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# Introduction

Linda Berg

The Centre for European Research (CERGU) at the University of Gothenburg has organised a public European Research Day every year since 1992. The participating scholars of each year's seminar later transform their presentations into research chapters in CERGU's annual book series '*Forskning of Europafrågor*' (Research on European affairs). In the spring of 2019, with ongoing debates about Brexit and Euroscepticism, independence quests in Catalonia and elsewhere, concerns over the political developments in Hungary and Poland, and not least the upcoming European Parliament elections in the end of May, the theme 'Contested Community' seemed highly relevant, and the event also attracted a large audience. In this book, the contributions are based on the presentations made by the researchers who participated in event in April 2019.

After this introduction, the first contribution is made by the moderator of the European Research Day 2019, *Lisbeth Aggestam*. It is an introduction to the topic of 'Contested Community', based on her welcome address at the public event. As a well-renowned political scientist and EU scholar, she placed the theme of the event into a larger European context, and introduced the keynote speaker Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary General at the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union. The welcome address is followed by six chapters by researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines at the University of Gothenburg, from

history of ideas and languages, to law, political science and media and communication studies. These chapters are furthermore divided into two parts: ‘Independence vs Community’ and ‘Electoral Contest’, reflecting the two-part structure of the presentations of the seminar.

The first chapter focuses on the historically complex relationship between the United Kingdom (UK) and the rest of Europe, especially what later became the European Union (EU). *Jens Norrby*, PhD student in history of ideas, analyses the ambivalence in the views of the perhaps most important UK Prime Ministers since after the Second World War. Norrby concludes that the sentiments reflected in the Brexit debate is not new. The preparedness to abandon the European project for something better has been a constant theme. None of the analysed Prime Ministers seemed to have settled on Europe as the home of Britain’s global role.

In the second chapter, legal scholars *Anna Wallerman Ghavanini* and *Clara Rauchegger*, discuss how Euroscepticism in political rhetoric and manifestos translate into concrete legislative, administrative, and judicial change in the Member States. Specifically, they are interested in when, how and to what extent Member States challenge or resist their European commitments. They conclude that EU-authority is challenged and resisted in multiple ways, ranging from the well-intentioned to the outright subversive – and that established Euroscepticism classifications do not capture all current challenges to EU law and policy in the Member States.

*Ingmar Söhrman*, professor emeritus in romance languages writes in the third chapter about Demands of Independence in Catalonia, Scotland, Bosnia and Transylvania, specifically highlighting the importance of language and language policies. In his conclusion, he points out that language stands out, as a marker for defining a community and that there may exist ideological reasons for promoting lexical and orthographical

differences between language varieties. Söhrman also warns that language issues must be taken seriously on a European level in order not to promote unnecessary conflicts.

The second part of the book: ‘Electoral Contest’, starts with Chapter four, by PhD-student *Eva Hoxha*. The focus in this chapter is on the Spanish populist radical left party (PRLP) Podemos, and its impact on Spanish mainstream parties’ rhetoric in relation to the EU. Hoxha writes that during the hard time of the economic crisis, Spanish citizens were more sceptic and showed lower levels of trust for their national governments and the European Parliament. Moreover, the mainstream party Partido Popular (PP) became less supportive of the EU when Podemos was seen as a viable political contender – although the Spanish political parties in general seem to support the European Union and its institutions to a comparatively high degree, despite the consequences of the economic and euro crisis.

Electoral contest is an integral part of parties’ campaigns before the elections. In the fifth chapter, *Bengt Johansson*, Professor in Journalism and Mass Communication, analyses the election posters before the European Parliament election 2014. Election posters rely on both textual and visual communication and is one of the most important channels for politicians and parties. Johansson studies differences in Europe in how the EU elections are presented to the voters on election posters, e.g. how political leaders (party leaders and candidates) are portrayed and how the EU is represented. He concludes that there are large variation across types of parties and different parts of Europe. Eurosceptic parties are more prone to criticizing the EU, there seem to be more sceptic campaign style in Western and Northern Europe compared to overall more positive in Eastern Europe and the style seem to be more casual friendly among politicians in Western and Northern Europe. Apart from these differences, the posters tend to be relatively similar, with national and EU flags

and calls to vote etc. This should however not be interpreted as the existence of a common European public sphere. The European perspective in terms of policy content is still missing. In the final chapter *Linda Berg*, senior lecturer in political science, writes about voting behaviour in European Parliament election, with a special focus on the 2019 election results in Sweden. She discusses how the 2019 election in Sweden took place in an unusual context. Following the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, the Swedish support for the membership in the EU was record high, but at the same time, the national election occurred not long before, and the prolonged government formation negotiations lead to discontent among some voters. In relation to the so-called second order election theory, she presents the unexpected high turnout, and a much more varied electoral outcome regarding party gains and losses, compared to the theoretical expectations. Moreover, the Swedish result differs from the overall trend in most EU countries. When parties belonging to the two largest party groups in the European Parliament have lost vote shares and seats in most countries, the Social Democratic party in Sweden kept its seats and the Swedish Conservative and the Christian Democratic parties gained one additional seat each. Liberal and green parties were successful in gaining new seats in many countries, but in Sweden the green party lost two seats, and the shift of one seat from the Liberal party to the Centre party means a status quo in number of seats to 'Renew Europe' from Sweden. Most similar to the European trend is that the Sweden Democrats gained one additional seat.

Overall, this book provides many important perspectives on the issue of Contested Community in Europe. From the importance of history and language, to legal, social and political aspects, it is clear that European integration and the idea of political community is contested. At the same time, there are also contrasting images present, of continuous high support for

European integration among some parties, countries and individuals. While some become more negative, others seem to be increasingly more positive. Such a polarisation in views regarding the form of cooperation (or cooperation at all) may however redirect the attention from the content, i.e. the pressing social issues that most citizens would like to see addressed.

# Contested Community

## - A welcome address

Lisbeth Aggestam

The European Research Day 2019, organised by the Centre of European Research (CERGU) at the University of Gothenburg, had the theme ‘Contested Community’. This is a yearly seminar, each year focusing on different topics, and open to interested students, faculty and the public. Presentations during the public seminar were made by researchers across the University, from the Department of Languages and Literature, Department of Law, the Department of political science and the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication. The keynote address of the event was given by the Deputy Secretary General in charge of global and economic issues at the European External Action Service, Christian Leffler.

The seminar was moderated by Associate Professor in political science, Lisbeth Aggestam. This text is her introductory welcome address to the European Research Day 2019.

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The theme of the European Research Day 2019 is ‘Contested Community’ – and indeed, the European Union is certainly at a critical juncture having to face many different contestations across Europe ranging from the rise of far-right parties, separatist demands for independence, and of course Brexit – the continuing drama that never seems to end.

In many ways – the theme of “contested community” is closely linked to the question “what kind of Europe” different individuals and groups are striving for? That is why the European Parliament elections are so important.

Much is at stake this year. This is not just an election that is carefully followed *within* the European Union itself as an internal affair concerning just its member states. There are many people and states outside the European Union that eagerly follow the outcomes of these elections. The European Union is a significant global actor in many different fields, ranging most obviously in trade, but also in such areas as the environment, development and foreign policy. We shall remember that it is the EP that ratifies many of the international agreements that the EU negotiates across the globe. Therefore, how the political configuration in the European Parliament will look like after the elections will be decisive for how the European Union can act globally.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I get to introduce our keynote speaker at today’s European research day. Christian Leffler is a very distinguished Swedish and European diplomat with long career spanning many critical junctures in Swedish, European and global politics. He was there from the start when Sweden became a member of the European Union in 1995 and have since then worked in both the Council and the European Commission and is now serving as the Deputy Secretary General in charge of global and economic issues at the European External Action Service.

Here at Gothenburg University, we consider Christian Leffler a great friend who has generously taken time out of his busy schedule to give talks to students and researchers, as well as being an important member of the advisory board of CERGU.



# United Kingdom: A Member that Never Found its Role in Europe

Jens Norrby

Our story begins in the unlikely place of the Welsh coastal town of Llandudno. It was here that the 1948 Conservative Conference was held, a conference at which the then leader of the opposition – Winston Churchill – depicted the country’s future as a balancing act between three circles: the Empire, the English-speaking world and Europe (Churchill, 1948). The bold ambitions of the speech was to argue the need to combine the three, to bind them together, but its lasting legacy was in the form of this effective illustration of Britain’s post-war dilemma. As Britain’s economy had suffered terribly by the war and the term ‘imperialism’ had become unsavoury to most of the international community, Britain found itself facing a fundamental question. Where would it find its future international role? This chapter uses the concept of a global ‘role’ to lend some new perspective to the history of Britain’s membership in the European Communities (EC) and later the European Union (EU). The chapter argues that Britain’s inability to settle for a role in Europe provides a new framing for the persistence of British Euroscepticism.

It is not uncommon to see the outcome of the UK’s European Union Membership Referendum 2016 explained as the result of

number of contemporary issues, for example: English nationalism (Henderson et. al., 2016), rising xenophobia (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017) or Globalisation's unbalanced wealth distribution (Clarke et. al., 2016). This is, as far as it pertains to explain the voting behaviours of the electorate, only proper, as the referendum seems to have been determined largely on contemporary issues. However, as has been brought up many times before, we have to go further back in history if we want to explain why the referendum was held at all (Green, 2017; Curtice, 2016; Kenny, 2016). This chapter looks at the history of British Euroscepticism through the framework of Britain's search for a post-imperial role. A search that, it will be suggested, seems to have resumed.

### **A Role to Be and a Role to Act**

It was in the winter of 1962 that former US Foreign Secretary Dean Acheson spoke his insightful words on the British predicament: 'Great Britain has lost an Empire and has not yet found a role' (Acheson, 1962). Whatever the exact intended meaning of this phrase, I would argue that a 'role' in this geopolitical sense entails two aspects of affinity between the country's actions and the context for those actions.

*The first aspect* is in the sense of the country's own fortune: a context that matches the needs of the country itself. As the British settled on a unified imperial vision in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was very much with these aspects in mind: imperial expansion allowed Britain to satisfy some of its key economic needs and provided both markets and resources that would prove a huge boon to domestic industry (Pagden, 1998). This is also an aspect that Churchill's circles had in common: they were pursued partly because of their profitability to British interests. A role is in this sense a function that matches the country's needs: allowing it to grow and prosper.

*The Second aspect* is in the sense of the country's contribution to the common good: a context where the country's actions comes to the benefit of most. One could argue that this aspect became central to the legitimation of maintaining the British Empire during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As its profitability as a business venture declined, officials began arguing for Britain's duty to civilize the world. A role is in this sense a function that matches the country's strengths: allowing it to help the world become a better place. This aspect, I would argue, has played an important role at times in the circle of the English-speaking people, but has been almost completely absent in the discussions on Britain's commitment to Europe.

It is, then, the combination of these two aspects that allows a certain role to be perceived as both sustainable and worthwhile. A role that fulfils the second but not the first aspect will eventually drain the country of its resources (as the Empire did) and a role that fulfils the first but not the second is quickly abandoned when something better comes along. The long-lasting comfort that the British derived from the Empire (and to some extent still does) stemmed from the fact that these aspects for a long time married beautifully in its endeavour.

Through these two aspects of a global role, this chapter will look at three different premierships during Britain's EC, and later EU, membership and argue that no one of those truly accepted that Europe could offer a role in the second aspect to Britain. Firstly, there is the first Prime Minister elected into EC membership, Harold Wilson, who called Britain's first referendum on Europe. Secondly, comes Margret Thatcher, whose active participation probably helped define Britain's image in Europe circles more than any other PM. Lastly, there is Tony Blair, the most instinctively and explicitly pro-EU Prime Minister in the country's history. This chapter shows that while both Thatcher and Blair were immensely invested in the question of Europe—and Blair even enthusiastic about it—none

of these three could truly get themselves to commit to Europe as the context where Britain's strengths could flourish.

### **Britain's accession to the EU**

Before we engage in the issue of Prime Minister Wilson and Europe, let us quickly recap how Britain ended up with a membership in the EC. Britain seems to have been unable to apply itself to European unity before the vacuum after the Empire had made room for Britain to pursue the other two circles wholeheartedly. It is of course impossible to pin down the 'fall' of the British Empire to a certain date and depending on their definition different scholars manage to draw completely different conclusions on when its definitive death is to have occurred. There are, however, three distinct events after World War II that it is very hard to argue did not (at least!) spell the beginning of a rather short end for British imperial ambitions. Those are the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1949, The Suez Crisis in 1956 and 'The Winds of Change' speech from 1960. The last of these marked the moment when Prime Minister at the time, Harold Macmillan, announced Britain's intention not to resist independence from most of its territories – a speech held only sixteen months before Britain's first application for EC membership.

Thus, Britain 'missed' the chance to be part of the original six that formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and it was not until a few years after its establishment, in 1951, that the UK began see the attraction of the economic benefits that the cooperation seemed to entail. In fact, during both the 1950s and the 1960s Britain's economic growth was significantly lower than those of the 'original six', something that kept Britain interested in membership even as its first two applications were rejected. Hence, it is important to keep in mind that when Britain

finally joined the EC in 1972, it was with the expectation of a bright economic future.

### **Harold Wilson, Interested but not Invested**

Harold Wilson was elected Prime Minister only two years after Britain's membership, at a point when he was already torn on what to do about it all. As leader of the opposition 1963–1964, he had been against the Tory's attempts to join the Communities, but as Prime Minister 1964–1970, he had been for – and had even sent Britain's second application himself. However, after he lost the election to Edward Heath, he had used his second period as opposition leader (1970–1974) to revert to the Eurosceptic position. This dance back and forth was telling of two things. *Firstly*, how torn Wilson's Labour Party was on the question of Europe. Eerily similar to the Tories of today, the party was completely split between a Europhilic and a Eurosceptic wing, each unwilling to compromise with the other. *Secondly*, to Wilson, Europe had always been a secondary issue: his job was to protect the party. In a famous episode, his Foreign Secretary – James Callaghan – asked one of the more Europe friendly party members if he really cared about Europe. When the answer was that the member really did Callaghan simply responded: 'very well', followed by 'But just remember. I really care about the Labour Party' (cited in Young, 1998: 279).

After quite some hesitation Wilson settled on that the only way to save his party was to de-politicize the issue and put it 'to the people'. Wilson argued that British membership was good but that the terms of accession was bad, and that after he had renegotiated them the people would decide if they wanted to be 'in' or 'out' – again, the similarities to present day and Cameron's rhetoric are simply striking. Whatever Wilson's intentions or

tactic, the message was clear, both to European officials and to the British people: Wilson was not in Europe for Europe's sake.

This was reflected further in Wilson's campaign, which centred itself on the economic benefits of membership. Wilson (as well as his opponents) almost exclusively referred to 'the Common Market' and the need for Britain to compete with the rest of Europe without handicapping itself. Non-economic issues were consciously avoided in Labour rhetoric, and pending concessions of sovereignty more or less completely ignored (Young, 1998). The yes campaign championed an economic membership, not a political one.

So after the referendum result, when Wilson proclaimed that the majority now gave Labour the mandate to 'join wholeheartedly' with Europe, what did he really mean? The party was joining a Europe whose trust he had betrayed only months before when had broken with recently negotiated conditions for Domestic political gains. The party had indeed ensured a mandate for the economic aspects of a membership but had seemed hesitant to secure one for the political aspects – arguably the more important for the strength of the Communities. But above all, Wilson had made sure to make clear where his loyalty lied. He was joining with Europe for Britain's sake, and he would be ready to abandon it for the same.

