A Different View*.

Opinion Articles

The repeatedly low turnout in EP elections: Political elites fail in politicising citizens

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The recent elections to the European Parliament (EP) again underscored one of the most important challenges the European Union faces: the lack of involvement on part of the citizens governed.

Before the interested reader starts turning pages now, this is neither another piece lamenting the 'democratic deficit' of the European institutions or the faulty 'second order' perception of the elections in the public. Nor is it another Eurosceptic pamphlet fundamentally criticizing the process or appropriateness of political integration in Europe. Rather, I argue in this opinion piece that the lack of citizen involvement at least partly results from misperceptions on part of the political elites and their failure to politicise actual European decisions.

The perspective draws heavily on the German campaigns in the run-up to the June EP elections. However, I am sure that the observed problem, the proposed solution and the resulting questions bear relevance in most member states of the Union.

Let's start with the problem first. Once again, turnout in the EP elections was exceptionally low. With almost 57% of the people preferring their usual Sunday activities over having a say on Europe's political agenda, Germany's turnout rate roughly equalled the European average. Strikingly, a majority

of European people did not see sufficient relevance in deciding about the directions of European policies.

As familiar as the fact of low public participation on European matters is, as familiar were the reactions of German political elites as soon as the figures were known. Their arguments very much resembled those heard after the 2005 elections, after the referenda in France and the Netherlands the same year, or after the Irish 'No' in June 2008.

Broadly speaking, elites tend to resort to three major claims when it comes to a lack of mobilization or adverse public opinion. First, people would not understand how important European Union decisions politically are. Second, people would not understand that the Union's democratic quality is consistently improving with the steadily increasing powers of the EP. And third, people would not understand that the European Union is a stable source of prosperity and peace. In conclusion, thus, elites of all mainstream political camps fell back to their usual reflex: If one only communicates the Union's benefits better, people will surely show up at the ballot box and support integration next time.

This reflex is exactly the crux of the matter. It is not that the overall existence of the claimed benefits is doubted here. It is just that their presumed relevance

for mobilizing public participation appears vastly overstated. They are simply too abstract to provide the average European citizen with any meaningful clues as to whether he or she should participate in European decision making.

Of course, from an EU expert's point of view it is reasonable to argue that European decisions can limit the leeway of national politics considerably. It is likewise reasonable to argue that the spread of the co-decision procedure into new policy areas has increased the power of the Parliament vis-à-vis the Council and the Commission. And it is similarly reasonable to argue that the internal market results in efficiency gains and reduces the incentives for conflict among the involved nations. However, if spelled out fully and broken down to the daily life of the individual voter, these arguments rely on long causal chains and marginal effects. Claiming the political importance of the EU, its democratic quality, or its economic and political benefits rests on rather sophisticated, macro-level and partially even counterfactual arguments. Though we often employ 'European benefits' as commonplaces, claiming them is far from being trivial or self-evident.

In this vein, political elites and admittedly often also political scientists tend to forget that citizens rarely can invest the same amount of time to review and to internalise such arguments. Nor can they spend considerable resources on relating specific political decisions to the grand lines of supranational power, to the shallows of institutionalist theory, or to the logic of economic and security externalities in international cooperation. Unlike for political elites or political scientists it is simply not their job. They utterly have other things to do. If the European citizen is perceived this way, however, the solution to a lack of participation can not lie in repeatedly telling European citizens how important, how democratic, and how beneficial the European Union is. Rather, the solution must lie in actually showing them.

In other words, elites should actively engage in the politicisation of European decisions. Normative democratic theory teaches us that elites ideally serve as intermediaries between the individual citizen and what Easton calls 'the authoritative allocation of values'. This intermediary role, however, entails not only the upstream aggregation of individual preferences but it also encompasses the downstream information about what is actually on the table. It is especially in this regard that elites have failed in living up to their role. Here, the German party campaigns in the run-up to the EP elections serve as an insightful example.

Let us consider for instance what the campaigning parties have done and what they could have done. Actually, their campaigns clearly lacked references to European policies at all. For instance, Germany's major conservative party held up the rather content-free slogan "We in Europe". The social

democrats engaged in negative campaigning drawing exclusively on cartoon-like clichés of their major opponents. The green party advertised "Economy and environment, human and social" which resulted in a presumably catchy German abbreviation which hardly meant anything to anybody. The liberal party, in turn, largely relied on the face of their front-runner and slogans that may cover any kind of policy one can image such as "Work must be worth it again". Finally, the far-left alluded some substance in demanding general wage floors and universal peace but like the others excluded upcoming questions in the EP.

Now imagine that you are not a student or scholar of political science, that you are not a civil servant, and that you are not a politician. In other words, imagine that you are not in any way professionally engaged in following political debates, in retrieving preferences of political actors, or in developing viable policy alternatives. Instead, you are concerned about your family and your daily job and you follow news only occasionally. What kind of message do you receive from the campaigns outlined above? What kind of relevant decisions and alternatives do the political elites signal to you? And why should you bother about the EP at all?

Now, that's it for the problem. Let's take a look at the solution and see what political elites could have done. How could their intermediary role have been fulfilled as I demanded it above? How could they have shown the people that Europe is relevant and potentially beneficial instead of just claiming it? The answer is almost trivial: They should have relied on actual decisions the upcoming Parliament and its future members face and they should have related these decisions to the every-day life of the citizens. Ultimately I argue that the solution lies in politicising these citizens.

Indeed, German parties could have much more engaged in the actual decisions their candidates are going to make. It is common in the EU system that much of the upcoming Parliament agenda is already known at the time of the elections. Many Commission proposals are already on the table. Likewise, the rather long policy cycle makes it not all too hard to find out what the Commission has in the pipeline. Such issues would have provided a formidable vehicle to politicisation. In line with more recent strands of the scientific literature, politicisation is understood here as the polarisation of citizen opinions on European policies by actively voicing alternatives in public and linking them to extant conflict dimensions.

Admittedly, this sounds like rather abstract political science talk again but it can be easily filled with life. Just venture a look at the agenda of the freshly elected parliament. There we find, for example, the Commission proposals on maternity leave from last October. For German mothers, on the one hand, the current proposals would extend the

protected period. Further, it enables them to decide to which share this period covers the time before and after the birth. On the other hand, the measures interfere with the obligatory wage continuation under Germany law imposing considerable extra costs on business which might hit back on the labour market for young women. Without engaging in a substantial discussion about the actual policy here, three things should be noted for our purpose: (a) the newly elected Parliamentarians will have to decide about this issue, (b) the issue touches upon a central decision in the life of many European citizens, and (c) the alternatives can be easily linked back to the basic ideologies of parties along the left-right dimension. Taken together, it would have been easy for party elites to exploit this piece of legislation in campaigning for the EP.