In this sense, Wilson is an archetypical example of a Prime Minister looking to Europe as well suited for Britain's needs but not its strengths. Britain's economic future was dependent on its continental neighbours but its mission lied elsewhere. It was in other matters that Wilson saw Britain flourishing and it was in other matters where he found his engagement. What is important to remember is that what he had sold to his people was that they could do the same. Not even thirty months into the British membership, it had been established as one of convenience rather than commitment.

### **Margret Thatcher, Invested but not Enthusiastic**

Due to her tenacity in the later years of her premiership, Margret Thatcher is often misremembered as one of Britain's sternest Eurosceptics. In fact, she had been in favour already of MacMillan's first application for membership in 1961 and in her autobiography, she laments the fact that Britain, in neglecting participation in ECSC, 'may have missed the best European bus that ever came along' (Thatcher, 1995: 127). As it had been with Harold Wilson, Thatcher's scepticism was a question of what a tour on this European bus ought to entail. From the onset, it was evident that Thatcher, unlike her Labour predecessors, was invested in Europe – but in what Europe?

Thatcher came to office in 1979, and her first major interaction with EC concerned net contributions. In hindsight, the European system for financial distribution could indeed be considered both nebulous and unfair (Spence, 2012), where a series of unintuitive formulas led to Britain's pre-calculated net contributions being far higher than other comparable countries (most aggravatingly France). However, in European circles this was considered as a secondary issue since the members were expected to willingly contribute to the collective efforts of the Communities. To complain about one's *juste retour* (just return) was seen as both petty and a sign of misguided selfishness (Young, 1998: 312-313). Thatcher's response was the simple, effective and extremely confrontational slogan 'Our money' (a sentiment that would be repeated on a certain red bus 36 years later). What ensued was years of negotiation that further cemented the perception of Britain's convenient membership in Europe – a country looking rather at what it gained than what it could give.

However, while this had been the limit of Wilson's engagement in Europe, Thatcher was undoubtedly invested beyond the realm of convenience. She is, in fact, one of the British PMs who have contributed most to European integration due to her work with what would result in the Single European Act

(SEA). It was in this endeavour that Thatcher revealed her vision for Europe (something that Wilson had lacked): a single market that allowed the free exchange of goods and services between its people. While this was a high – and perhaps even radical – ambition, one would be hard-pressed to argue that it was enthusiastic about Europe. The fact that her vision was limited to purely economic aspects made an eventual clash with European officials inevitable and what finally ended up in SEA (when it was signed in 1986) was much more than Thatcher had ever bargained for. Hence, it is interesting to look at what prevented her from going beyond the limits of economic cooperation.

There are, of course, a slew of ideological parameters that inform a certain view, but the most interesting to the issue at hand is what Thatcher perceived as the discrepancy between the political ideology of the European project and her own. This has been a recurrent theme in the British debate on Europe – not least currently – and centres on the assumption that the European project fundamentally stems from a radically non-British understanding of the ideal state. As such, the political aspects of the project must be resisted, not on the basis of keeping the distance to fellow Europeans, but in order not to compromise Britain's own constitution. In Thatcher's own words to the College of Europe: 'We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level' (cited in Senden, 2004: 9). Regarding the SEA, Thatcher persistently argued that the Single Market was a goal in itself and thus should be pursued outside the jurisdiction of European institutions (Geddes, 2013). Thatcher's resistance to European integration stemmed more from her reluctance to commit the British people to European rule, than a reluctance towards Europeans *per se*.

To understand how these fears intermingled, Political Scientist Paul Sharp (1997) employs his concept of 'ideological nationalism'. Thatcher's nationalism was ideological, Sharp



argues, as it was not based in the belief of some common cultural traits shared by the individuals of the nation, but rather in the ideological legacy of the nation and its leaders. To Thatcher, it was tempered liberalism and parliament democracy that made her proud to be British, and it was in administering this heritage from her predecessors that she found her duty (Sharp, 1997). In this sense she elucidated a notion that in a more implicit form is widespread in British society. A Euroscepticism not primarily based in suspicion about the other European countries, but a resistance to commit Britain to a political system that is perceived as fundamentally non-British. Similarly, Rosamond and Wincott (2006) argue that much of Britain's historic relationship with the European project must be understood as a struggle to reconcile the government's strategic vision for its Foreign policy and domestic 'specificities', such as a certain understanding of the societal role of institutions. Hence, Thatcher fought for a British role in Europe because it needed it economically, but could not go so far as to envision Britain's strengths being best utilized in such an un-British political context. In 1988, in a speech to the College of Europe, she argued that Europe could not, as Americans did, be proud primarily as Europeans, but rather must derive their strength from the French being proud of France, the British of Britain and so on (Sharp, 1997). There, one finds the limit of Thatcher's ambitions for European unity.

### **Tony Blair, Enthusiastic but not Dedicated**

Blair has been described as the British Prime Minister most 'instinctively' European. He was too young to be moulded by the grandiose self-image with which Britain escaped the Second World War, he had worked as a bartender in Paris during a year abroad and as PM he was actively looking to strengthen British international ties and strengthen its global position. However, to be enthusiastic about the opportunities that Europe offered is one

thing and dedicating oneself (and indeed one's country) to the project of Europe – and the cause of that project – is another.

First off, it is worth mentioning that while Blair had always been in favour of British membership, this was not a conviction more important to him than party politics. At times when the Labour party swayed farther from Europe, he had allowed himself to tone down his opinions in order not to upset party unity (Rentoul, 1996). Secondly, he was not completely untouched by the 'ideological nationalism' that was previously described to Thatcher. In the weeks running up to his first election, he famously proclaimed that 'I will have no truck with a European super\_state. If there are moves to create that dragon I will slay it' (Blair, 1997). During his premiership, Blair would return regularly to this European super\_state as the limit of his Europeanism. Lastly, there is an argument to be made that the success of the Blair government's Europe policy was mainly due to the issue's low saliency at the time (Geddes, 2013). Blair's priorities as PM lied in critical issues as the Iraq War and his beloved 'education, education, education' – and it was the fact that the public agreed with this priority that paved the way for his popularity. None of these contentions are decisive in their own right, but together they speak to a fuller picture that tempers the sometimes exaggerated Europhilia ascribed to the Labour leader.

Another rather subtle clue to the temperance of Blair's European devotion is the way he seemed to talk *to* Europe more often than *with* Europe. Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan once described Thatcher's way of addressing the highest officials of Europe as the same manner she would approach someone 'mentally deficient' (cited in Sharp, 1997: 156) and while Blair never did anything as bad as that, he seemed unable to completely rid himself of the infamous British superiority. The most telling example is in one of his first interactions with the EU as Prime Minister. After his unexpected landslide victory in the 1997 election, Blair toured Europe to spread the 'New Labour' gospel.

The audacity of such a young man (44 years of age) to tell European labour parties what the path forward was did not escape the established socialists on the continent. His intentions were not primarily to strengthen the socialists' ties in Europe or to contribute to a stronger platform in the European Parliament, but rather to put on display a progressive and innovative British government. Historian Philip Stephens comments that while Blair succeeded in making Britain's case in Europe, he 'failed to make Europe's case in Britain' (2001: 67). This was, of course, partly due to domestic resistance – but while Blair worked consistently for a strong British presence in Europe, he seemed much less convinced of the intrinsic value of an increased European presence in Britain.

The most well-known example of his lack of conviction was Blair's approach to the Euro. During his second year at number 10 Blair chaired the European Council (a position which before the Lisbon treaty rotated among the member states), allowing him to play an important part in the work on a single European currency that was going on at the time. This in combination with his ardent, pro-European rhetoric and the fact that he argued that Britain should join this currency 'when the time was right' must have made Britain's adoption of the Euro seem almost inevitable to his contemporaries. The time, however, would never prove quite right. Blair himself argued that this was due to the fact that Labour's five economic tests never were met, and that he would have been very willing to take Britain into the Eurozone otherwise. Political scientists Rosamond and Wincott (2006), on the other hand, argue that these 'tests' never were designed as such and that their intended function had always been as 'technocratic benchmarks' – solving an issue in a depoliticised manner that would have been rather painful to solve politically (very similar to the tests put to Theresa May by Labour in 2018).

Hence, there were certain practical limitations to Blair's Europeanism that were not obvious if one looked at his more

theoretical enthusiasm for the European project. It is in this sense that journalist and writer Hugo Young characterises Blair as ‘an umpire, not a player’ in Europe (Young, 1998: 495). Stephens denotes Blair an ‘unsentimental European’, engaging with Europe (as he did with the US) as a means to maximise Britain’s global reach and presence (Stephens, 2001: 67-69). Blair did indeed believe that membership in the EU did play to Britain’s strengths in allowing the country to exert its influence further – changing the world for the better. Europe was, however, only one of many potential ‘channels’ that Blair saw for British influence, something that made it ultimately replaceable if/when other means for British aspirations seemed more promising. His speeches often reflected this ‘functionalist’ view of the EU: ‘Europe is a Europe of free, independent sovereign nations who choose to pool that sovereignty in pursuit of their own interests and the common good, achieving more together than we can achieve alone’ (cited in Geddes, 2013: 94). Blair’s union was strategic endeavour stripped of the aspects of identity or shared heritage – reduced to a calculated choice.

So even as Blair advocated in favour of Europe as satisfying for Britain’s needs and amplifying of her strengths – a place where both Britain’s fortune and contribution were maximised – he never dedicated Britain to the ‘will’ of Europe. In this sense, Blair did find a role for Europe in Britain but hesitated to commit to a role for Britain in Europe. A Britain subsumed to the European project, acting in Europe’s interest, was not part of his vision. As with Wilson and Thatcher, Blair consistently acted to keep the relation to Europe on British terms.

### **Why it all matters**

In February 2019, when Shadow Defence Secretary Gloria de Piero guested on journalist Nick Robinson’s podcast, Robinson put to her the suggestion that what her constituents wanted to

change with Brexit had nothing to do with the EU: ‘Look, the closure of the pits was not to do with the EU. The decline in real wages was not to do with the EU. These are long term economic trends, not over a couple of years, but decades.’ To that, de Piero answered ‘Absolutely, absolutely. [But] I believe in the power of national governments as well, and being in the EU didn't stop those things happening either ... so it can't be that brilliant’ (Robinson, 2019). This chapter has aimed to show that this indifference, with which de Piero rejects the EU for failing in something it could never have been expected to do, is not the expression of something new in Britain. Rather, if one looks at the nature of Britain’s historic commitment to Europe, one realises that through Wilson, Thatcher and Blair, no Prime Minister has been prepared to subsume British interests to European. Each of them seemed ready at all times to abandon the European project if something better came along. None of these Prime Ministers ever settled on Europe as the home of Britain’s global role.

Lastly, that leaves us with the question of what a finalised Brexit would entail. History suggests that Britain now faces the same issue as Churchill and his circles, albeit within a fundamentally different context. So if indeed the membership in the European project was an attempt to find Britain’s next role – and if they actually are leaving – what is next for Britain? And perhaps more concretely, with a new set of minds in Her Majesty's Government after July 24<sup>th</sup> 2019, where do they see this process ending up? How far does the Johnsons, the Cummings and the Rees-Moggs really believe that Britain has come since the days of Churchill? Only time will tell.

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# Challenges to EU Law in the Member States: From Reluctance to Revolt

Anna Wallerman Ghavanini and Clara Rauchegger<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 2018, ten European Union (EU) Member States had a government that included at least one populist party, most often having campaigned on a Eurosceptic platform (Falkner & Plattner, 2019). The European Parliament elections of 2019 saw populist and Eurosceptic parties gain further ground at the EU level (Blomgren, 2019). In January 2020 the EU is set to lose a Member State for the first time through the United Kingdom's withdrawal. These are indeed challenging times for European integration.

The increased political mandates of Eurosceptic legislators will put to the test the endurance and effectiveness of the Union institutions – most notably the Commission and the Court of Justice (CJEU) – responsible for compliance and enforcement (see eg Closa, 2019; Blauburger and Kelemen, 2017). In particular, much attention has been directed to the rule of law backsliding in Poland and Hungary (see e.g. Pech and Scheppele, 2017). However, increased Eurosceptic tendencies within a Member State do not appear to necessarily increase the number

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on the book *The Eurosceptic Challenge: National Implementation and Interpretation of EU Law* (Hart 2019), of which we were the editors. We are grateful to the contributors of that volume for their insightful contributions, and to the editor of this book for valuable comments on an earlier draft.



of EU law infringements (Toshkov, 2019), and case studies on Greece and Italy suggest that parties may soften their anti-European stance once in government (Vasilopoulou, 2018; Guastaferrero and Gianniti, 2019).

The question thus arises: how does Euroscepticism in political rhetoric and manifestos translate into concrete legislative, administrative, and judicial change in the Member States? When, how and to what extent do Member States challenge or resist their European commitments?

The present chapter will briefly address these questions by providing examples of challenges to EU law and policy in the Member States. We do not aim to develop our own concept or definition of Euroscepticism in this chapter. We rather draw on specific case studies to verify the image of Euroscepticism as a broad spectrum of resistances against the authority of EU law. The chapter will conclude that no clear dividing line can be discerned between forms of critique and reluctance that are vital and permissible in a democratic community based on the rule of law, and more fundamental challenges that constitute existential threats to the European project. Instead, challenges to EU law and policy manifest themselves in various forms and degrees. They can be better described as different shades of grey than by an opposition of black and white.

### **What is Euroscepticism?**

It is well established that Euroscepticism as a concept encompasses a wide variety of political stances. This has led commentators to suggest various sub-categorisations of the term. Most influentially, Taggart and Szcerbiak have introduced the distinction between *hard and soft Euroscepticism*, with the former implying “outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one’s country joining or remaining a member of the EU” – Brexit being a case in point – and the latter instead involving “contingent

or qualified opposition to European integration” (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008).

However, alternative and competing conceptualisations abound. For instance, Kopecky and Mudde distinguish between attitudes towards European integration in the abstract and towards the EU in its current (and developing) incarnation, noting that it is quite possible to be positive to the European ideal and yet (very) critical of the EU, or vice versa (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002). Lubbers and Scheepers instead introduce a distinction between political and instrumental Euroscepticism, the former being focused on objections to European power and decision-making, while the latter is instead caused by a (perceived) lack of positive economic effects for a particular nation or region (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005).

Naturally, these categorisations are not mutually exclusive, nor entirely unrelated. Many real-life phenomena will combine features of different categories and, as always, eschew clear classification. For similar reasons, the image of a spectrum, favoured by several commentators over that of clearly delineated boxes, may be more helpful (Hooghe & Marks, 2007; de Vries & Edwards, 2009). This observation, however, also serves to underline the fundamental indeterminacy that continues to characterise the concept, covering anything from legitimate criticism of the EU and/or some of its policies to populist or illiberal rejection of its core values.

Criticising the use of Euroscepticism as a ”catch-all concept”, Krouwel and Abts have suggested a continuum that moves from Euroconfidence over, in turn, Euroscepticism, Eurodistrust, and Eurocynicism to Euro-alienation (Krouwel and Abts, 2007). This arguably more literal understanding of the term “*Euroscepticism*” has the benefit of clarifying that not all scepticism against the EU and its policies or indeed against the European integration project is inherently negative.

Similarly, De Vries characterises public opinion about the EU as ranging from Loyal Support via Policy Scepticism and Regime Scepticism to the most extreme rejection of the Union: Exit Scepticism

(de Vries 2018). Both these alternatives highlight that the spectrum not only includes varieties of Euroscepticism, but runs all the way from the embrace of European integration to its complete rejection.

### **Case Studies: From Revolt to Reluctance**

By means of illustration, this section will revisit five examples of Member States challenges to the authority and orthodoxy of EU law. The case studies will show that such challenges range from revolt to resistance and on to, perhaps, mere reinterpretation of the Union legal authority.

First, taking a side track to the high-profile judicial reforms carried out by the Polish government in recent years, Tacik has analysed the conduct of Polish executive authorities in connection to the preservation efforts of the primeval *Białowieża* Forest (Tacik, 2019). The case in itself, Tacik argues, was relatively straight-forward. By allowing logging activities in the protected primeval forest, the Polish authorities acted in breach of the Birds and Habitats Directives,<sup>2</sup> which was subsequently confirmed by the EU Court of Justice (CJEU or the Court).<sup>3</sup> However, Member State actions in breach of EU law, even blatant ones, are not normally described as Eurosceptic. Tacik argues, however, that the *Białowieża* Forest case was particularly serious because of the strategies adopted by the Polish government vis-à-vis the Commission. He demonstrates that government representatives

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds [2010] OJ L20/7, as amended by Council Directive (EC) 2013/17 adapting certain directives in the field of environment, by reason of the accession of the Republic of Croatia [2013] OJ L158/193 and Council Directive (EC) 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [1992] OJ 1992 L 206, p. 7, as amended by Council Directive (EC) 2013/17/EU adapting certain directives in the field of environment, by reason of the accession of the Republic of Croatia [2013] OJ L158/193, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Judgment of 17 April 2018, *Commission v Poland (Forêt de Białowieża)*, C-441/17, EU:C:2018:255.

engaged in a deliberate attempt to distort public discourse and undermine the authority of the CJEU by, *inter alia*, issuing untruthful, contradictory and scientifically flawed statements, misrepresenting the Court and its activity, and politicising fundamental legal principles and values protected by law.

The second case study turns to Hungary, where the *Fidesz* government has systematically dismantled liberal institutions such as judicial independence and academic freedom. Papp and Varju, in their study of Hungarian economic patriotism, note that a shift in economic policy after 2010 has led to an increased number of infringement actions in the field of EU economic law against Hungary, a Member State which had previously been celebrated as a frontrunner of compliance (Papp & Varju, 2019). They identify a number of economic policy measures undertaken by the Orbán government, including the monopolisation of certain sectors of the economy, tax reforms targeting sectors with large foreign economic interests and licensing requirements affecting large-scale (i.e., predominantly international) company structures that are applied in a discriminatory manner. Like Tacik, they link these violations of EU law to a deeper challenge to the EU's "allegedly neoliberal policy agenda", motivated by nationalist interests.

Both case studies highlight the limitations of viewing Euroscepticism, or kinds of Euroscepticism, as dichotomies. Neither the Polish environmental actions, nor the Hungarian economic policy measures, are indicative of a desire to dismantle or leave the EU. They would therefore be classified as instances of soft Euroscepticism in Taggart's and Szczerbiak's terminology. Nevertheless, the case studies show that the measures have fundamental, structural and possibly even existential implications for the Union.

The third case study to be highlighted here proves that persistent and systematic infringement of Union law in certain sectors is not necessarily connected to, nor an exclusive trait of,

fundamental rejection of European integration and values. Warin notes that even a Member State like Luxembourg, a small state in the centre of Europe, self-perceived as deeply European and certainly an overall beneficiary of free movement, has a history of reluctance against EU policy, which cannot be satisfactorily explained with reference to the administrative limitations of a small government and civil service (Warin, 2019). Favouring the term “Euroreluctance” over the more sinister “Euroscepticism”, Warin describes how Luxembourg in several instances over a sustained period of time failed to properly implement and enforce EU measures protecting the freedom of movement for workers through tax schemes targeting non-residents, limitations in higher education financial aid and language requirements for legal practitioners. She terms these measures a “defensive reflex” against EU policies perceived to threaten national welfare and finances.

Clearly, these “reflexes” are not to be interpreted as fundamental rejections of the European ideal; indeed, Warin observes that they may be perceived as strategic measures to contain national Eurosceptic tendencies, which in themselves are described as soft in the Taggart/ Szczerbiakian sense. Nevertheless, they display tendencies of cherry-picking reminiscent, perhaps, of Lubbers’ and Scheepers’ economic Euroscepticism or De Vries’ ambivalent EU scepticism, and in any case suggest an attitude on the part of the national legislature that is closer to scepticism and reluctance than to the loyalty expected by Article 4(3) of the EU Treaty.

Moving along the spectrum, the fourth case study concerns the introduction of border controls within the Schengen area in a number of Member States, including Sweden, in the wake of the 2015 migration crisis. These measures differs from those of the previous three case studies by being, at least arguably, legal, relying on exceptions recognised and foreseen within the Schengen framework (Thalmann, 2019). Nevertheless, Thalmann

cautions against the expansive interpretation of the concept of a “serious threat” to public policy and security, which was invoked to justify the measures. He finds that the exceptions provided for within the Schengen framework and in particular their application during and in the aftermath of the 2015 crisis are testament to the EU’s Westphalian heritage. Thus, the more extensive reintroduction of border controls represent a concession to the EU’s intergovernmental – as opposed to supranational or *sui generis* – character, heritage and tradition. While not in itself a rejection or even (necessarily) objection towards the EU and/or its policies, it can hardly be described as conducive towards the “ever closer union” of the peoples of Europe.

The fifth and final case study to be covered in this chapter concerns the judiciary and its willingness to engage with the CJEU under the preliminary reference procedure.<sup>4</sup> This procedure allows and under certain circumstances obliges national courts to refer questions on the interpretation and validity of EU law to the CJEU for correct and uniform resolution. Claassen investigated the reasons for the surprisingly low number of references to the CJEU from Dutch courts in competition law cases. Dutch courts tend to refer to the CJEU frequently in other areas of law, and competition law is a thoroughly Europeanised field of law, rendering this selective reluctance remarkable. Claassen notes that while restrictive reference practices are often interpreted as a sign of reluctance towards Europeanisation, it may also be the effect of the successful integration of EU law into the national legal system (Claassen, 2019). In the case of the Dutch competition courts, he concludes that this is indeed the case; the low number of references can be explained not by unwillingness, but by the judges’ confidence in their own ability to apply EU law without outside support. The low number of references should not

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<sup>4</sup> Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

be seen as an expression of Euroscepticism, but rather as the opposite.

From the point of view of the CJEU, however, these may be the good intentions paving the proverbial road downwards. The function of the preliminary reference system is not only, or even primarily, to ensure the correctness of individual judgments, but to ensure the uniformity of the interpretation of law throughout the Union. As Claassen observes, the reluctance to refer has the effect of withholding potentially clarifying matters from the CJEU. When practiced by courts of last instance, it is also in itself (often) irreconcilable with EU law, as such courts are in principle obliged to refer all questions that appear before them to the CJEU.

### **Concluding remarks**

The case studies recounted in the previous section have demonstrated that the established dichotomies that are used to sub-classify Euroscepticism do not aptly capture all current challenges to EU law and policy in the Member States. The authority of the EU is challenged and resisted in a variety of modes, ranging from the well-intentioned to the outright subversive.

It may not be constructive to classify all domestic challenges to EU law and policy as “Eurosceptic” and thus to slap the “Euroscepticism” label, with its undeniable negative connotations, upon too wide a range of actions. However, it should not be overlooked that the combined effect of seemingly insignificant challenges can be far-reaching. Moreover, previous research has found that lesser degrees of Euroscepticism (however termed) may over time and in particular if exploited by populists transform into stronger, harder and more principled versions (Wessels 2007; Krouwel and Abts, 2007; cf also Drewry 2007). These insights should inform the search for remedies.

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# Demands of Independence. Catalonia, Scotland, Bosnia and Transylvania

Ingmar Söhrman

To create a human community of any kind you have to establish some sort of criteria in order to establish a border that includes or excludes people. You need some common markers that define the community you want to establish. Mostly, people tend to look for easily distinguishable and identifiable criteria.

*Language* is an obvious criterion, as is the case when you start talking to somebody and you reveal which is your linguistic community (Gumperz 1960; Moreno Fernández 2005: 23-24, 338), your social class and education. The idea of linguistic communities is often used in sociolinguistic research as this social perspective is of greatest importance for how your presentation is perceived by others and will be reflected in their attitudes towards you – and, of course, the other way round, how you perceive the other person, is just as fundamental (Moreno Fernández, 2005: 242).

Language is also a criterion for establishing a nation and a state as we will see. In an earlier study I asked the question whether a nation needs a language and if a language needs a nation (Söhrman 2007: 141-151). There is no real need for this, but they make things so much easier as we can separate ourselves from the rest when we want to become parts of a politically or culturally separate community.

Dialect and the use of certain linguistic varieties (sociolects) may identify you socially and politically as when many French

communists in the 50's and 60's started to use the alveolar R instead of the more frequently used uvular R in French since the leader of the Communist Party came from southern France where the alveolar R is normally used. They show who is an outsider and who is not. It might be question of such a simple thing as if you are to be trusted or not (due to some sort of linguistic prejudice) or it could identify you as an enemy of some kind.

A central idea from sociolinguistics is that people's social identity is reflected in their use of language, and that people modulate their use of language in order to present particular identities in different situations. (Shoemark 2017: 1239)

*Cultural uniform*, i.e. preferring certain clothing or haircut and similar observable traits. This could be due to religious tradition, political ideas or cultural such as punk, hip-hop and local traditions as well as political and religious convictions and traditions.

*Cultural history* is a mixture of historical reality and interpretations of this that has led to traditions and strong ideological feelings and thus a united community to which outsiders rarely can be admitted. However, there are two sides or perspectives. It is important that we see these two sides of the problem. One is the majority perspective, where minorities may have their 'peculiarities' as long as they are not supposed to question the 'superiority' of the majority. At least, this is how a minority may perceive a situation and thus feel oppressed. Whether this is true or not is another question, but the majority is often reluctant to admit the rights and demands of the minority.

The other perspective is that of the minority to whom the majority's attitudes and behaviour seem oppressive and disdainful and who does not seem willing to recognise the minority's rights. Often this can be interpreted as just laziness and the presumption that the minority "should" behave according to the majority's "rules" and traditions just because they are more

and predominant which in an obscure way may lead them to a certain priority, which, of course, is totally unfair and arbitrary. An example could be the German-speaking Swiss who are reluctant to learn and use Romansh in Romansh-speaking parts of Grisons in Switzerland (Söhrman 1998) or when you could see signs until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Brittany in France saying “Défense de cracher par terre et de parler Breton” (Forbidden to spit on the floor and to speak Breton; a Celtic language spoken there). The order of these two rules is also interesting!

In Franco’s Spain a migration of Spanish-speaking people to the Basque Countries was promoted just to eliminate the Basque majority, and France has done the same thing in many Pacific Islands in order to maintain the “majority” of the votes and the colonial situation. This is naturally more complex, but the language is fundamental for the speakers and their citizenship and – votes.

Both need to try to understand the other’s point of view if a standstill or more or less violent fights is to be avoided. It does not matter if this can be perceived as understandable or not. It is a question of both sides in the conflict to take a step back and see what could be the “major good” for all involved in the conflict and not insist on their own demands at the same time as they completely disregard those of their counterpart. The conflictive situation of Catalonia is unfortunately a “good” example of two forces that refuse to recognize the other part as will be seen further down.

The intention of this article is to raise both general and specific questions rather than to provide the reader with answers. The examples are chosen with the intention of showing what is particular and what is general in perceived oppression of a minority, and the focus is to identify the importance of distinguishable markers that represent external ways of showing the community identity, mainly *language*, but also the role of *cultural uniform* and of a common *cultural history*.

The focus of the article lies on the Catalan and Scottish examples to which Bosnia and Transylvania have been added as they do broaden the perspective and add to the examples. It also has to be said that in a short article like this there are simplifications and a lack of details, but the argumentation hopefully stands solid.

The concepts of *majority* and *minority* are not necessarily so easily defined. So, what is a *minority* (Söhrman 1997: 45-66)? It could be a minority within a country, but not necessarily in the region where the ‘majority of the minority in question’ lives, or it could be a minority even there, such as the Aranese speakers in the Catalan Pyrenees (Valle de Arán; Gozzer 2017) within Catalonia and also within the valley. They represent something like 35 % of the population in the Aran Valley, but in Catalonia they have a favoured position, either because of a wise and understanding political standpoint or because it would be disastrous for the Catalan political pretensions to not give favourable rights to an existing minority within Catalonia or because of both these reasons. It has to be said that the Aranese are mainly not in favour of Catalan independence. They might want to remain a part of Spain – or belong to France, but have few feelings for an independent Catalonia, as it seems. They have their own linguistic variety which is more related to Occitan than to Catalan, and they have their own cultural history and traditions.

Werner Kägi summarizes this in the following sentence: “Show me how the minorities are treated in your state, and I will tell you what spirit rules behind the curtains of your state” (Kägi 1984: 9) and this seems to be valid for all minority policies.

## **Catalonia**

As always, we tend to take geophysical entities for granted, but this is seldom correct. Modern Catalonia is one of 17

autonomous regions in Spain according to the constitution, but historically it was the economically most important part of the kingdom of Aragon, and the count of Barcelona was the responsible of today's Catalonia which was founded as a border county and defence zone by Charlemagne in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as *Marca hispanica* which was later included in the kingdom of Aragon.

As time went by the Balearic Isles were taken by the Catalans and so were some of the now Italian islands. Catalan is still spoken in Alguer/Alghero in Sardinia. Valencia was never a part of the kingdom of Aragon, but the language is a linguistic variety so close to Catalan that linguists (and Catalans) would consider it Catalan, but there are differences, and as the definition of *language* is political and not linguistic, it is considered a language in its own right, and the feeling for this variety being a language of its own is strong in Valencia.

The two main kingdoms on the peninsula were united when the Aragon king, Ferdinand, married the queen of Castile, Isabella, but when the last Hapsburg king of Spain, Charles II, died without an heir the throne passed to one of his nephews, Philip IV of Bourbon, from France after the War of the Spanish Succession 1701-1714. However, the Catalans had hoped for his Austrian cousin, who was also a candidate, but therefore they were punished by the new king's troops. Ever since there has existed a feeling of oppression by the Catalan part.

Everything became more complicated and 'poisoned' after the Civil war 1936-1939, when Franco oppressed all linguistic and ethnic minorities in different ways, and there were a lot of expectations when democracy was (re)introduced in Spain and the autonomous regions were created. However, the idea among the Catalans and Basques, and, to a lesser extent, the Galicians was that they were to have separate constitutions and not that

everybody was to get more or less the same rights. In Catalan this is often called ‘Coffee for everyone’ (*Historia del ‘café para todos’ 2011*). There was unfortunately not an equal distribution of rights (Strubell 2007), which is part of today’s problem.

The Basques got a more autonomous position that gave them the right to deal directly with tax money which Catalonia did not get. At the time it may have been because of the terrorist threat from ETA, but there is no real excuse for maintaining this economic difference today. There are of course more discrepancies between the different autonomous regions, but I will not go into details here.

Today Catalan is spoken in Catalonia and in Andorra as are related varieties such as Valencian, Balearic (Mallorquín etc.) and the variety of Alguer where the language has a semi-official status. It is also spoken along the Aragonese border with Catalonia, in the autonomous region Murcia close to Valencia and in the Pyrenees and in southwest France around Perpignan. These territories are called *els països catalans* (the Catalan Countries), a concept that has a strong political implication that is not always shared by Valencians and people from the Balears as they often see the notion as a token of Catalan (Barcelona) self-imposed superiority. It is normally used by Catalan nationalists and historians and political scientists who promote Catalan independence and is used as a means to get support from the Catalan-speakers outside Catalonia and not as a political possibility, just an identification of related cultures.