Take another example that fits this pattern: the proposed directive on consumer rights. On the one hand, this measure provides protection to the individual consumer, for instance through information obligations for traders, by prescribing cooling-off periods after online shopping, or by obligatory guarantees for purchased goods. On the other hand, the proposal undermines some extant rules in Germany and prohibits member states to enact any further-reaching national legislation. Again, the policy matter fulfils the basic conditions for politicisation: The Parliamentarians will decide about and amend it, it affects the every-day life of European citizens and is thus quickly comprehensible, and it also involves the decision about market vs. state intervention and may be linked to extant party cleavages.

As a final example of what could have been exploited politically, the upcoming Parliament will decide on a range of measures on the regulation of financial markets. In reaction to the financial crisis both, rating agencies and hedge funds will be re-regulated in the current term. Further, the Commission will propose new rules on financial supervision to the Parliament in autumn. Again, it are exactly those people the citizens were expected to vote last June who will decide and amend these envisaged regulations. Again, political elites could have easily linked the issues at stake to the daily life of citizens as the financial crisis had shown quite plainly that financial markets and individual welfare are connected. And again, the issues touch the question of whether the state or the market should allocate societal resources which can be clearly framed along the ideological bases of the different parties.

Well, admittedly I do not propose catchy party slogans here, but the point should be clear. At the time of the elections there were current European issues which are easily communicable in clear political terms. The inevitable involvement of the Parliament would have allowed political elites to credibly argue in public about the alternatives involved. And, finally, it would have meant not much effort for political elites to

provide direct links to the daily life of those citizens they want to see at the ballot box. Turnout may have a range of determinants, but participation would have increased considerably if the elites had provided the citizens with something to decide about.

Finally, the obviousness of the proposed solution leads to the question whether the failure of elites in fulfilling their intermediary role can be explained only by the outlined misperceptions. Indeed, political science literature holds quite a number of arguments claiming that supranational decision-making is also a strategic tool to de-politicise decisions. And clearly, the EU would change in the light of politicised decision-making. However apart from any normative concerns one can hold the actual benefits of integration may also serve as a strategic incentive for politicisation. If mainstream political elites continue to fail in communicating actual European decisions, the fringes of the political spectrum will profit on that. The claimed effect of the Lisbon treaty on Irish abortion laws serves as a warning sign in this regard. So, if you need the citizens, politicise them.

Opinion Articles

Economic CPR: Big Government for Big Growth

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As of this writing the United States has been in a recession for well over a year. GDP has contracted 6.2% over the course of the past year and U6 unemployment, which includes discouraged workers, is exceeding 15%. Median household income is now lower than in 1999, and the real median hourly wage just \$1.30 higher than it was in 1973. While the failure of growth in real median household income and hourly wage is part of a longer-term structural problem, rather than the current recession, it only underlines the point that the U.S. is in need of growth. To spur the economy, the administration of Barack Obama has looked to mainstream economics to the neoclassical synthesis which combined neoclassical micro and Keynesian macroeconomics. The result was a \$790 billion stimulus package of which 64% are dedicated to spending and 36% to tax cuts of low and middle income households. The measure passed without any Republican support in the House of Representatives and just three Republican votes in the Senate. While Republicans were bemoaning the size of the bill, increasing the size of government, President Obama repeatedly asserted that something must be done. That stimulus is needed immediately. With the exception of three Republican Senators, the President's pleas for

quick, decisive action seem to have fallen of deaf ears among conservatives. The idea that spending is to provide the main stimulus in particular was a sore point. Barack Obama did make it clear that conservatives would have to abandon their small government dogma:

We can't expect relief from the tired old [conservative] theories that, in eight short years, doubled the national debt, threw our economy into a tailspin, and led us into this mess in the first place... We can't rely on a losing formula that offers only tax cuts as the answer to all our problems while ignoring our fundamental economic challenges.

More spending does, however, entail more government, and there is nothing conservatives fear more than the government they controlled for most of the past 29 years.

The idea promoted by conservatives promoted today is known as the "Treasury View." It was the position taken by the British treasury in response to Keynes's plea for more intervention and states that since money cannot be created out of thin air, any

increase in public sector spending must come at the expense of the public sector. Conservative John Cochrane at the University of Chicago gave an overview of the modern Treasury view in response to the passage of Obama's stimulus plan:

First, if money is not going to be printed, it has to come from somewhere. If the government borrows a dollar from you, that is a dollar that you do not spend, or that you do not lend to a company to spend on new investment. Every dollar of increased government spending must correspond to one less dollar of private spending. Jobs created by stimulus spending are offset by jobs lost from the decline in private spending. We can build roads instead of factories, but fiscal stimulus can't help us to build more of both...

Second, investment is "spending" every bit as much as consumption. Fiscal stimulus advocates want money spent on consumption, not saved. They evaluate past stimulus programs by whether people who got stimulus money spent it on consumption goods rather save it. But the economy overall does not care if you buy a car, or if you lend money to a company that buys a forklift.

Cochrane was preceded by fellow conservative economists and University of Chicago faculty member Eugene Fama:

The problem is simple: bailouts and stimulus plans are funded by issuing more government debt. (The money must come from somewhere!) The added debt absorbs savings that would otherwise go to private investment. In the end, despite the existence of idle resources, bailouts and stimulus plans do not add to current resources in use. They just move resources from one use to another.

While conservative economists are a minority (there are about 2-3 Democrats per Republican among American economists), Cochrane and Fama are not alone. The conservative CATO institute took out a full-page ad in the New York Times stating that expansionary fiscal policy was not an effective remedy against a recession with the signatures of 250 economists of the roughly 15,000 economists in the U.S. According to the statement, "To improve the economy, policymakers should focus on reforms that remove impediments to work, saving, investment and

production. Lower tax rates and a reduction in the burden of government are the best ways of using fiscal policy to boost growth." In other words, policy makers should adhere to what Obama described as the "losing formula that offers only tax cuts as the answer to all our problems."