A vital question is of course whether these speakers consider themselves Catalans? And the fundamental question is: who is Catalan? Speaking Catalan is a strong requirement of course, but there was at the beginning of the democratic change in Spain a feeling that outsiders were not supposed to learn Catalan. This is an interesting but quite common idea that those who do not belong should not be taught ‘our language’. It must be kept as a secret language among its original speakers. This has often been



the case among Romani speakers. In the Basque Country this resistance to teaching the language was weak, possibly due to the fact that there were relatively few Basques who actually spoke and used the language, while in Catalonia the language has always been strong among the Barcelona bourgeoisie and elsewhere. Thus, in the Basque Country the promotion of Basque classes was something that had started earlier in the *ikastolas* (schools for promotion of Basque culture and language; Söhrman 1993: 37).

Questions that arose among people who considered themselves Catalans and many politicians were, for obvious reasons, such as whether somebody with a family connection to Catalonia was Catalan or how to consider someone who had lived in Catalonia for a long time without speaking the language such as many Andalusians. How about people from *els països Catalans*? Could and should all these groups be considered Catalans? In Catalonia the idea has since long been open to include all these as Catalans, even if the question remains, and the initial reluctance to include people was possibly also due to the fact that there were few qualified teachers (Generalitat 2015). Then, who is Catalan? The language is naturally a very good criterion as it is so easy to separate those who know the language from those who don't, but how well must you know the language to pass the 'test' to be considered a Catalan. Is a foreign accent OK or not? This is a very general questions as there are ongoing discussions about language tests in many countries all over the world nowadays (Milani 2008; Byrne 2017).

A very important change that has practically erased the existence of non-Catalan speakers in Catalonia with the exception of recent immigrants from other countries is the introduction of compulsory use of Catalan as the main language in all schools and in the regional parliament. The officiality of a language supports its prestige and thus people's willingness to use the language. This is clearly stated by the regional laws:

The linguistic model of Catalan schools ratified by the Statute of Autonomy of 2006 and the Education Law of Catalonia (2009) establishes Catalan as the vehicular language for learning, a reference and pre-eminent instrument and a pivotal element in social equity and cohesion. (Generalitat 2015: 58)

Having given this background, we must raise the very personal question of every citizen whether they consider themselves Catalans or Spanish or both. This is often called linguistic loyalty (Moreno Fernández 2005: 244-245) Officially, politicians and administrators can choose their criteria for including or excluding someone from an identity, but, fundamentally, this is a consideration that must be made on an individual level. What am I? I might not even be able to explain why, just how I feel about it. Are people Spaniards or Spanish citizens but with a Catalan identity? These considerations are personal and depend on society, feelings about language change and ideological and social considerations – and are, of course, difficult to measure as they represent what is perceived by each and every individual. It is a question of cognitive self-awareness. The problem has been discussed at length by Uriel Weinrich (1952).

What are the consequences of these conflicting identities and definitions? Separation and independence, more autonomy, or just more official recognition by the majority? There are many more important questions that make the situation and the solution of the conflict unclear and very problematic.

What are you to do with all those who do not want Catalonia to leave Spain? They may have a Catalan identity, but possibly at least a feeling of being Spanish to some degree. There are of course also those Catalans who live outside Catalonia. Must they choose identity or at least citizenship?

In the present (i.e.2019) Catalan parliament, there is an uncomfortable situation as those in favour of independence have a few more seats than those who want to stay within Spain, but there were more votes to stay than there were pro-independence.

It is quite clear that there are major legal improvements to be made on a national and regional level, i.e. a certain renegotiation of tax administration and regional legal rights between the national government and the regional government (Generalitat) in Catalonia, but a situation where the minority is almost as big as the majority complicates things enormously. How can we avoid the ‘dictatorship’ of the weak majority, for instance 51-49? Should the winner take it all?

Another linguistic perspective is the use of certain words in the political rhetoric. Is the migration of Andalusians to Catalonia seen as a domestic migration or should it be called immigration as some politicians do? It implies that they go to another country. In a rather aggressive article Rosalina Moreno reveals how migration and history is presented in a partial way in some Catalan textbooks (Moreno 2018; cf. Moreno Cullell 2010). And at least on one occasion the Spanish king’s visit to Barcelona was called a state visit, and this was in a Swedish newspaper, but many see it as such.

An ethically very complicated issue is of course if former Catalan president (head of the regional government) Puigdemont and others who stay abroad to avoid being prosecuted can be considered *political prisoners*? Should those who are now being sentenced for breaking the law when they organized a referendum on independence in 2017, as did Puigdemont, be considered political prisoners since they had political reasons for their deed? This referendum was and still is officially considered illegal, but it had and still has a lot of support in Catalonia.

Furthermore, how should the result be interpreted? 90 per cent voted in favour of the independence, but, on the other hand, only 2.26 million Catalans voted, and there are 5.3 million registered voters. So what will be the outcome and how should the relation between Catalonia – other Catalan territories – Spain/France/Italy – EU be? Who is **in** and who is **out**? It was no surprise that in Catalonia you saw graffiti texts such as ‘¡Visca Eslovenia liure!

(Long live free Slovenia) during the Yugoslav split up (personal observation in Sant Cugat del Vallès in June 1991)

There is also the question of a potential international support. To what extent should the EU member states take sides in, what on a European level, is seen as a domestic conflict? It is obvious that states such as the UK with a possible Scottish separation was not at all interested in supporting the Catalans, and this was also the case for other European countries. The Catalans were overoptimistic in this respect, but, as has been clear, the EU states are not willing to just play the Spanish card. The extradition of the former Catalan president Puigdemont has not taken place yet. Both sides' reluctance to negotiate unconditionally has not been appreciated among the other European countries.

That there are ongoing conflicts between the pro-independence parties in 2019 has not strengthened their cause, and the independence seems less probable at this moment (Oct. 2019). On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 there were considerably fewer participants, 40 per cent less, in pro-independence manifestations in Barcelona than earlier years on the Catalan national day, *la Diada* (Noguer 2019), Although 600,000 people manifesting is by no means negligible, and the sentences passed in October 2019 have caused a lot of impressive protests.

## Scotland

When queen Elisabeth I died in 1603 the throne was given to the Scottish king James VI as closest relative to the childless queen. Since then, there has been a union between the two countries, although there have been quite a few "disagreements" as the Civil War between those in favour of the Scottish royal family when the Stuarts lost the throne as James II (of England) and VII (of Scotland) was deposed in 1688. In 1714 the Hanover family (George I) came to power in the UK and Bonnie Prince Charles (Stuart) tried to regain the throne. The lack of support to the Highlands that suffered most from crop failure and hunger and

the clearances that drove Scottish clans from their land with an austere military control and oppression as a consequence created hatred and suspicions for centuries. There were also religious conflicts between Catholics and reformed Protestants in Scotland and the Church of England.

These events, among other things, have led to a lack of trust between the two. However, when the independence movement lost the referendum in 2014 (44.7 per cent in favour and 55.3 against; BBC) you would think that the pro-independence movement was buried. The Brexit has changed the situation once again, and there are demands for a new referendum that does seem to exist a certain possibility to win as Scotland voted against the Brexit (62 % voted remain), so the EU membership may lead to the split-up of the UK after more than four centuries (Wishart 2019).

The linguistic issue is interesting as Scots Gaelic, a Celtic language that is emblematic in Scotland, is now mainly spoken in the Outer Hebrides and in the Highlands, but only by around 1 % of the total Scottish population. It is not recognised as an official language, only as a minority language, but there is a revitalization movement going on. Nevertheless, there is a strong feeling that the Scots English should be considered a language in its own right and not just a series of English dialects. The fact that there is also a (Standard) Scottish English which is not the same as Scots English complicates the situation (Corbett, McClure, Stuart-Smith 2004). As Shoemark et al. (2017) have observed:

Identity is often reflected in language use, suggesting the intuitive hypothesis that individuals who support Scottish independence are more likely to use distinctively Scottish words than those who oppose it.

There is thus a willingness as it seems, especially among pro-independence Scots, to prefer the most different variety, Scots, to dialects closer to Queen's English. This seems to be a frequent attitude towards language usage as we will see in the Bosnian

case, and it is also quite obvious in Catalan usage that many prefer words that do not coincide with Spanish/Castilian lexemes.

A state that consists of several historic countries have certain identity problems. How do the inhabitants identify themselves – and how would the state like them to be identified? The very existence of several names of the state complicates the identification – *United Kingdom* (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and *Great Britain* (the kingdoms of England and Scotland) versus the countries' names: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland etc. Are you a Scotsman, an Englishman etc. or are you British? In the case of Northern Ireland this becomes really difficult since you may feel that you are more of an Irishman than British or English, and where are your personal loyalties then as Ireland is another country that you might identify with for family or ideological reasons.

Even within Scotland there is a cultural difference between the traditional Scottish Highlands and the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland islands, where different cultures have created a special mixture (Picts, Celts, Norsemen – and Englishmen) and the Lowlands.

## **Bosnia**

*Bosnia and Herzegovina* is the correct name of the country, but here we are just going to look at the linguistic and political situation in Bosnia (Söhrman 1996). Herzegovina is mainly Croatian speaking.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century many nationalistic and romantic ideas were being discussed and promoted especially in intellectual and political circles. This was very much the case in the Balkans, a territory that had been dominated by Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire for centuries.

In the Slavic speaking parts of Europe a pan-Slavic movement put forward the idea of uniting all these countries, but in the

western Balkans the main idea was the creation of a Yugoslav (southern Slavic) country, and Yugoslavia came into existence after World War I as the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. The Bosniaks were not even mentioned!

After the communist take-over after World War II the country was officially labeled *Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia* that existed until the breakup at the beginning of the 1990s, and in 1992 Bosnia and Herzegovina declared itself an independent state with tragic consequences as this led to a horrible international violent conflict (Rogel 2004).

The country is not only geographically but also politically and culturally squeezed between Serbia and Croatia, which both try to defend the speakers of 'their' language, Serbian or Croatian, within Bosnia and Herzegovina. This does not make the situation easier although the present situation is so much better than it was some 20 years ago.

While Yugoslavia existed, the Serbian dominated the national administration and the army. To a certain extent, this could be seen as a unifying and stabilizing factor as this was where young Yugoslavs from different parts of the country met and made friends during their compulsory military service. They also came to know other parts of the country, and quite a few stayed in these parts after the service. This is one of the reasons why there are Serbs in all the non-Serbian new countries (Magnusson 1996). It also partly explains why Serbia feels obliged to intervene in the politics of these other ex-Yugoslav countries.

The idea of being a *Bosniak* is not only linguistic but also cultural and religious, as many Bosniaks are Muslims. In communist Yugoslavia there were many cultural Muslims who kept the traditions, but they were not necessarily religious, although it seems that many have now also become religious Muslims.

The linguistic side of it is complicated as all three languages, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, have developed from one and the

same Yugoslav dialect, the *Shtokavian* dialect (Ronelle 2006; Gröschel 2009). In Croatia there are two more main Yugoslav dialects - *Chakavian* (Karlsbeek 1998) and the linguistically more distant *Kajkavian* (Ronelle 2006) that are more different than the three languages are from each other. How can Bosnian language and culture then be distinguished from the other two closely related linguistic varieties (Gustavsson 2009)? Culturally it is possibly easier to see the differences, but the language resembles the other two quite well and both Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are accepted, while Croatian uses the Latin alphabet and Serbian the Cyrillic one. Furthermore, there has been a linguistic promotion of words with an Oriental origin that gives Bosnian a more Muslim or Oriental character to the language and makes it more separated from the other close relatives as has happened both in Catalonia and Scotland. It is also happening in Macedonia with a language closely related to Bulgarian (Gustavsson 1996) and Montenegrin that used to consider its linguistic variety a Serbian dialect (Hammarström 2017).

### **Transylvania**

Transylvania is one of the three principalities (the other two being Moldavia and Wallachia) that constitute the main parts of today's Romania.

For many centuries the three Romanian principalities along with other small Balkan realms (i.e. Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia etc.) were politically and geographically squeezed between the major political powers which dominated the region, i.e. Austria (mainly Hungary) and the Ottoman empire and at times Russia and Poland. The fight for independence was ongoing and the dominance of the great powers never shattered, but how this was done changed over the years. Medieval princes who stood up against the great powers with some success were for instance in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Albanian prince Skanderbeg (Alexander bey)



and the two Romanian princes and cousins Vlad III Dracula (Wallachia) and Saint Steven of Moldavia (Hitchins 2014; Söhrman 2016a, 2016b).

Another historical aspect of utmost ideological and political importance is the Roman conquest and colonization of Dacia in 106 which lasted until 275. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries the Magyars (Hungarians) arrived and conquered Transylvania. The political issue that remains a conflict for the nationalist movements is whether there were any Romanians in the territory or if they had all left and the Magyars came to a rich and empty land. This seems very unlikely, BUT the two peoples, have coexisted for more than 1,000 years, so the discussion about who came first seems futile to an outsider's eyes. The Hungarians and Germans started the urbanization of Transylvania, while the Romanians for many centuries were mainly farmers.

A curiosity is that in Moldavia, next to the Transylvanian border there exists a Hungarian-speaking group, the only one that has never lived in Hungarian dominated territories, at least not since they came to Europe, – the *Csángó*. Some have argued that they are magyarized Romanians, but, on the other hand, so what? Does this have anything ethnically or politically to do with their position as Romanian citizens and today's society? It can always be used as an argument, one way or another, but is it fair and has it anything to do with modern times more than that it may promote certain nationalist ideologies and parties defending these ideas?

To make the situation even more complicated Germans were invited to come and settle in Transylvania in the 13<sup>th</sup> and later in the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This means that there are three different languages spoken, although the vast majority of the German-speaking population emigrated to Germany after the fall of communism. Because of this a town can have three toponyms as the city *Cluj(-Napoca) — Kolozsvár — Klausenburg*. There is also a Romanian-speaking minority in Hungary, but the

Hungarian-speaking population of Transylvania is almost 100 times bigger.

Here lies a problem. We are now dealing with a minority that constitutes the majority in a neighbouring country. Are these inhabitants to be called *Hungarians* or *Hungarian speaking Romanians* or *Hungarian speaking Romanian Citizens*? Mainly they are referred to as *Hungarians (Magyars)*, and they normally call themselves *Magyars*, but the difference between the ones in Transylvania and Hungarian citizens is unclear, and possibly this suits politicians of different ideologies quite well. The party that defends their cause, UDMR, which in English means *The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania* (Terry 2014) where the term *Hungarians* is used and accepted without problems. Another thing is how they look upon themselves. There are no real statistics on this but in Hungarian dominated regions the Magyar feeling seems stronger among the population than outside these regions.

In the Catalan case we have seen the ideological difference between a *Spaniard* and a *Spanish citizen* and the question to whom Catalans are loyal, to Spain or to Catalonia? In the Transylvanian case it is ideologically worse as the Hungarian speaking population can be seen as not trustworthy ('a fifth column') because of a presupposed loyalty not only to their region but also to another country, to Hungary and not to Romania. This has been used by nationalists in both countries – and both may be right to some extent, but certainly not always.

It comes down to small things as from where the schoolbooks come, as the Hungarian speaking children are entitled to education in their mother tongue. The two controversial subjects are, of course, geography and history as events can be described in very different ways, especially referring to what Hungarians and Romanians have done to each other all through history and the geographic consequences of these 'activities' and the

justification of these “deeds”. And you are also entitled to ask in which language the classes should be taught?

On the political stage there is always the question whose interests the parties that defend the minorities really represent.

### Conclusions

As was pointed out in the introduction the intention of this chapter was to raise questions and not to give answers. It is quite evident that many concepts that are used in the political and historiographical rhetoric are not so semantically clear as is often presupposed. Even a notion like *minority* is much more relative than a reader might think as it can refer to absolute numbers in different geophysical classifications, valley, town, region or country - and if they may represent majority in a neighbouring country, and what consequences can be concluded from this. Where is the loyalty - and would this automatically disqualify somebody's loyalty? Of course not, but just questioning can lead far if it is used for ideological reasons.

We have also seen that even if *variety* is a more neutral term for language and dialect it is not the word used by others than linguists, and how the borders are drawn depends on the intention of the speaker. If this is conscious or not is another question.

Language stands out as a marker/criterion for defining a community, and we have also seen how there may exist ideological reasons for promoting lexical and orthographical differences between varieties. In Transylvania learned men created the *Transylvanian school* at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as they tried to eliminate Slavic words in the Romanian language and introduce French (= Romance words).

That history can be most controversial is clear as it is always a question of the author's standpoint and in which language everything is presented. It is part of the creation of a community? Who belongs and who doesn't?

The examples presented in this chapter have shown how languages can be used as an easily distinguishable criterion for dividing people for nationalistic or ideological purposes. It has also shown that this is connected to other cultural, geophysical and ideological factors that have been and still are used in present-day politics.

This also means that languages must be taken seriously on a European level in order not to promote unnecessary conflicts that can be devastating both nationally and internationally.

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# The influence of Podemos on mainstream parties' position regarding European Integration

Eva Hoxha

There were austerity measures put in after the economic crises of 2008 by several governments in Southern Europe, particularly by Spain and Greece. This allowed for a greater discourse on citizenship, the set of civil, political and material rights (Gerbaudo, 2017), and for many anti-austerity mobilizations targeting European institutions and national governments.

The Great Recession, and the unpopular austerity measures put in effect as a response, are not the only causes for anti-EU mobilizations and rise of new parties. The refugee crisis, and the aftermath of the result of the 'Brexit' referendum in the UK, also contributed onto the emergence and/or electoral success of Euro-skeptic populist parties across Europe. While a few scholars have focused on the effect of the crisis on the electoral success of populist radical left parties (PRLPs) (Hooge and Marks, 2017), the majority are looking at the transformations that have led to the rise of radical right parties (RRPs). Nonetheless, measuring by their sheer success, the parties that emerged, both PRLPs and RRPS, seem to have influenced the mainstream parties' policy position and discourse on certain issues.

This chapter examines the impact that *Podemos*, a newly emerged populist radical left party (PRLP) in Spain, has had on Spanish mainstream parties' rhetoric in relation to more European Integration.

Before the crisis and ever since the end of the Franco regime, Spain could be characterized as a two party system, without any major Euro-skeptic party, with the exception of some nationalist parties (Costa Labo & Magalhães, 2011). After the economic crisis, the Spanish electorate saw the emergence of two particular parties into the national parliament: Podemos and Ciudadanos (a center-right party at the time), where the former displayed an anti-European discourse whereas the later was more pro-Europe, European integration and the EU institutions.

Llamazares & Gramacho (2007) have empirically shown that in Spain and Portugal there was traditionally a low level of Euroscepticism and that this could be due to the positive historical associations with the European Union (EU). However, the economic crisis led to weakened political trust at the national level (Van Erkel and Van der Meer, 2016) as well at the international level in relation to European institutions (DottiSani and Magistro, 2016). Needless to say, the situation presented a convenient opportunity for Eurosceptic parties to become relevant actors, and to gain political representation at the national level as well as at the European parliament level, as can be illustrated by the case of Podemos in Spain.

As can be seen in Table 4.1, Podemos obtained 7.98 percentage of vote shares at the European elections in 2014, and in 2015 they became the third largest party at the Spanish general elections by obtaining 12.67 percentage and 42 seats. Despite the fact that Ciudadanos obtained more votes, because of the Spanish electoral system, Podemos gained 42 seats obtained whereas Ciudadanos only received 40 seats.

Table 4.1 European and national election results in Spain, 2014 - 2019 (per cent)

Political Parties	European Parliament election 2014	European Parliament election 2019	Spanish national election 2015	Spanish national election 2019 (II)
PSOE	23.01	32.86	22.01	28
PP	26.06	20.15	28.72	20.82
Podemos	7.98	10.07	12.67	9.80
Ciudadanos	3.16	12.18	13.93	6.79
IU-LV	10.03	-	-	-
UPyD	6.51	-	-	-
EPDD	4.02	-	-	-
Vox	-	6.21	0.23	15.09

*Comments:* The results for the main political parties. Source: European Parliament and Spanish Government, Ministry of Interior. The parties are: PSOE: Spanish Socialist's Workers Party PP: Popular Party, IU-LV: United Left/The Greens – Assembly of Andalusia, UPyD: Union, Progress and Democracy EPPS: The Left for the right of Self-determination (coalition between pro independency parties from Catalonia, of the parties from Catalonia, Islas Baleares, Comunidad Valenciana and the Republic Left party (ERC).

In this chapter, I am interested in investigating how the electoral success of a populist radical left party, with an anti-EU rhetoric, influences mainstream parties' rhetoric and support for European institutions, such as the European parliament. The main objective is to identify and show the changes of support from mainstream parties regarding European integration, if any, after the first breakthrough of Podemos at the national parliamentary level.

Most previous studies have focused on the role and the electoral success of the radical and/or right wing populist parties, as well as the reasons behind their electoral success and the political discourse of these parties towards the European Union and European parliament. However, few studies have analysed the political discourse of left wing populist parties (Kioupkiolis & Katsambekis, 2018).

This chapter is organized in the following manner: the next section explains in detail the emergence of Podemos and its electoral success; section three discusses the potential changes that might be identified in mainstream parties' political discourse

towards Europe, its institutions and European integration. In addition, you will be provided with an analysis on mainstream parties' position towards more European integration based on the Chapel Hill expert survey data. This chapter concludes with thoughts on what might be some of the consequences on mainstream parties' position regarding European integration when parties with an anti-EU rhetoric are perceived as rivals and become electorally successful.

#### **The electoral success of Podemos**

Spain was highly affected by the recent economic crisis. The austerity measures put in by its government at the time caused a lot of discontent among citizens, which in turn opened up opportunities for new parties to emerge. One of the successful parties that was launched in 2014 was Podemos, which was perceived by Spanish citizens as a needed political initiative to bring political change. Podemos' rhetoric was marked by the need of presenting a twofold program: common sense and 'dream' (Kioupkiolis & Katsambekis, 2018). By common sense they referred to a practical consciousness that will ensure a more democratic political system and a renewal of the social pact between citizens and institutions. 'Dream' referred to the idea that dreams are achievable if they are carried out by just/fair political representatives who take into account the will of the people.

Podemos emerged from the Trotskyist organization Izquierda Anticapitalista (the Anticapitalist Left), which brought some of its supporters from Izquierda Unida (the United Left) and a group of Political Science professors at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, such as Pablo Iglesias, the current leader of the party, Íñigo Errejón, and Juan Carlos Monedero. In March 2014, Podemos constituted itself as a political party aiming to represent the discontent of the people towards the main political parties by making use of the 'plazas' (main squares in main Spanish cities that were a place of expressing discontent toward political

situations) and the media which gave the new party a lot of attention and coverage.

Spain used to be a two party system until the general elections of 2015. The electoral success of Podemos and Ciudadanos disrupted and weakened the two main Spanish parties: Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol (PSOE) and Partido Popular (PP). The centre left party PSOE was voted out of office in 2011 when they implemented many top-down European demanded austerity measures in order to handle the economic crisis. The Spanish government had no choice but to accept the bailout conditions formulated by the ‘Troika’, which was composed by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In turn, the centre right Partido Popular (PP), which held on to power until 2018 after replacing the socialist government. The difficult years during the economic crisis changed the relationship of the EU with the Spanish institutions as well as the image of the EU in the public sphere (Roch Gonzalez, 2017).

### **Indignados and Podemos**

The social resentment against the restrictive policies imposed by the national government, but also the European Union’s institutions, allowed for many anti-austerity movements to emerge (Castells 2012; Della Porta 2014a). The Indignados, or the 15-M movement as it was also known emerged from the massive protest on the May 15th 2011.

In 2010, the Spanish government had no choice but to accept the bailout conditions formulated by the ‘Troika’. The measures led to severe cuts in public spending and welfare provisions, which set the background against which the Indignados were able to mobilize large numbers of citizens. However, since the Indignados movement, despite the large number of support, was criticized for its lack of political influence (Wert 2011), they then

agreed on a common program to be able to shape the political developments of the country. Podemos was able to attract media attention, increase their political influence by increasing their public support. In addition, many followers of 15-M ended up supporting Podemos, which became the third largest party in the Spanish general elections of 2015.

### **Podemos' discourse towards the European Institutions**

Defining populist parties, and therefore populist rhetoric, has been an academic challenge, not only in the last few years. There are at least two main definitions regarding populism that are widely accepted in academia. On the one hand, the minimal definition, which defines populism as a thin centred ideology:

...that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people (Mudde 2004: 543).

While on the other hand, the school of Essex and the philosopher Laclau, define populism as a political discourse, which represents the opposition between the elite and the people including a social dimension where populism "can be found in the changes of social aggregation and formation of equivalently chains between social demands in a broader social sphere (Laclau 2005).

The expressed discourse towards the European Union, its institutions and European integration by Podemos since 2014, are the most important components of ascertaining populism for this work, and more specifically, the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite where the perceived elite here includes the EP and European institutions, based on Mudde's definition (Mudde 2004: 543).

Podemos' European election campaign started in Berlin, at Humboldt University, as a form of protest towards the austerity measures endorsed by the European institutions and Angela Merkel's government. Angela Merkel and generally the European

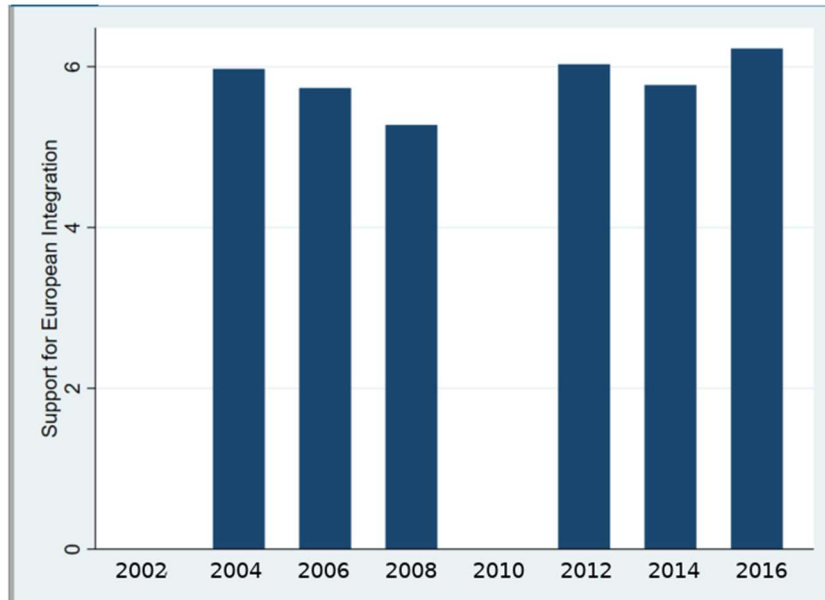
elite were portrayed, by Podemos, as the group of the privileged who were against democracy and the people. This was part of Pablo Iglesias' discourse portraying the European elites as evil, following with the same definition for national elites. The elites are argued to have an antagonistic relation with "the people".

### **Spanish citizens' support for European Parliament**

Since Spain joined the European Union in 1968, Spanish citizens have constantly supported the European integration process, the European Union and the European Parliament. However, Spain was also one of the countries most affected by the economic crisis, which was one of the factors that led to a decrease in support from citizens for political institutions and mainstream parties (Mair 2013). And it allowed for new challengers like Podemos and Ciudadanos to become relatively important political actors (Hernandez & Kriesi 2016). The results have not only changed the national order and affected national institutions but also the traditional support for European integration and the European Institutions.

Figure 4.1 shows the changes on the level of further European integration among Spanish citizens from 2002 to 2016 with data taken from the European Social Survey (ESS). Respondents were asked about whether they think European unification should go further or has already gone too far.

Figure 4.1 Support for European Integration from 2002 to 2016



*Comments:* Data retrieved from the European Social Survey (ESS), from round 1 to round 8 (2002-2016). The respondents were asked about whether they think that European unification should go further or it has gone to far asked to indicate how much they trust the European Parliament on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'Unification already gone to far' and 10 signifies 'Unification go further'.

As we can see from figure 4.1, Spaniards do agree on further European unification. However, there is a small decrease on support for further integration in round 7, conducted in 2014, which coincides also with the first political appearance of Podemos.

### Theoretical expectations

The economic crisis transformed Spain's position in the EU, i.e. it turned from an economically successful country to a potential bailout. From a theoretical perspective, such a change can be expected to have affected Spanish citizens' perception and trust in the political system. Roth (2009) has showed that citizens' trust



in government and in its ability to manage this particular economic crisis decreased.

The changes in the party system, social mobilization against the government, the emergence and electoral success of new parties, all taken together are expected to influence the political arena in general and the political behaviour of parties more specifically. Social mobilization would create space for new parties to emerge and the emergence of new parties is expected to influence the behaviour of existing parties. The question then is: how do mainstream parties react when newly emerged parties experience electoral success while competing on specific issues? William & Ishiyama (2018) have demonstrated that far-left parties influence European mainstream parties' position in relation to Euroscepticism. Consequently, mainstream parties become more Eurosceptic when far-left parties increase their saliency regarding the European Union.

Therefore, when a far-left party becomes part of the national parliament and in this way can be seen as a long-term competitor, mainstream parties tend to reconsider their position on issues the far left parties own. In the above-mentioned case, mainstream parties are thus expected to change their position regarding EU and European integration. Election results obviously tend to inform political parties about voters' preferences on certain issues, and thus when parties with an extreme position gain more electoral support, it is also can be interpret as a message for mainstream parties regarding the position of voters. Consequently, mainstream parties can change either their position, their discourse, or both, on certain issues.

Taking into account that Podemos entered the European and the National parliaments in 2014 and 2015 respectively, and that they were critical towards more European integration and EU in general, I would expect that two mainstream parties, PSOE and PP, would also reflect a similar behaviour towards European integration during the years 2014 and 2015.

In order to test the theoretical expectations, I will focus on the changes that the main Spanish party leadership has shown towards further European integration of Spain from 2010 to 2017. Since this period coincides with the break-through of Podemos, I expect the data to show that after the European elections of 2014, and in the general elections of 2015/16, the two main Spanish parties, PSOE and PP, would have decreased their support for more European integration. This is even more likely as European integration, the European Union and its institutions, were highly discussed and ‘attacked’ by Podemos.

I am using the Chapel Hill expert survey data, which are from 2010 to 2017 and they include the 2010, 2014 and 2017 wave. The Spanish experts were asked regarding the overall position of the party leadership towards European integration. The question is measured in a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 suggests that party leadership strongly opposes European integration whereas 7 suggests that the former strongly favours the EI. Therefore, the dependent variable is party leadership’s position regarding European integration whereas the independent variable is the electoral success of Podemos.