The Treasury View is not accepted by most economists for a reason: it is wrong. First and foremost, savings do not automatically translate into investment. A recession is caused by excess saving people are hoarding money but their savings are not borrowed by businesses and other individuals. Money, and with it, resources such as labor and land go unused. Savings do not automatically translate into investment. When money is deposited in a bank, it must be lent to a business to be invested. Businesses only borrow, however, when there is sufficient demand for their goods. When savings are not converted into investment by borrowers, government must come do so. When the private sector is not using the funds people are hoarding in their bank accounts, government must put them to use instead. Government is using money and resources that would have otherwise gone unused. By doing so it is growing the economy further than it would have otherwise grown. Through expansionary fiscal policy, government is putting idle resources to work, which in turn creates demand and income, which creates growth. As a result, the private investment and government expenditure will rise. Government is growing the pie; it is creating more money and demand by using previously idle resources dipping into savings that would have gone unused. If the Treasury view was correct, that any dollar spend in one sector must come from another, growth spurts would be impossible. It assumes that the economy is more or less consistently zero sum. As University of California Berkley Brad DeLong put in his criticism of Fama:

We can immediately recognize that Fama's argument must be wrong. First, it proves too much: not just that government spending cannot boost employment and output, but also that private enthusiasm like the enthusiasm for housing construction in the mid-2000s or high-tech investment in the late-1990s cannot boost employment and output either. Second, the savings-investment equation Fama claims to derive his conclusions from is an accounting identity. It holds in all models of the economy including models in which fiscal policy has powerful effects on output. The equation has implications for the effects of fiscal policy only when combined with auxiliary hypotheses for example, the hypothesis that changes in government spending do not lead to any

changes in corporate saving or private household saving. But Fama does not provide any reason or explanation for why he (or we) should adopt this auxiliary hypothesis.

The economy is neither zero-sum, nor are savings always converted into investment. Government can use spending to increase overall demand by putting idle resources to work. Lastly, since expansionary fiscal and monetary policy (they are currently conducted in tandem) raise the overall amount of money in the economy and, along with growth, creates at least some amount of inflation, its cost will always be lower than its effect. Obama's \$790 billion stimulus will not cost the taxpayer \$790 billion. By the time most of the money is being paid back, inflation and higher income levels will have eroded that bill substantially. In sum, government spending of \$1 dollar today will not necessarily equal \$1 less in private spending. It will increase GDP by at least \$1 and, owing to inflation and growth, cost the taxpayer only a few dimes and nickels.

U.S. economic history once more vindicates economic theory and the liberal view. Conservatives are right the New Deal did not end the Great Depression. The massive government mobilization of resources that came with WWII did that. The New Deal did help, however, and conservatives are wrong to suggest that it actually prolonged the Great Depression. At the peak of the boom in the late 1920s industrial output reached almost 9% of 2002 levels. By 1933 it had fallen by half to 4%. Allowing for a one year lag between policy implementation and its effects, industrial seemed to respond favorably to the New Deal, jumping to 6% within less than 1% in 1934. By 1937, industrial output was higher than in 1929 (see figure 1). Furthermore between 1932 and 1933 overall business investment increased 67%. A similar trend can be observed for unemployment which fell from 24.9% in 1932 to less than 15% in 1937 (see figure 13 for overall trajectories between 1932 and 1937). It was in 1937, when FDR deviated from Keynesian-style expansionary fiscal policy and embraced fiscal conservatism that things went sour. With rising political pressure to decrease the deficit, FDR attempted to balance the budget. Industrial production dropped by a third, unemployment increased to over 18% and the country went into recession. Yet, when FDR resumed expansionary policy the economy recovered and by 1940, industrial production and unemployment were back to their 1937 levels. As Krugman summarized,

After winning a smashing election victory in 1936, the Roosevelt administration cut spending and raised taxes, precipitating an economic relapse that drove the

unemployment rate back into double digits and led to a major defeat in the 1938 midterm elections.

What saved the economy, and the New Deal, was the enormous public works project known as World War II, which finally provided a fiscal stimulus adequate to the economy's needs.

Even if the economy would have redounded in the long run, the close correlation between lower unemployment, higher output on the one hand and fiscal policy on the other strongly suggests that the New Deal did have an effect. It may not have been ambitious enough to jolt the economy out of recession but it did lower unemployment and increase production. Furthermore, the idea that government stimulus can revive the economy is still vindicated by WWII, when the economy started to expand at an exceptional pace and full employment was reached within a few years, despite resource rationing which decreased the multiplier effect of government spending during the period.

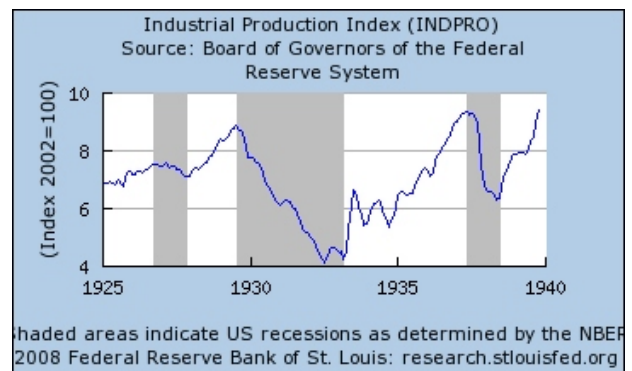


Figure 12: Industrial output, 1925 - 1940.

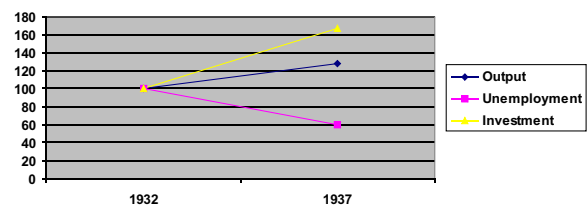


Figure 13: Overall change in industrial production, unemployment and investment, 1932 - 1937, using 1932 as base year with a value of 100.

Opinion Articles

The European Parliament: Still a half-way house - A Euro-Idealist View -

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We made it through. Barely! Yes, I am talking about the European elections and the campaign that went along with it. C'mon, you have to admit, it was a bit of a delicate tight rope walk that whole undertaking. Why so? Let me take you back in time a bit:

In the fall of last year the Commission and European leaders were still all enthusiastic about the upcoming elections. They had hired a well-known consultancy to present them with a new concept for the EP election. They had been determined that turnout at the ballot boxes had to increase. Another negative record would be unacceptable. And, the new concept looked promising. Instead of appealing to every Europeans' civil duties (the bottom-line of previous campaigns), the new concept thought to polarize people by posting (more or less) provocative posters or setting up clunky super-sized boxes. Maybe you have seen one or two of them. The one I clearly remember is the big blue box with a solid brick wall on it. Next to the wall is a green hedge. The title reads: How open should our borders be? Besides, the EP elections got a fancy logo; and, media boothes, equipped with a chair and a camera, invited citizens to record what they had to say about Europe. Young voters could find several well-done clips on youtube. In brief, it all got a bit

more flashy, more up-to-date.