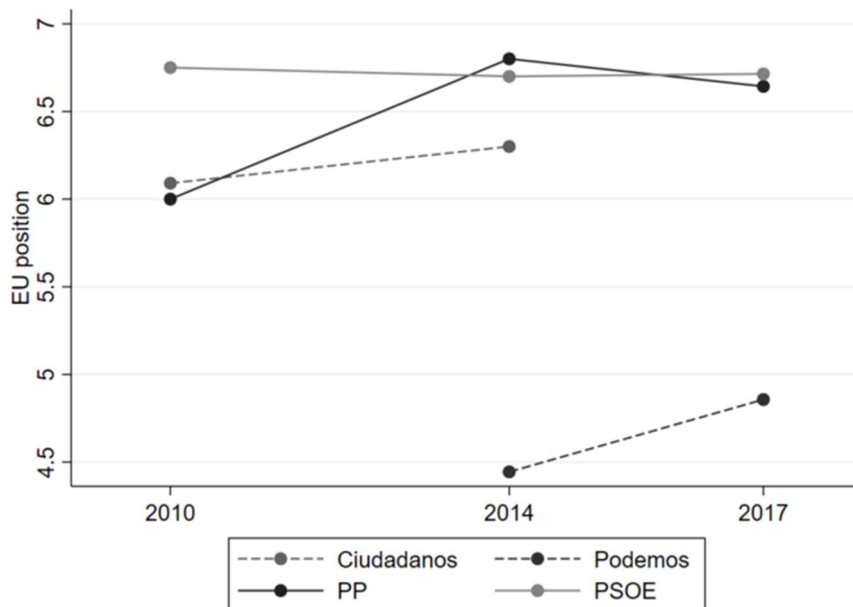
### **Analysis**

The expectation here is that the electoral success of Podemos, which at its beginning maintained a Euro-sceptic rhetoric, would influence the two main parties to decrease their support for more European integration. Figure 4.2 shows changes on two of the mainstream parties in Spain, PP and PSOE, regarding European integration, from 2010 to 2017. PSOE lost its government position in the general elections of 2011 when PP obtained the majority and formed a new government. However, we see that from 2010 to 2014, PSOE’s party leadership has slightly decreased the support towards more European integration

whereas for PP it has increased. In 2014, when Podemos had its first parliamentary representation at the EP, we see that PP scores slightly higher on opposing more European integration compared to the position maintained by the PSOE's party leadership.

We have to remember that during the European parliament elections of 2014, PP was the party in government. Being the incumbent and experiencing the emergence and electoral success of Podemos seems to have affected the position of PP regarding European integration. In addition, we see that from 2014 to 2017 PP's position for more European integration slightly decreases. However, the change is not significant and it is small.

Figure 4.2 The Spanish political party leaders' support for European integration



*Comments:* Data from the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES). The question asks about the position of parties' leadership towards EI. It is measured in a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 suggests that parties' leadership strongly oppose more European integration whereas 7 suggests that parties' leadership strongly favour more European integration.

According to the theory, we would expect a more significant change on the support shown by mainstream parties towards the EI. However, we see PSOE' party leadership opposing more towards further European integration compare to their position in 2010.

Several explanations might justify the obtained results. First, during the time that Podemos emerged and entered Spanish politics, Spain was in a process of recovering from the crisis. Second, even Podemos itself did not maintain their 'extreme' position against the EU, its institutions and further European integration for a long period. The difference that we observe regarding the position towards European integration between PP and PSOE can be attributed to their ideological similarities with Podemos. It is less likely that Podemos will get support from PP's voters; however, the likelihood to attract PSOE's voters is higher. Therefore, PSOE is more likely to respond when a new ideologically similar party becomes a relevant actor and experience electoral success.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has offered an overview of the Spanish political party positions regarding further European integration at the individual level and at the party level.

Throughout the chapter and based on previous literature, I have argued that during the time when Podemos becomes a relevant political competitor, mainstream parties would decrease their support for more European integration. The analysis covered the time-period from 2010 to 2017, including the moment when Podemos managed to gain seats in the European parliament in 2014 and at the Spanish national parliament in 2015/2016. Based on the previous theory, we expected that the electoral success of Podemos would influence mainstream parties to adapt a position more in line with Podemos regarding their own position towards more European integration.

The data has shown that during the hard time of the economic crisis, Spanish citizens were more in favour of European integration; however, their position slightly changed in 2014 when Podemos entered the political arena. Based on these descriptive data but also on previous theories, we expected that mainstream parties will also become more sceptical towards further European integration.

However, the results show that PP (in power at the time) slightly decreased their support for the European integration despite the electoral success of Podemos. Alternatively to PP, PSOE adopted a higher position against further European integration after the first breakthrough of Podemos.

There are several reasons that might explain the results. First, the timing when Podemos emerges as a party in 2014, Spain was recovering from the economic crisis, austerity measures were not a highly salient issue. Secondly, Podemos itself did not maintain a negative rhetoric towards the EU and its institutions probably due to the fact that despite the crisis and the austerity measures, Spanish citizens still support and value the European Union and the institutions within it.

The European parliamentary election of 2019 was quite a success for PSOE obtaining 32.86% as it is shown in table 1. The participation was higher compared to the turnout in the 2014 election, where it increased from 46% in 2014 to 64% in 2019. The main reason that that might explain such a high participation is due to the fact the European elections coincided with municipal elections and in specific cases with regional elections. The downside of such a high level of turnout is that voters will base their vote choice, at the European elections, on national issues.

According to the results in table 4.1, we see that the far right party, Vox, managed to gain seats for the first time at the European parliament. They have a soft Euroscepticism and focus mostly on has been the latest political situation in one of the Spanish regions, Catalonia, which seeks independence from

Spain. As it was mentioned earlier, we see that parties compete even at the European elections level with national issues and they manage to obtain political representation at the European level. One of the most unexpected results were the victory of PSOE, since it was one of the few mainstream centre-left party to obtain such a high vote share in all of Europe. Podemos obtained more votes in 2019 compare to their electoral results of 2014, however their results were considered bad since they performed worse than the national elections of 2015/2016.

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Data retrieved from European Social Survey:

<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>

Data retrieved from Chapel Hill Expert Survey:

<https://www.chesdata.eu/>



# Campaigning for Europe

## Election Posters in the 2014 EU elections

Bengt Johansson

Even if we often think of politics as an arena of words, this is not the whole truth. Words are of course central in politics, but so are images. Political campaigns are crowded with pictures of party leaders and voters (on posters, television ads and in the news), party logos, flags, and so on. Politics is thus both about textual and visual communication. This is of course not by accident. Political strategists know that not only words have an impact on voters, and therefore we see smiling politicians and other visual appeals during election campaigns. This assumption has also been supported by research, showing we more quickly process images than words and that images are important for how we understand messages (Barnhurst & Quinn, 2012; Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Schill 2012).

Election posters rely on both textual and visual communication and is one of the most important channels for politicians and parties. Posters have a long tradition and even if they been around for more than a century electoral posters still play an important role in many countries, especially where television advertising is prohibited or regulated (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). Some claim they are old-fashioned and outdated due to increased possibilities for digital campaigning using Internet and social media. However, we have so far not seen any sign of a decline of

electoral posters in political communication. Rather the opposite. Posters have moved on-line and have become viral, and some argue posters are highly relevant as a modern campaign channel (Johansson & Holtz-Bach, 2019).

Specific features and functions make them attractive. For example, they are almost impossible to avoid. During election campaigns, posters are everywhere, decorating walls, billboards, lampposts and trees, and people moving in the public space are always confronted with posters. They therefore fulfil a classical *announcement* function, signalling to voters that an election is coming up. Posters also have a *mobilizing* function for partisans and the general electorate in showing what is on offer for an election. Since they cannot be avoided when people are walking or driving, posters have the potential to *overcome selective behaviour* which otherwise often guides the reception of electoral information in other channels of political communication (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). When participating in “poster wars”, on the streets public presence of posters is also taken as a *signal of campaign strength* giving voters the impression of a strong commitment (Dumitrescu, 2017).

In addition, posters are also used for *attracting the attention of the traditional (and social) media*. Some posters are actually not produced for mass circulation, but in small numbers and are strategically positioned to obtain an indirect effect on voters through the coverage of the other media and by being posted on the social networks sites. This function has probably become even more important due to the breakthrough of social media during election campaigns (Holtz-Bacha & Lessinger, 2017, Johansson & Holtz-Bacha, 2019).

Furthermore, in countries with high degrees of illiteracy and linguistic diversity, visual electoral posters help overcome these obstacles (Willnat et al., 2017).

To sum up, electoral posters have been around in political campaigning for a long time and there is really no sign of them

disappearing. Maybe they are moving into the digital world of campaigning as everything else, but in the public space posters are still the best alternative for political campaigning.

In this chapter, I will focus on posters and European parliament elections, which raise a number of questions. Are there differences in Europe in how the EU elections are presented to the voters on election posters? For example, how are political leaders (party leaders and candidates) portrayed? How is the EU represented? Are European perspectives addressed and if so in what way? I will try to answer these questions, looking at both textual and visual communication in the 2014 European election posters, as the analysis of the 2019 campaign is still not finished.

### **Comparing political cultures**

European election campaigns are never uniform, instead they can be seen as a mirror of the political culture (Rohe 1990). Political culture thus becomes manifest in the verbal and visual styles of political communication, including advertising, and is accessible through content analysis (see, e.g., Griffin and Kagan 1996). The concept of political culture can be used to analyse differences in approaches to political advertising between countries who share historical and political experiences (Holtz-Bacha et al. 2012).

In this chapter, which to some extent builds on the work of Carlson, Johansson and Vigsø (2017), focus lies on the use of textual and visual appeals in election posters in the 2014 European election campaign, where I highlight two aspects of the member countries' political cultures. Firstly, political culture is related to countries belonging to different geographical regions, which indicates a shared cultural and political experience with a bearing on media systems and campaigning styles (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Secondly, political culture is also relevant to study on the party level, where shared experiences and views also will manifest in

political communication generally and in campaigning specifically. I therefore address the question to what extent there were party differences in the 2014 European election campaign regarding the use of textual and visual appeals. Previous research suggests that different types of parties use different rhetorical styles in their campaign communication. In Europe, research on election campaigning has also indicated that party cultures affect the way campaigns are organized and conducted (Strömbäck et al. 2013). Moreover, party differences regarding the use of visual elements can be traced in the use of motifs, symbols and colours in election posters (Carlson 2017; Håkansson et al. 2017). Furthermore, research on election posters indicates that parties on the far left or far right tend to use more harsh ways of communication styles compared with more mainstream parties (Håkansson et al. 2014).

From what we know, particularly about European Parliament elections, there are also differences between parties as to their approach to campaigns. Specifically, Eurosceptic parties tend to frame their political advertising differently compared to other parties (see Adam et al. 2013). Against this background, the analysis of the party level will focus on the poster style in relation to party families and, in addition, to what extent Eurosceptic parties use visual appeals differently compared with other parties.

### **The European Election Monitoring Center**

The data collection of posters (and television spots) was conducted by a network of researchers in the 28 member states of the EU during the 2014 campaign. In all, 894 posters and 405 television ads were collected and analysed. The results were presented in the book *Political Advertising in the 2014 Parliament Elections* (2017), edited by Christina Holtz-Bacha, Edoardo

Novelli and Kevin Rafter<sup>5</sup>. This chapter is based on the data material from the 2014 study, and I will focus on how political leaders and EU/Europe were represented and to what extent different aspects of political culture (EU region and party) could be traced on election posters appeals.

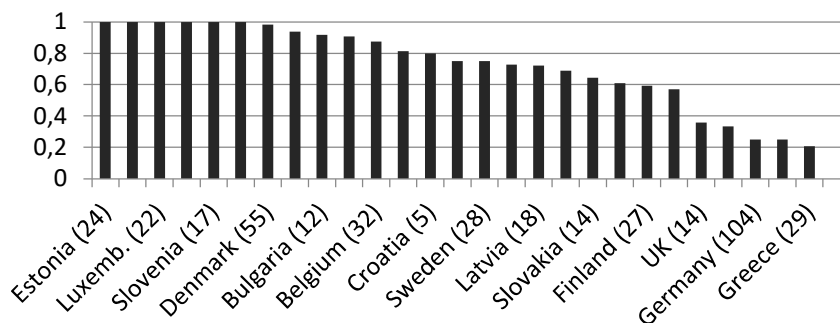
### **The smiling politician**

First, I will present to what extent posters portray candidates for the European Parliament or other political leaders, such as party leaders. These findings show that around 50 percent of all posters in the EU election in 2014 include a picture of a politician. If we limit ourselves to visual posters (i.e. posters with images), the figure is 66 percent. Hence, if a voter sees a poster of EU elections, he/she will probably look at a politician more than half of the times. However, there are country differences. The results in figure 1 reveal that Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia and Hungary show politicians on every one of the visual posters published during the campaign. On the other side of the scale we find Malta, Greece, the Netherlands, and Germany, where most visual posters show something else than faces of politicians. If visualization of politicians is analysed in terms of the different aspects of political cultures discussed above, the new member states in Eastern Europe and northern Europe tend to more often include politicians on their EU election posters. We also find that right wing parties are more inclined to focus on politicians, while left wing parties more often use other objects for visual communication on electoral posters (see also Carlson et al, 2017).

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<sup>5</sup> This network of researchers also collected posters and television spots during the 2019 EU elections. The research network was organized as the European Election Monitoring Center (<https://www.electionsmonitoringcenter.eu>) and the efforts to collect and analyze campaign material was even more extensive and included – apart from posters and television spots - newspaper ads and EU election related posts on 200 party Facebook accounts in the member states. An overview of the results were published in the report *2019 European elections campaign. Images, topics, media in the 28 Member States* (2019), edited by Edoardo Novelli and Bengt Johansson.

**Figure 1. Proportion of visual posters depicting candidates/leaders across countries (total N per country in parentheses).**



Source; Carlson, et al. 2017 p. 197

Having politicians on the posters is one thing; another is how they are portrayed. The next aspects to analyse is the style of appearance. In short: do they smile or look more worried, and are they dressed more formal, in suits and dresses or more casual? Table 1 reveals that around 50 percent of all politicians found on EU election posters are smiling at the potential voter, while the rest of them have a more serious, angry, worried or neutral look.

**Table 1. Facial expression and dress code in the visual portrayal of leaders/candidates on posters in the 2014 EU elections (percent).**

Facial expression	
Smiling/Friendly	49
Not smiling	51
Percent	100
N	432
Dress	
Formal	46
Informal	54
Percent	100
N	433

*Note.* The category 'Not smiling', two categories were merged: Serious/worried/angry, and Neutral. Five cases where the facial expression was coded as Funny were excluded. As to the

category 'Informal' dress consists of three merged categories: Semi-formal, Casual, and More than one outfit.

The poster dress code is also split into two almost equal shares; although informal dress code seems to be a little more common (54 percent). However, there are country differences behind these figures. In short, we find a more serious and formal style of portraying politicians in Eastern Europe. In countries like Bulgaria and Romania, more than 60 percent of the posters show male and female politicians with serious facial expression and formal clothes. The opposite style is found in Continental and Northern Europe, where casual and a more friendly style of portraying politicians is more common. In countries like Denmark and France, we find that less than 10 percent of the politicians have a serious facial expression combined with wearing a dress or a suit.

## **EU and Europe and election posters**

How is the EU addressed on election posters? One might assume that a European election should focus on EU, but previous research has again and again shown how national political issues and perspectives tend to dominate the EU election campaigns (Holtz-Bacha, Novelli & Rafter, 2017; Maier et al., 2011, Novelli & Johansson, 2019). Nevertheless, there seems to be a greater focus on EU compared with a national perspective (table 2) in the 2014 EU election posters, especially if we talk about textual representations (49 vs 32 percent). When looking at what they actually refer to, there is a similarity in that posters mostly tend to denote the EU or the member country as a territory, and not refer to the citizens, buildings or anything else. In terms of visual representation, the situation is a bit different. The shares between textual and visual representation are almost identical (16 vs 15 percent), and behind these numbers we find pictures of the EU and country flags, buildings, landscapes and ordinary people.

**Table 2. Textual and visual representations of EU and members states on posters in the 2014 EU elections by different regions (percent).**

	Continental Europe	Eastern Europe	Northern Europe	Southern Europe	Total
<i>Textual</i>					
EU	53	49	56	35	49
Member state	18	41	33	47	32
<i>Visual</i>					
EU	23	22	7	12	16
Member state	9	24	16	12	15
Percent	100	100	100	100	100
N	155	92	115	48	410

*Note.* Continental Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands. Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. Northern Europe: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, United Kingdom. Southern Europe: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain.

The representation of the EU and members states differs even more in different regions, where continental and northern member states are more alike and are much more inclined to make textual references to the EU instead of referring to the national states (Central Europe: 53 vs 18 percent/Northern Europe: 56 vs 33 percent). In Eastern Europe, it is instead more common to refer textually to the member states than to the EU (49 vs 41 percent).

Looking at visual representations there seems to be a different pattern. Continental Europe refer more to EU than to member countries (23 vs 9 percent), just like for the textual representation. However, for Eastern Europe and especially the northern region we find the opposite perspective, where the member states are more visualized on the posters compared with the EU (Eastern Europe: 24 vs 22/Northern Europe: 16 vs 7 percent).

The more detailed analysis indicate, not surprisingly, that Eurosceptic and nationalist party groups are more prone to mentioning national state perspectives and less focus on EU representations. This trait can be found both for verbal and visual representations, even if it is more prevalent in the former. The Green parties also stand out with significantly fewer mentions of the national states in their textual communication.



Another aspect of the EU campaign is how EU and Europe is portrayed and framed. In the analysis, general framing of Europe is measured and more precisely, how Europe was represented in terms of positive, neutral and negative perspectives (both textual and visual representations). Positive appeals could be more general like “Vote for Europe” or more specified on how European collaboration would solve a certain problem or issue. Negative appeals often mention “Brussels” or “EU” as something negative, or saying that the national perspective should be more prevalent than the European. When looking at the numbers, we find that Europe is not at all represented in more than half of the posters (54 percent). However, when Europe is addressed, results (table 3) show an almost equal share for a positive, neutral and negative frame, even if the share of positive frames is a little lower (30 percent).

**Table 3. Frames of Europe on posters in the 2014 EU elections by different regions (percent).**

	Continental Europe	Eastern Europe	Northern Europe	Southern Europe	Total
Positive frame	32	37	21	33	30
Neutral frame	26	46	38	34	35
Negative frame	42	17	41	33	35
Percent	100	100	100	100	100
N	155	92	115	48	410

*Note.* Continental Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands. Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. Northern Europe: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, United Kingdom. Southern Europe: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain.

As for previously analysed characteristics of the EU election campaigns there are differences between regions in Europe. Posters in Eastern Europe tend to be more inclined to frame Europe in a more positive way (37 percent) compared with other regions. The more widespread Euroscepticism in parts of the EU (Continental and Northern) are also reflected in how Europe is framed on the campaign posters. More than 40 percent frame Europe in a negative way, when there is a Europe frame. A more

detailed analysis also reveals differences between parties, where the Eurosceptic parties frame Europe more negatively than others, and when comparing party families, results show that parties in PES<sup>6</sup>, where Social Democratic parties are affiliated, have posters with the most positive frame of Europe, while more nationalist groups tend to frame Europe more negatively.

## Conclusions

So what have we learned? What can the analysis of the poster campaigns of the EU elections in 2014 tell us? One could of course stress the differences and point out how dissimilar EU election campaigns are. The ways in which politicians address voters are not univocal in the EU, in terms of election posters. Many of these dissimilarities are obvious in that Eurosceptic parties are more prone to criticizing the EU in their campaign style. Naturally, the domestic EU opinion will also reflect how parties choose to campaign. The more sceptic campaign style in Western and Northern Europe and more positive in Eastern Europe is not surprising. On the other hand, there are also differences which are perhaps more surprising. The more casual friendly style among politicians in Western and Northern Europe is apparent, but not as easily explained.

Apart from these differences, posters in Europe are in many ways quite similar. If we were to compare with posters from other parts of the world, we would probably more accentuate the similarities than the differences (see Kumar, 2017; Willnat et al., 2017). There are a lot of pictures of politicians, EU and country flags, calls to vote, appeals supporting EU or more critical in all countries, even if the levels to some extent differ due political culture in the regions and parties. Even so, one should probably not take these figures as a proof of a common European public sphere. Mentioning the EU and members states is one thing, but

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<sup>6</sup> Party of European Socialists (<https://www.pes.eu/en/>)

research still tell us that EU election campaigns tend to emphasize on domestic perspectives and issues (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2017, Bolin et al., 2019; Novelli & Johansson, 2019). A European perspective on campaigning still seems to be missing.

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# Voting behaviour in European Parliament elections – the case of Sweden

Linda Berg

In late May 2019, EU citizens could vote in the European Parliament election. The overall turnout was 50.66 per cent, an increase compared to the 42.61 per cent who voted in 2014. This was the first time there was an increased turnout since the direct election of the European Parliament was introduced 1979 (European Parliament). The overall outcome, in terms of which party groups lost or gained seats, was that the two largest party groups, the conservative group EPP and the social democratic group S&D, lost the ability to form a majority on their own, while the liberal group (Renew Europe, previously ALDE) and the green group (Greens/EFA) increased their number of seats. The radical rights groups also increased their seats, but not as much as expected. Nevertheless, a noticeable outcome is that different kinds of eurosceptical parties gained more seats, and that parties to the left were not very successful in mobilising voters (Blomgren 2019).

In Sweden, the election May 26th 2019 was the sixth national election to the European Parliament since Sweden joined the EU in 1995. As per common, the campaign was short but intensive, this time resulting in a record high turnout (55.3 per cent), in the context of record high pro-EU sentiments (Berg et al. 2019). In contrast to the overall EU results, the Swedish European Parliament election saw no liberal/green momentum, rather the

opposite. Instead, the three conservative parties in the Swedish party system – Christian Democrats, Conservatives, and Sweden Democrats – together increased 11.4 per cent of the votes and three Swedish EP seats (Berg & Oscarsson 2019).

This chapter will focus on voting behaviour and electoral outcome in European Parliament elections, with a special focus on the somewhat deviant case of Sweden in the 2019 European Parliament elections.

Before continuing the chapter, it is worth a reminder that voting in European Parliament elections is not the only way in which citizens can influence decisions and policy in the EU. Albeit not as commonly highlighted in campaigns and by national media, the elections to the national parliaments are equally important. How citizens vote in national elections affect the distribution of seats and the government formation – and the ministers from the national governments then meet at the Council of Ministers meetings (formally Council of the European Union) to negotiate and decide upon new laws and the EU Budget, together with the European Parliament. Since the Lisbon treaty, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have to agree in order for new laws to be accepted, with a few exceptions. This so-called *Ordinary legislative procedure* has increased the decision-making power of the European Parliament and expanded it into more policy areas. Citizens' electoral influence can thus be described in terms of two different paths, one described as supranational (voting in the European Parliament elections) and one described as intergovernmental (voting in National Parliament) via the influence of national governments' ministers' participation in the Council of Ministers (Blomgren & Bergman 2005). Nevertheless, in this chapter the focus is on voting behaviour in European Parliament elections.

## **Research on voting behaviour in European Parliament elections**

The most well-known theory about voting behaviour in European Parliament elections is the so called Second Order Election theory (Reif & Schmitt 1980). This theory is originally based on research on American mid-term elections, but has been developed and adopted to European contexts, with multi-party system and elections to different societal levels (Hix & Marsh 2007; Marsh & Mikhaylov 2010). Nevertheless, the theory has also been criticised and questioned (Hobolt & Wittrock 2011; Hobolt & Spoon 2012; Dandoy & Schakel 2013; Berg & Oscarsson 2015).

The basic idea of the Second Order Election theory is that all involved actors – parties, media and voters – are expected to care much less about elections to any other level than the national. When the issue of government formation is off the table, the idea is that most actors will perceive the election to be less important. Because of this, we should also expect to see some specific voting behaviour patterns: turnout should be lower, large and government parties should perform worse, and smaller and challenger parties should perform better.

Moreover, there is an expectation about timing, i.e. when in the national electoral cycle the so-called second order election takes place. The pattern of small and challenger parties performing better, and larger parties performing worse, is expected to be most noticeable the further away from a national election the second order election takes place. Very close in time after a national election, parties of the newly elected national government are expected to perform better. Half-way through, the expectation is that the voters will be most dissatisfied with the national government and thus be most likely to ‘punish’ the incumbents by not voting for those parties in elections to other levels. Similarly, the government parties might find it most difficult to mobilise their sympathisers to vote at this time. When a second order election happens close in time before a national



election, it is again expected that national parties will perform better (Jeffery & Hough 2001; Hix & Marsh 2007, 2011).

Critiques of the Second Order Election theory highlight a number of different aspects. Firstly, results from some European Parliament elections and regional elections do not fit with the theoretical expectations (Berg & Oscarsson 2013, 2015). One example from the Swedish case has to do with ticket splitting, i.e. when voters chose to vote for different parties at different elections. Ticket splitting in Sweden continues to increase despite the vertical and horizontal similar elections (Berg, Erlingsson & Oscarsson 2019).

Secondly, another form of critique emphasise that the Second Order Election theory lacks theoretical foundation and development on the micro level (individual level). Hobolt and Wittrock (2011) argue that there may be many different individual level explanations why voters vote the way they do. In other words, there may be more than one reason behind why we see the expected theoretical patterns at the aggregate level.

Thirdly, other forms of critique question the foundation of the theory that it always should be the national politics, which is of most importance to voters and their vote choice. Alternative explanations to why large parties perform worse in non-national elections could for example be that some voters believe another party to be a better match to their preferences concerning politics at that level (Hobolt & Wittrock 2011; Dandoy & Schakel 2013). In the case of European Parliament elections, the attitudes towards the EU could be an important factor too (de Vries et al. 2011). Attitudes towards the EU was an important factor for voting in European Parliament elections in Sweden for a long time (Oscarsson & Holmberg 2010; Berg & Oscarsson 2015).

Moreover and fourthly, some scholars have raised the importance of issue voting. The relative success of the Swedish green party (Miljöpartiet) in European Parliament elections can be understood in relation to the environment being perceived as

an important issue for the European Parliament. Blombäck and de fine Licht (2017) have shown that equality issues were considered integral to the voters who chose to split their tickets between the Feminist Initiative (FI) and another party in the European Parliament election and the Swedish national election 2014. Erlingsson and Persson (2011) showed similarly that a vote for the Pirate Party in 2009 was not a protest vote but a reflection of their voters perceiving issues of Internet integrity important.

In sum, most of the critique is about nuancing the understanding of voting behaviour at different levels. European Parliament elections tend to display the overall aggregated patterns expected by the Second Order Election theory, but at the individual level, the reasons for this voting behaviour may have a much larger variation.

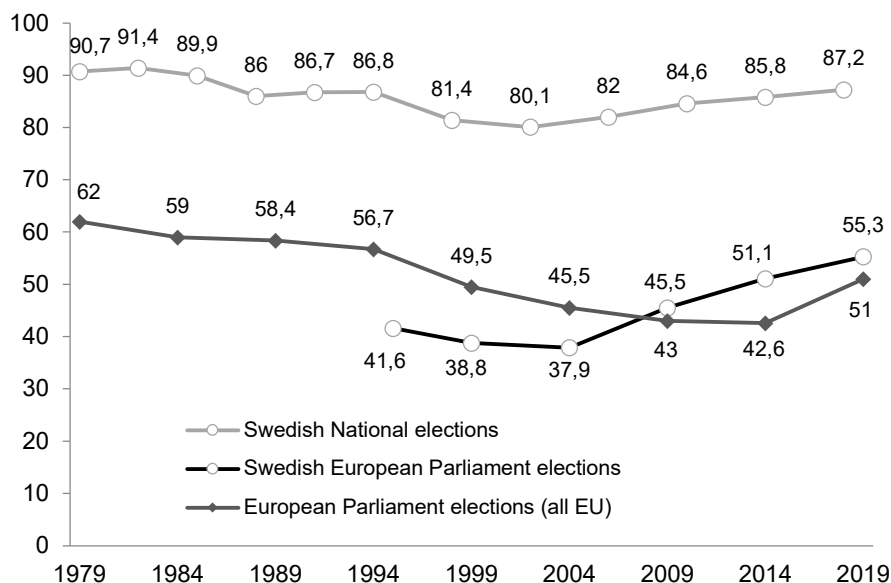
### **Turnout in European Parliament elections**

As mentioned above, a low turnout is often understood as an indication of an election being of the second order. The turnout in the European Parliament elections has decreased constantly since 1979, when the turnout was 62 per cent, until 2019 when the turnout for the first time increased, and reached almost 51 per cent.

Figure 6.1 displays a comparison of the overall EU turnout over time, with the Swedish turnout in the national and European Parliament elections during the same time. Largely, this decreasing turnout over time in the EU can be explained by the welcoming of new EU member states with a generally lower turnout in elections, also domestically. In addition, some of the older member states, such as Belgium and Luxembourg, have mandatory voting, whereas this is not the case in the newer member states from the 1990s and onwards.

As a contrast, the turnout in Swedish national elections has been consistently high, over 80 per cent throughout the same period. The Swedish turnout in the European Parliament elections has been noticeably lower, even below 40 per cent in 1999 and 2004. Since 2004, the turnout has increased however, and in 2019, the Swedish turnout was 55.3 per cent. In ten years, the turnout has increased by ten percentage points. During this time, the Swedish attitudes towards the EU has changed. From a predominantly negative view on the Swedish membership in the EU, the Swedish public has become increasingly positive, especially since the beginning of the 2000s. In 2019 the support for Swedish EU-membership was record high, with 59 per cent of Swedes being in favour of the EU membership (Berg et al. 2019).

Figure 6.1 Turnout in European Parliament elections in all EU 1979-2019, in Swedish national elections, 1979-2018, and in Swedish elections to the European Parliament 1995-2019 (per cent).



Comments: Source: the Swedish Election Authority and the European Parliament.

A more detailed analysis indicate that the increase in turnout in the Swedish European Parliament elections is reflected in all regions, albeit the turnout varies from 49.8 per cent in Gävleborg to 59.4 per cent in the Stockholm region (Berg 2019). At the local level, the variation across the Swedish municipalities is larger, from the highest, in the affluent municipality Danderyd just outside of Stockholm (73.6 per cent), to the lowest, in Haparanda in the north of Sweden, bordering to Finland (35.2 per cent).

At both the regional and the local level, we find the same regions and municipalities in the top and the bottom of the list of turnout in 2014 and 2019. The pattern seem to be stable over time. It is also similar to where the turnout is lower and higher in national elections, but the differences increase in the European Parliament elections. The typical pattern over time has been a

north-south pattern, where turnout typically has been lower in the north (Oscarsson & Holmberg 2010).