By early spring of this year, I can only imagine that most of the responsables in the campaign were a bit disappointed. Yes, posters had been put up. And yes, boxes had been installed. But all in all they were mostly to be found in capitals or larger cities. Even there, they did not dominate the city's scenery. The attempt to give the European elections a European flair vaporized. National campaigns made up the lion's share of the effort. As usual, tight budgets did not allow to implement an innovative idea. I am not saying the campaign's concept had no flaws. Nonetheless, it was something new, a refreshing input. However, how are we to judge the consultancy now, a month after another historically low turnout? Hire them again? I am glad, I dont have to make this decision.

The underlying rationale, i.e. having a European campaign run simultaneoulsy to a national campaign, is an interesting step. Yet how succesful can it be? To my mind, profound changes in the EP's set-up and competences could have a more promising effect. To date the EP is made up of representatives elected by the principle of degressive (or declining) proportionality. This means, that a Maltese MEP represents roughly 80.000 people, while a German MEP is good for 833.000 of his fellow countrymen.

The result is, that the EP is made up of several peoples and not one people. A we-feeling both in campaigns and politics would be facilitated if Europe was divided into transnational constituencies. Through a first-past-the-post system, half of the MEPs could be elected. The other half would stem from European (and not national) party lists. Campaigns and politicians would be forced to think more European.

As a second measure the EP needs to receive the right to initiate proposals. Every national parliament has some way to propose legislation. Finally, and the author is well aware of the fact that he is preaching to the converted, the EP needs to be able to influence substantially European foreign and security policy. This is particularly true, if the Lisbon treaty is ratified and a European external service is installed. Foreign policy politicizes people tractor regulations hardly do hence, the representation of the European people ought to play a vital part in it.

For now let me end on a positive note though: It's approximately five years until we will have to endure another EP campaign. Thinking about it, I am actually quite excited to see what we Europeans will come up with next to mobilize ourselves. One thing seems certain. It will be another tight rope walk.

Academic Article

Low Turnout, Strong Sceptics, or However You Please? Mixed Prospects for the 7th European Parliament

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Introduction

Modern elections are very lengthy processes, and often cumbersome for all people involved - be they candidates, observers or voters. Every election starts with a lot of campaigning long before the actual polling day, and even once polls have been closed and votes tallied, an election is not really over. Like after any big game in sports, the pundits appear and willingly utter their share of new or confirmed wisdom. Pundits or not, we plead ourselves 'guilty' of the same attempt to offer a few - hopefully - wise suggestions in trying to make sense of the results of the elections to the 7th European Parliament (EP), just recently held in June this year.

This article is guided by the appreciation of nuanced realities within the member states of the European Union (EU). While media coverage after the 2009 EP elections focused on an alleged 'swing to the right', including the strength of Eurosceptical parties, it is our contention that only by taking a closer look at the member state level can the election results be better understood and put in perspective. One commonly held assumption is that when turnouts fall, parties opposing the system tend to gain disproportionately because of their clienteles' eagerness to express their dissent through protest voting. Focusing on the

performance of Austrian and British Eurosceptical parties¹ in the latest EP elections, however, we find no such hard-and-fast rule for the success and failure of these parties.

The article is organised as follows: After a brief introduction of the leading definition of 'hard' versus 'soft' Euroscepticism, the divergent experiences of Austria and the United Kingdom (UK) in the recent elections are presented. The concluding remarks of the article, then, weigh some of the hopes and challenges surrounding the alleged or actual strength of the Eurosceptical 'movement' at party level.

How Sceptical?

The phenomenon of Euroscepticism² constitutes a rather young field of scientific research. The seminal contributions of Taggart (1998), Kopecký and Mudde (2002), Szczerbiak and Taggart (2003) and Rovny (2004) have paved the way for a new conceptualisation of the relations between (national) parties and European integration. In any case, Szczerbiak and Taggart deserve special mention for having introduced the crucial distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism:

Hard Euroscepticism [...] might be defined as principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU, in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to supranational institution such as the EU. Soft Euroscepticism [...] might be re-defined as when there is not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2003, p. 12).

This distinction has informed most of the literature on the subject, and not least Table 2 in this article. Despite being dichotomous conceptually, Euroscepticism, in reality, comes in a great many different shades. This note of caution is meant not to point to a potential shortcoming of Szczerbiak and Taggart's indeed trailblazing distinction, but much rather to draw the reader's attention to its character as a Weberian ideal type: 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism can best be understood as categories of overlapping spaces in a continuum of sceptical party positions towards European integration. In reality, a clear-cut differentiation is difficult, not least because of the dynamics of such positions³.

Austria and the United Kingdom share at least four common features with regard to their positions towards European integration. First, both countries have witnessed the growth of hard Euroscepticism, as defined above, in their respective political system. Second, both countries have frequently seen Eurosceptical parties holding office (in fact, British governments have always been at least mildly Eurosceptical). Third, both countries rank among the most sceptical member states in terms of their popular embrace of the EU as measured by the Eurobarometer⁴. Fourth, both countries have print-media systems that can be classified as rather Eurosceptical, featuring high-circulation tabloids such as *The Sun* or *The Times* in the UK or the *Kronen Zeitung* in Austria.

Austria: Higher Turnout, Stronger Sceptics

The Austrian party system is divided on European issues⁵. On the one hand, the Austrian People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei*, ÖVP) and the Greens more or less support European integration. On the other hand, four relevant parties indulge in EU-

critical rhetoric. These four parties are the Social Democratic Party of Austria (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*, SPÖ), the Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ), the Alliance for the Future of Austria (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*, BZÖ) and the List "Dr. Martin - for Democracy, Control and Justice" (Liste "Dr. Martin - für Demokratie, Kontrolle, Gerechtigkeit"). Their cumulative vote share in the 2009 EP elections accounted for 58.7 per cent (see Table 1). Surprisingly, the two ruling catch-all parties, the SPÖ and the ÖVP, performed quite differently: the soft Eurosceptical SPÖ suffered a remarkable loss of almost ten percentage points; the pro-European ÖVP, by contrast, suffered a moderate loss of just under three percentage points. The smaller parties appear to have benefited from the catch-all parties' losses. The FPÖ, the BZÖ and the List "Dr. Martin", taken together, gained 14.7 percentage points. The share for the right-wing extremist FPÖ rose by as much as 6.4 percentage points, which indicates that the party's populist and nationalistic rhetoric realigns former voters and attracts even new ones. In total, the Eurosceptical parties expanded their electorate by 5.1 percentage points (see Table 2).

Euroscepticism in the Austrian party system has been strongly driven by a 'cult of personality'. The FPÖ is probably the best-known Eurosceptical Austrian party, mainly because of its participation in the national government in the early 2000s under its then leader Jörg Haider. It can be described as a right-wing and hard Eurosceptical party, still notorious for its call for an Austrian EU exit. Also shaped by Jörg Haider, the BZÖ, another right-leaning populist - but rather soft Eurosceptical - party, ran for EP elections for the first time and won a respectable 4.6 per cent of the Austrian vote. Despite this apparent success, the party attained no EP seat. The List "*Dr. Martin*" revolves around its leader, Hans-Peter Martin, in much the same way, yet its manifesto differs in many ways from what the aforementioned parties propose; with an approach to promoting more transparency in EU bureaucracy, rather than questioning the EU system as a whole, the List "Dr. Martin" must be categorised as a constructive soft Eurosceptical party. It garnered a remarkable 17.7 per cent, thereby becoming the third strongest party and sending three delegates to the 7th European Parliament.

Against the background of a considerable amount of subliminal Euroscepticism in society, the minor Austrian turnout of just under 46.0 per cent comes as no real surprise. However, it is striking that turnout increased by 3.6 percentage points as compared to 2004. The question at hand is whether this increase is best be interpreted as an expression of pro- or anti-European sentiments. In other words, does the voter surplus consist of mobilised EU sceptics or supporters? At this point, we cannot give a reasonable,

let alone conclusive, answer.

The Austrian example shows that Euroscepticism can be used to pursue vote-seeking across a party system's traditional cleavages. In Austria, a higher turnout went hand in hand with growing vote shares for (hard and soft) Eurosceptical parties. This development, however, should not be overestimated, as Benedetto (2008, p. 148) aptly highlights: "Many of the right-wing Eurosceptical parties have weak structures focused around the personalities of their leaders, and peak at European elections, which means that they often lack a strong base at the national or local levels." Given that all Eurosceptical parties together won merely ten seats, the strength of Austrian Euroscepticism and its potential impact on proceedings in the EP should be viewed realistically.

The United Kingdom: Lower Turnout, Harder Sceptics

More than any other member state, the United Kingdom resembles the Eurosceptical headquarters⁶. Princeton University's Andrew Moravcsik (2009) has only very recently labelled the country "perennially Euro-skeptic". Such characterisations seem to be fully appropriate, considering the stances on European issues of the vast majority of the relevant British parties. With the notable exception of the pro-European Liberal Democrats (LD), all British parties that gained more than five per cent of the vote can be considered Eurosceptical to at least some extent. In total, almost three-thirds of the vote was cast for one of the five sceptical parties, which comprise not only the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the British National Party (BNP) and the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW), but also the 'big two', the governing Labour Party and the oppositional Conservative Party. While UKIP, the BNP and the GPEW combined had won just about four per cent in the last general election in 2005, neither of them obtaining a single seat in the Commons, UKIP now snatched as many EP seats as the Labour Party; the BNP and the Greens each took two seats (see Table 1).

Voter turnout in the UK dropped to 34.7 per cent from 38.5 per cent in 2004. Yet this decrease by a little less than four percentage points did not translate into a stronger standing for the Eurosceptical British parties. Their combined share of the vote changed marginally at best. In what presents itself as a steady and flourishing political environment for anti-European sentiments, one development stands out: the Labour Party's loss of seven percentage points was in large part for the benefit of the much more Eurosceptical and indeed xenophobic BNP, which won 6.4 per cent at its European debut. The changes in the shares of the other parties in question were not sizeable, with the GPEW gaining 2.2 percentage points and the Conservatives and UKIP losing 0.7 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively (see Table 2). Thus, the overall share for

the Eurosceptical front remained stable, but a realignment within it did occur since the rise of the BNP marks a considerable shift away from cautious scepticism towards outright rejection of the European project.

The success story of the Eurosceptical British parties is as much about these five parties as it is about the political system in which they operate. The Liberal Democrats, for decades the third-strongest party in national elections, continue to constitute the only serious alternative to the strong, if hardly united, front of Eurosceptics. Even so, there is no reason why the weakness of the scandal-strewn Labour Party could not have benefited the centre-left Liberals rather than the right-wing BNP. The UK may therefore be seen as a special case of politically deeply entrenched majoritarian Euroscepticism. In this respect, a shrinking turnout combined with a constant strength of Eurosceptical parties - instead of their further rise to prominence - might ultimately not be too special a pattern.

Conclusion

The preceding illustrations contain, if anything, one apparent message: Eurosceptical parties escape all-too easy generalisations. Neither did they all gain votes or seats in the 7th European Parliament, nor are there universal patterns to explain their unsteady performances, as the cases of Austria and the UK have demonstrated. Suffice it to say that the picture would presumably be even much fuzzier if all of the current 27 EU member states - given their political, societal and cultural diversity and heterogeneity - had been included in the analysis. Despite the narrow analytical focus applied here, this observation may challenge established assumptions about the strength of Eurosceptical parties across the Union and shed light on some of the many complexities in each case. More research is needed to move analyses beyond potentially selection-biased case studies such as this, and to allow for robust testing of competing explanations as to the success or otherwise of EU-critical parties.

Public opinion and a country's party system can be understood as two sides of the same coin. Both are interrelated and determine the prevalence, degree and quality of Euroscepticism in a given country. An EU-critical societal environment, for example, offers Eurosceptical parties a fertile ground for their canvassing. The EU as a polity has become a phenomenon of everyday life, yet paradoxically coupled with an extremely low degree of salience for its citizens. This lack of interest is expressed in ever-decreasing EU-wide election turnouts since 1979 (see Steinbrecher & Huber, 2006). The so-called 'permissive consensus' (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970), which carried the process of European

integration in its early decades, has eroded. Hooghe and Marks (2009) hit the mark by speaking of an emerging 'constraining dissensus'.

The rise to prominence of Eurosceptical parties represents a serious challenge to the future of European integration, albeit neither the only nor the most critical one. The challenge posed by these parties also gives rise to one particular but unlikely hope: that EU-'friendly' parties will further political integration in a more meaningful and socially acceptable way than previously done, taking into account the potential downsides, risks and even prejudices surrounding deeper Europeanisation. Interparty competition, one might infer by analogy from other contentious political issues, is likely to incite the parties challenged in the policy area at hand to develop fresh ideas, employ new strategies and thus generate better outcomes. Besides, it is an encouraging sign that, the low turnout and the limited salience of European issues notwithstanding, Eurosceptical parties reaped merely a small number of seats - far too few to stall proceedings or prevent legislation. The founding of a second Eurosceptical group (*European Conservatives and Reformists Group, ECR*) - the other being the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (*EFD*) - therefore does not yet mark a historic turning point. Mainly because of its high degree of internal heterogeneity, its political influence in the 7th European Parliament will probably remain marginal in the longer term⁷.

Put bluntly, the EU is still on a rocky road towards achieving adequate political legitimacy. David Easton (1965, pp. 124-6), the renowned system theorist, has it right when he describes all political systems as depending for continued existence on its members' support. Such support, he reasons, can come in a *specific* form as a return for tangible benefits from the system, or in a *diffuse* form as a commitment "to be bound to it [the system] by strong ties of loyalty and affection" (Easton, 1965, p. 125). While the EU has no doubt been a resounding success in that former category, mostly because of its many economic benefits, it continues to lack the at least equally necessary diffuse support, a high of level of which would profoundly strengthen the EU as a political system regardless of concrete short-term outcomes. As long as such rather unconditional support is lacking, Eurosceptical parties will not hesitate to exploit this window of opportunity for their electoral ambitions. Without sufficient legitimacy beyond the provision of economic benefits, the EU is bound to remain an easy target at which political protest of any kind can be mounted at virtually no cost. All EU-'friendly' parties would be well advised to jointly work towards mitigating this particular deficit.

Notes

1. A broader analysis that includes a respectable number of, or even all, member states is beyond the scope of this sketchy article with its yet tentative results.
2. For a comprehensive overview see, first and foremost, Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008a, 2008b), but also Harmsen and Spiering (2004).
3. One of the main shortcomings of this conceptualisation is its failure to offer a distinction between ideologically rooted and strategically motivated Euroscepticism.
4. The standard Eurobarometer centres on two lead questions ("Generally speaking, do you think that [OUR COUNTRY]'s membership of the European Union is a good thing?"; "Taking everything into account, would you say that [OUR COUNTRY] has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?"), for both of which the 2008 December surveys show Austria and the United Kingdom to fall clearly below the EU-27 average (see European Commission, 2008, pp. 32, 36).
5. For further information on Euroscepticism in Austria, see, among others, Fallend (2008) and Pelinka (2004).
6. For further information on Euroscepticism in the UK, see, among others, Baker et al. (2008) and Spiering (2004).
7. The main party groups composing this new 'eurorealistic' faction are the British Conservative Party, the Polish Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) and the Czech Civic Democratic Party (*Občanská demokratická strana*, ODS). It is completed by five single representatives from five different member states.

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Table 1 Absolute Percentages of Votes and EP Seats (All Parties)

| | EP Elections 2004 | | EP Elections 2009 | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | Percentage | Seats | Percentage | Seats |
| <i>Austria</i> | | | | |
| ÖVP | 32.7 | 6 | 30.0 | 6 |
| SPÖ | 33.3 | 7 | 23.7 | 4 |
| List "Dr. Martin" | 14.0 | 2 | 17.7 | 3 |
| FPÖ | 6.3 | 1 | 12.7 | 2 |
| Greens | 12.9 | 2 | 9.9 | 2 |
| BZÖ | - | - | 4.6 | - |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> | | | | |
| Conservative Party | 27.4 | 27 | 27.0 | 25 |
| UKIP | 16.8 | 12 | 16.1 | 13 |
| Labour Party | 22.3 | 19 | 15.3 | 13 |
| Liberal Democrats | 15.1 | 12 | 13.4 | 11 |
| GPEW | 6.2 | 2 | 8.4 | 2 |
| BNP | - | - | 6.0 | 2 |

Source: data available at <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/>> and <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2004/ep-election/sites/en/>>.

Table 2 Relative Gains and Losses in 2009 EP Elections (Eurosceptical Parties)

| Voter turnout per member state (in per cent; change in percentage points) | Change in share of votes per Eurosceptical party (in percentage points) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Gain | Loss |
| <i>Austria</i> (46.0; increase: +3.6) | 6.4 ▲ FPÖ 4.6 ▲ BZÖ* 3.7 ▲ List "Dr. Martin" | 9.6 ▼ SPÖ |
| Subtotal | 14.7 ▲ | 9.6 ▼ |
| Total | 5.1 ▲ | |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> (34.7; decrease: -3.8) | 6.0 ▲ BNP* 2.2 ▲ GPEW | 7.0 ▼ Labour Party 0.7 ▼ UKIP 0.4 ▼ Conservative Party |
| Subtotal | 8.2 ▲ | 8.1 ▼ |
| Total | 0.1 ▲ | |

Source: own calculations based on data from <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/>> and <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2004/ep-election/sites/en/>> (see also Table 1).

Notes: Rounded to one decimal place, all figures herein signify changes from the previous EP elections in 2004. Hard Eurosceptical parties (authors' categorisation) are typed in bold font; soft Eurosceptical parties are typed in standard font.

* The BZÖ and the BNP ran for EP elections for the first time, which means that their respective gain equals their actual percentage of votes.

Academic Article

Security of Energy Supply and the New European Parliament

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11. Introduction:

The growing politicization of energy supply is one of the most pressing issues the European Union is facing. The vulnerability of the European Union in terms of its energy import dependency was demonstrated repeatedly over the last three years, the two highlights being the Ukraine-Russian gas disputes in January 2006 and January 2009.

The EU-27 is a net energy importer and the EU's indigenous energy production is depleting. The EU's energy production satisfies less than half of its needs, with import dependency reaching almost 54% in 2006. Oil comprises the bulk of total EU energy imports (60%)¹ followed by imports of gas (26%) and solid fuels (13%)². The dominant Russian position in the group of energy suppliers to the European Union raises fears that Russia will use its oil and gas exports as a foreign policy tool when dealing with the EU Member States. However, when it comes to energy policy the European Union faces three more issues that impact on its overall goal of long-term energy security. The first is increasingly fierce competition for energy sources with other big players on the international scene like the US, India, Japan and China. Secondly, geographical diversification of energy suppliers as the often proclaimed solution to the Russian problem

means substituting the Russian stable authoritarian regime for instable and authoritarian regimes in Africa and the Middle East. The third problem is an incoherent energy policy within the EU and within its external relations.

The latter problem connects with the other two, as in the face of growing import dependency and competition for resources, a European External Energy Policy is needed to make operative the political clout of the world's biggest market³. Internally, the development of a coherent energy policy is impeded by diverging national interests and protectionist sentiments (the call for “national champions”). When it comes to a European External Energy Policy, the EU has to surmount the same obstacles as in all her foreign relations: The need for unanimous decisions in the Council of Ministers, different voices from different institutions claiming to speak for the EU⁴ and a lack of political will to sacrifice national sovereignty in this policy field to pursue common interests.

Nevertheless, the European Commission, since the publication of its Green Book on the security of energy supply on November 29, 2000⁵ has actively pursued a strategy to convince the Member States that they indeed have common interests and put forward the advantages of a common external energy policy.

On March 8, 2006 the European Commission presented its second Green Book on the topic in which the overall goals of a European energy policy were defined to be sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply. In other words: environmental protection, cheap energy prices and stable supply⁶ of energy.

2. What can we expect of the new European Parliament?

First, we can if all goes well expect the Lisbon Treaty to come into force. This would give the EU a greater say in the field of energy policy, especially when it comes to solidarity measures and security of supply. Already under the current Treaties, namely with the help of Art. 95 EC, which is used to harmonize the internal market, the European Commission has proposed two regulations that would enhance supply security, by establishing an emergency mechanism that if used would oblige Member States to act if a member of the EU faces disruption of its energy supply. The regulations will be adopted by Qualified Majority, probably against the will of countries like France and Germany who claim that this measure would punish those Member States that have done their homework and would encourage some others to postpone necessary investments in gas and oil storages.

Yet, the European Parliament will most likely seize on this measure as a way to create European public space. With energy security all over the newspapers in the wake of the January Ukraine-Russia gas dispute and announcements from Russia and the Commission that Ukraine has not enough money to fill up its gas storages for the winter, energy security has the potential to become a European issue just as much as climate change. Such a European problem will focus attention on the work of the Commission and the Parliament as European energy security is best dealt with on the European level. Furthermore, energy security is vital for the internal market to function, and the European Court of Justice has already declared in a number of judgments that gas and electricity have to be seen as tradeable commodities. With such a classification, gas and electricity are just as much part of the internal market as wine and butter and most of the internal market rules apply to them. Although energy import dependency varies from Member State to Member State, with Spain being much less dependent on Russian gas than Germany and Slovakia, the proposed solidarity measure would force Spain and France (which generated 80% of its electricity through nuclear power plants) to care more about a potential gas crisis in 2010 and would help Member States to adopt a common policy stance on Russia and Ukraine, on Nabucco and North Stream and diversification of supply through LNG-terminals, importing gas from Africa.

Apart from the political ramifications of the proposed solidarity measures, Member States need to invest in the necessary infrastructure. The European Commission in its Second Strategic Energy Review has already announced that it will make building so-called interconnectors (connecting the regional gas markets in the EU) and back-flow mechanisms (to reverse gas flow from the West back to the East in a crisis situation) a priority. The European Parliament, which under the Lisbon Treaty will have full budgetary co-decision powers, can use the proposed investments in key infrastructure projects under the Trans-European Networks policy to propagate itself as a job creator and as a helping hand in the economic recovery. That is if it plays its cards well, because at the moment it looks more like the SPE-faction under Martin Schulz is set for constant confrontation with the current and probably future European Commission President Barroso.

However, the EP should not forget that for a united Europe, free from nationalist sentiments, it needs the Commission. Only the EP and the Commission are supranational institutions, which favour the European interest over the narrow national interest. Hence, it is most detrimental if EP and Commission are offsetting each other by fighting for power and influence, while the Council dominates the legislative process. With energy security and climate change dominating the media (the summit in Copenhagen will add further media presence to the topic) the EP has two issues at hand that can make it really popular and present in the debate and make it relevant to European citizens.

However, in the next legislative period there will also be a number of issues that will put the focus on the European Council and the Council of Ministers and the EP will only play a marginal role.

These are some of the problems that the EU needs to tackle effectively in the next years:

- Iran: Media reports suggest that a decision on Iran has to be made within the next six months; otherwise the time window to prevent it from getting the bomb will have closed. With Iran already being able to attack Israeli nuclear power plants with missiles, the options are very limited and in the EU it will mostly be up to the Council, deciding unanimously how to deal with Iran.

- The new partnership agreement with Russia: Negotiated by the Commission under a mandate given by the Council, the EP can veto any agreement, but not influence it while it is in the making.

- Iceland, the Balkans and Turkish accession: Here too, it is the Commission that negotiates and the EP that gives its assent or not.

- The economic crisis and economic recovery and regulation: The EP has co-decision powers and should use them to gain the respect of

citizens by keeping the social dimension in mind and limiting excesses by managers and speculators.

Notes

1. The European Union in 2006 imported 608 Mtoe of oil. Most of the oil imports come from OPEC (38%) and Russia (33%), while Norway and Kazakhstan respectively provide 16% and 5% of oil imports to the European Union. The EU produces less than one fifth of its total oil consumption.

2. European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2008/doc/2008_11_ser2/strategic_energy_review_wd_future_position2.pdf

3. In 2008, the combined GDP of the EU 27 was estimated to be US \$18.93 trillion (official exchange rate): <https://cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ee.html>

4. For the representation of the EU's energy interests abroad a host of people claim the competency to speak: e.g. The EU Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, European Commission President Barroso, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and the respective Presidency of the European Council.

5. European Commission: Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/green-paper-energy-supply/doc/green_paper_energy_supply_en.pdf

6. European Commission: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0105:FIN:EN:PDF>

Academic Article

Driver or Driven? Gordon Brown, public opinion, and the European Reform Treaty

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A recently conducted survey quantifies the gap between Gordon Brown, the British prime minister and Labour party leader, and his electorate with 69% (YouGov, 2007). After Labour pledged to hold a referendum on the European constitutional treaty in 2005, 69% of the British electorate now want this pledge to be redeemed and be granted their say on the European Reform Treaty. The situation in Britain gives rise to the following questions. Why is there this gap between the wish of British citizens to vote on the EU Reform Treaty and the unwillingness of Gordon Brown to grant them their say? What difference does the British political system make in this regard? Does this gap represent a problem at all?

The following answers are proposed. First, Brown does not keep Labour's promise in order to avoid the risk of a profound European paralysis. The latter would arguably be the outcome of a most likely negative British vote. Second, Brown could not that easily disrespect public opinion in an electoral system based on proportional representation (PR). Third, the salience of the Reform Treaty confirms that "...the relevance of social cleavages is declining..." (Franklin et al., 1992, p. 4). Instead, new post-materialist and cross-cutting cleavages have become

important. Fourth and finally, Brown's decision not to hold a referendum represents an important and much needed example of leadership (Möller, 2006). These claims will be substantiated in the following.

Möller (2006) holds that "[t]he basic prerequisite is that the political elites will try to avoid referendums. The latest referendum (on the EU constitution) demonstrated the risks of allowing the people to decide". What would happen if the traditionally Eurosceptic British citizens rejected the European Reform Treaty in a referendum? The result would most likely be more damaging and devastating than it had been after the French and Dutch negative votes. The permissive consensus, upon which elites shaping the European integration project could count for a long time, has certainly come to an end. Instead, the notion of a democratic deficit emerged. It is at least questionable whether a referendum would be the right answer to this challenge, given that the knowledge on the European Union (EU) is generally underdeveloped. Putting the fate of the future of European integration at the mercy of 'Europeans' who use referenda as opportunities to express their dealigned opinions and to punish their national leaders by saying 'no' is irresponsible. The British would most probably say 'no'. This would in turn result in an

extremely serious setback for the recently reanimated European patient. Thus, it is reasonable that Brown does not intend to hold a referendum.

In the following, it will be argued that the characteristics of the British Westminster model of democracy (Lijphart, 1999) make it comparatively easier for Brown to disrespect public opinion than it would be the case in a PR system. The majoritarian Westminster model is characterised by single-party majority cabinets and power concentration in the executive (*ibid.*). Brown can count on a large majority in Parliament within his Labour party. MPs are being disciplined by party whips if necessary. His primeministership does not depend on a coalition, as it would more likely be the case in PR systems. Thus, Brown is not constrained by a potentially Eurosceptic coalition partner. As the prime minister has the right to call upon the Queen to dissolve Parliament and, thereby, determine the timing of the next general election, he can afford to be less appeasing to public opinion than he could if fixed elections were scheduled. Against the background of Brown's stable political power basis, it becomes understandable that governments of majority systems are "...on average substantially farther from the median voter than are governments in the Proportionate Influence systems" (Huber/ Bingham Powell, 1994, p. 309).

Furthermore, it will be highlighted that the salience of the European Reform Treaty issue reflects the replacement of the traditionally modern social cleavage by post-modern and Inglehartian post-materialist issue cleavages. The term "... 'cleavage' simply refers to issues, policy differences or political identifications related to certain long-standing conflicts in a particular society" (Franklin et al., 1992, p. 4). It has been a long way from the emergence of the social cleavage to its resolution. As a consequence, it is declined in relevance (*ibid.*). This gives in turn rise to the "...model of realignment, which predicts that voters are progressively freeing themselves from the traditional cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan, but falling on the two sides of new cleavages..." (Bruter, 2007, p. 92). The post-materialist European issue cleavage is an example of such a new divide. Bartolini (2007) notes that "...by European cleavage we may mean divisions concerning a general and a specific orientation to the EU" (p. 43). Furthermore, it is interesting to mention that the European cleavage is cross-cutting in the sense that it cannot be conceptualised in terms of the traditional left-right dichotomy. In fact, "...the correspondence between the left-right location and con versus pro EU has eroded" (p. 45). Accordingly, the YouGov (2007) survey shows that a majority of both Labour and Conservative voters, 57% and 87% respectively, demand a referendum on the treaty.

In turn, an attempt to interpret these figures

will be made. While one could unquestionably argue that discussing European integration in Britain is a special case, the salience of the 'pro/ con Europe' cleavage is indicative of the fact that "...public opinion is now more directly involved in the integration process than was ever the case" (Bartolini, 2007, p. 44). To a certain extent it might be argued that the EU has become the victim of its own success in that it indirectly facilitated the emergence of a European cleavage. The framework it provided for the development of peace, stability, and prosperity in Europe can be considered as a necessary condition for the resolution of the social cleavage. Looking through the prism of Maslow's hierarchy of preferences, why should Europeans have cared about (post-modern) European integration as long as there were more pressing problems, such as an unresolved social cleavage? Furthermore, "[i]n step with post-materialist values becoming strong and the citizens becoming less accepting of authority, the elites have been challenged" (Möller, 2006). This is and has been underlined by the popular demand for a referendum and the failed referenda in France and the Netherlands.

The citizens' demand to be granted their say in turn conflicts with the traditional elitist conception of European integration. Constructing Europe has been an elite-driven undertaking for decades. Leadership exercised by various politicians has been crucial in this regard. Being a leader also implies to decide on and implement initially unpopular decisions. Take the example of European Monetary Union (EMU). If the Germans had been allowed to express their opinion on whether to exchange their D-Mark for the Euro, the common currency would hardly ever have come into existence. An act of leadership was necessary to realise this objective whose long-term advantages are nowadays being embraced by everybody. Brown's decision not to hold a referendum on the treaty can be considered as an example of leadership. One cannot entrust the future of the European integration process to largely uninformed and Eurosceptic Brits. Neither should politicians slavishly follow any short-term trend of public opinion. Leadership means forming public opinion instead of following it (Möller, 2006).

Democracy involves the delegation of power and authority to elites. On the one hand, party leaders cannot be interested in a division between themselves and their potential voters. On the other hand, however, what distinguishes party leaders from their fellow party members is their responsibility to lead. If European statesmen had not exercised leadership in the past but succumbed to negative public opinion, many (retrospectively) praised benefits of European integration would hardly have come into existence in the first place. This is not to suggest that a majority of the British would hail the effects of the treaty once it was finally ratified. However, a likely negative outcome of a British referendum would deprive all

other Europeans of this possibility. This would not be democratic either. Thus, Brown's decision not to hold a referendum can be considered as an act of leadership.

The essay also attempted to shed light on the question whether the prime minister could have that easily disrespected public opinion in an electoral system based on PR. It was argued that this would not have been the case. The single-party majority cabinet, power concentration in the executive, self-determined elections, and party discipline enforced by whips have been identified as factors which partly insulate the government from the constraints of public opinion. Furthermore, the very emergence of the European Reform Treaty issue and its salience confirm the declining relevance of social cleavages (Franklin et al., 1992). Inglehartian post-materialist divides which cut across the traditional left-right dichotomy have risen instead.

Notes

1. A further explanation for this might be the following. In a PR system, multiple parties compete for as many voters as possible and, thus, strive to get closer to the median voter. If one major party does that, its political opponent is also prompted to move closer to the centre. Due to the limited number of parties in plurality systems (two), any party has no incentive to move towards the median voter on a one-dimensional issue such as European integration, if the other does not pressure it to do so by moving closer to the median voter itself.

2. Franklin et al. (1992) note that "...associations are being formed between these 'new' issue concerns on the one hand and generic political labels and symbols on the other..." (p. 425).

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