However, increasingly there is also a pattern of lower turnout in some municipalities with a high proportion of citizens born outside of Sweden. In Södertälje municipality for example, the turnout actually decreased by 0.5 per cent units compared to 2014, despite to large overall increase. This corresponds to the pattern of lower turnout in all elections, which is more commonly found in municipalities with a higher proportion of foreign born, and in municipalities in the north and rural municipalities. In contrast, turnout tends to be higher in larger cities, affluent suburbs and university towns.

### **Electoral outcome of the European parliament elections 2019**

Starting by looking at the overall results of the European Parliament election 2019, table 6.1 show the number of seats (and the percentage of the seats) for all party groups, and the non-attached members, in the European Parliament.

In previous European Parliament elections, the two largest party groups, the Christian democratic and conservative group EPP and the social democratic group S&D, have gained more than 50 per cent of the total number of seats in the parliament and thus been able to form a majority on their own. This is no longer possible as they only have 45 per cent of the seats. Instead, the groups in the middle of the left-right spectrum, the liberal group (Renew Europe, previously ALDE) and the green group (Greens/EFA) have increased their number of seats. They will thus become more important in the parliament as their votes will often be necessary in order to form a majority in favour of e.g. a new legislation.

Table 6.1 Number of seats per political group in the European Parliament after the 2019 election (number of seats and percentages).

Political groups in the European Parliament	Number of seats	% of seats
EPP - Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)	182	24.23%
S&D - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament	154	20.51%
Renew Europe - Renew Europe group	108	14.38%
Greens/EFA - Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance	74	9.85%
ID - Identity and Democracy	73	9.72%
ECR - European Conservatives and Reformists Group	62	8.26%
GUE/NGL - Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left	41	5.46%
NI - Non-attached Members	57	7.59%

*Comments:* Source: the Swedish Election Authority and the European Parliament.

The radical rights groups (ID and ECR) increased their seats compared to 2014, but not as much as expected from polls during the spring of 2019. Nevertheless, a noticeable outcome is that different kinds of eurosceptical parties, both to the right and to the left, gained more seats (Blomgren 2019). Parties to the left were less successful in mobilising voters this time, and their group GUE/NGL lost eleven seats, from 52 seats in 2014 to only 41 seats in 2019.

### **Party choice in the Swedish European parliament election**

A typical difference between elections to the European parliament and the national parliament in Sweden is how close before the Election Day the citizens decide which party they will chose. Voters tend to make up their minds at a later stage before the European parliament elections (Berg & Oscarsson 2015). In the Swedish Television Exit poll 'Valu', close to 40 per cent of respondents have answered that they did not decide which party to vote for in the European Parliament Election 2019 until the election day (Näsman et al. 2019).

A late decision on how to vote fits nicely with the expectations from the second order election theory. However, as voters also tend to decide increasingly later also in the national elections, the high share of late decisions could also reflect more volatile voters who find it increasingly difficult to decide how to vote, in all elections. Moreover, as the European Parliament campaigns tend to be shorter, voters have less time to consider the various options and candidates. The everyday work in the European Parliament is also clearly less monitored by media. Most voters thus also have less knowledge of how the parties and the candidates have acted during the last five years.

Since 1995, the overall trend in Swedish European Parliament elections have been that the two main parties, the Social democrats and the Conservative party, have gained less vote shares over time – and especially compared to their results in the national elections.

Some of the smaller parties, e.g. the Green party and the Liberal party, have instead performed better in the European Parliament elections compared to their results in the national elections. At each of the elections 2004, 2009 and 2014, there was a new party, lacking previous representation nationally, gaining seats in the European Parliament. None of these parties was able to regain the voters' support at the following European Parliament election.

The 2019 election deviated in some aspects from previous patterns. There was no new party gaining seats. The two parties previously known to perform well in the European Parliament elections - the Green party and the Liberal party – lost vote shares and seats (two and one respectively). The parties that gained seats were the Centre party, the Christian democrats, the Conservative party and the Sweden democrats (one additional seats per party). The Left party and the Social democrats kept their previous seats.

In relation to Sweden's contribution to the party groups in the European Parliament, from left to right, there is status quo for the

GUE/NGL group. For the S&D group there is one seat less than before, as the party Feminist Initiative, who lost their one seat, belonged to this group. The Greens/EFA lost two seats – although, when the UK leaves the EU, there will be one additional Swedish seat, which will go to the Green party. For the group Renew Europe there is a  $\pm 0$  effect as the Liberal party loss of one seat matches the Centre Party gain of one seat. The EPP group gained two new seats from Sweden, and the ECR group one.

Table 6.2 Election results in Swedish EP-elections 1995-2019 (per cent).

	1995	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2019 Seats*	Party group
Left Party	12,9	15,8	12,8	5,7	6,3	6,8	1 ( $\pm 0$ )	GUE/NGL
Social Democrats	28,1	26,0	24,6	24,4	24,2	23,5	5 ( $\pm 0$ )	S&D
Green Party	17,2	9,5	5,9	11,0	15,4	11,5	2 (-2)	Greens/EFA
Centre Party	7,2	6,0	6,3	5,5	6,5	10,8	2 (+1)	Renew
Liberal Party	4,8	13,9	9,9	13,6	9,9	4,1	1 (-1)	Renew
Christian Democrats	3,9	7,6	5,7	4,7	5,9	8,6	2 (+1)	EPP
Conservative Party	23,2	20,7	18,2	18,8	13,7	16,8	4 (+1)	EPP
June List	-	-	14,5	3,5	-	-	-	IND/DEM
Pirate Party	-	-	-	7,1	2,2	0,6	-	Greens/EFA
Sweden Democrats			1,1	3,3	9,7	15,3	3 (+1)	ECR
Feminist Initiative	-	-	-	2,2	5,4	0,8	0 (-1)	S&D
Others	2,7	0,5	1,0	0,2	0,7	1,1		
Sum percent	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0		
Turnout	41,6	38,8	37,9	45,5	51,1	55,3		

*Comments:* Source: The Swedish Election Authority ([www.val.se](http://www.val.se)); Statistics Sweden ([www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)); Swedish National Election Studies Program ([www.snes.gu.se](http://www.snes.gu.se)). \* Numbers in parenthesis indicates the number of seats lost or gained compared to 2014. The party groups are: GUE/NGL=European United Left/Nordeic Green Left, S&D= The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Greens/EFA=The Greens/European Free Alliance, Renew = Renew Europe (previously ALDE, Alliance for Liberals and Democrats in Europe,

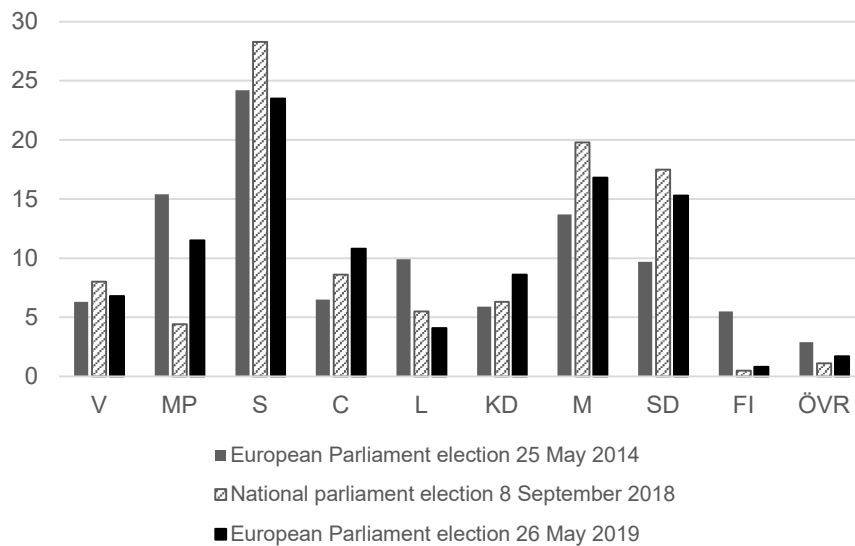


plus some new parties e.g. the French president Emmanuel Macron's party "Renaissance", EPP=European Peoples Party (Conservatives and Christian democrats), ECR=European Conservatives and Reformists. Italics indicates that the party no longer has a seat (but shows which group they belonged to when they did).

In relation to the overall pattern of the European Parliament election, and especially the outcome in the largest member states, the Swedish result stands out. It was less of a liberal/green momentum. Instead, the three conservative parties in the Swedish party system together increased 11.4 per cent of the votes and three Swedish EP seats.

Furthermore, it can also be relevant to compare the results also to the most recent national parliament election. This can be particularly interesting this time, as the national election occurred in September 2018 – and the government formation process was extremely difficult which meant there was no new Swedish government in place until January 2019. In Figure 6.2, the results from the European parliament elections in Sweden 2014 and 2019 are presented, as well as the results of the 2018 national election in Sweden.

Figure 6.2 Results of the Swedish European Parliament elections 2014 and 2019, and the national election of 2018 (per cent).



*Comments:* Source: The Swedish Election Authority. The Swedish party abbreviations are: V = Vänsterpartiet (the Left party), MP = Miljöpartiet (the Green party), S = Socialdemokraterna (the Social democrats), C = Centerpartiet (the Centre party), L = Liberalerna (the Liberal party), KD = Kristdemokraterna (the Christian democrats), M = Moderaterna (the Conservative party), SD = Sverigedemokraterna (the Sweden democrats), FI = Feministiskt Initiativ (Feminist Initiative) and ÖVR = other parties.

Certain aspects of the comparison with the national election outcome are extra noteworthy. One aspect is that all three largest parties, the Social democrats (S), the Conservative party (M) and the Sweden democrats (SD), all perform worse in European Parliament elections. Despite the two latter gaining significantly compared to 2014, their results are still clearly below their national results. Conversely, the Green party (MP) still perform better in European Parliament elections than in national elections. Despite the significant loss compared to the 2014 European Parliament election, they still performed better than in the 2018 national election.

According to the theory of second order elections, these results are just what is to be expected. However, if everything should be only about national politics, we would expect a national

opposition party as the Sweden democrats to perform even better in the European Parliament election. What is apparent here is rather the importance of EU attitude. As both the Left party and the Sweden democrats are the most critical of the EU, they have a harder time to mobilise their sympathisers to vote in these elections.

Moreover, in relation to the second order election theory, the Green party should perform even worse, especially as a small, heavily criticised government support party. The fact that they ended up with an average result for them, rather points to other aspects being of importance for voters, e.g. the environmental issue, than displaying dissatisfaction with national government performance.

Citizens choosing to vote for different parties in different elections – or split ticket voting – has also increased enormously in Sweden since 1970. Between local and national elections, more than 30 per cent of Swedish voters chose different parties, despite simultaneous elections. In 2014, 40 per cent of voters chose different parties in the European Parliament election in May and the sub-sequent national election in September (Berg & Oscarsson 2015). Hence, it is also not self-evident that Swedish voters should vote more in line with national preferences simply because the European and the national elections take place close in time.

From the Swedish Exit Poll study “Valu” (Näsman et al. 2019), we know that the propensity to split ticket vary across the party preferences. Least likely to vote differently in the national election 2018 and the European election 2019 were supporters of the Sweden democrats, 83 per cent voted for the party in both elections. This can be compared to the Liberal party, where only 36 per cent of respondents said they voted for them in both elections. Overall, the propensity to split ticket is higher among voters who prefer parties to the right, i.e. the former Alliance parties. This is a similar pattern to what we see in local elections

too (Berg, Erlingsson & Oscarsson 2019). Given the larger supply of parties in this end of the political spectrum, this is not very surprising and voters tend to mainly split ticket to one of the other ideologically close parties.

Despite the fact that most voters chose between ideologically close parties, it is noticeable that the most EU-positive party, the Liberal party, received less than half of their vote share 2014 – especially in a context of record high support for the EU. It was also a worse result than in the national election, which is opposite from their typical pattern. The Liberal party had a tough time during the EU campaign: they were in the middle of the process of choosing a new party leader; they were heavily criticised for their behaviour in the government formation process; their previously popular candidate did not run again; and their original top candidate had to withdraw her candidature during spring due to refusal to step down from her well-paid board positions. During the spring of 2019, the Liberal party often had less than four per cent in the opinion polls, and just barely managed to keep one of their two seats.

The Left party tends to loose voters to the Green party and the Social democratic party in the European parliament elections. Their EU critical stance may make it more difficult to mobilize their core voters. Furthermore, in 2019 the largest share of their supporters were actually in favour of the Swedish membership of the EU (Berg et al. 2019).

### **Voting behaviour in relation to EU attitudes and important issues**

The early Swedish elections to the European Parliament had a large number of voters who based their party choice on their opinion towards the EU (Oscarsson & Holmberg 2010). Hobolt and Spoon (2012) have also shown that attitudes towards the EU may affect voting behaviour in European Parliament elections.

The overall attitude towards the EU in a party will affect the campaigning strategies, the issues the party will highlight, as well as the strategies they have for the work in the parliament if elected. Voters who are positive towards the EU may thus be more inclined to vote for a party with a more positive attitude towards the EU compared to their party choice in the national election. Conversely, voters with a more negative attitude towards the EU may chose a more EU sceptic party compared to their national party preference. Some high profile issues, such as leaving the EU or introducing the euro as currency, are not issues to be decided by the European parliament, but they are neither typical domestic political issues. Rather these types of issues address broader ideas of the purpose of membership, and thus a politicization of the EU-dimension. The importance of EU-attitudes for party choice thus conflict with the expectations of the Second order election theory.

Table 6.3 Party choice in the Swedish European Parliament Election 2019 and attitudes to Sweden leaving or remaining the EU (per cent).

	Leave	Remain	No opinion	Sum per cent
Left Party (V)	16	65	19	~100
Social Democrats (S)	5	87	8	~100
Green Party (MP)	3	90	7	~100
Centre Party (C)	2	91	6	~100
Liberal Party (L)	1	96	3	~100
Christian Democrats (KD)	7	81	12	~100
Conservative Party (M)	4	88	8	~100
Sweden Democrats (SD)	41	37	22	~100
Feminist Initiative (FI)	13	72	16	~100
Others	40	40	19	~100
Total	11	77	11	~100

*Comments:* Source: the Swedish Television Exit poll Valu (Näsman et al. 2019).

In table 6.3 we can see that almost eight of ten Swedish voters were in favour of Sweden remaining in the EU, according to the Swedish Television exit poll Valu 2019 (Näsman et al. 2019). With such a strong pro-EU sentiment in the electorate, it is not surprising that almost all parties' voters prefer to remain in the EU. Even among the EU critical Left party's voters, 65 percent

preferred to remain. The only exception to the overall pattern is the Sweden Democrats' voters; 41 per cent wants Sweden to leave, compared to 37 per cent who prefer to remain.

Over time, the importance of being for or against the Swedish membership in the EU has decreased an explanatory factor for party choice in European parliament elections (Berg & Oscarsson 2015). Instead, various issues relating to EU politics have become more important. In the Swedish television exit poll Valu, the most common justification for party choice in the European parliament election in 2019 was the party's policy in EU issues.

EU issues can mean a variety of different things for different voters, from more overarching ideas of European integration at large, to specific policy areas where the European Parliament is one of the two law-making EU institutions.

Table 6.4 Most important issues for party choice in Swedish EP-elections 1995-2019 (per cent).

	Issue	1995	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
1.	Peace in Europe	66	66	61	55	59	58
2.	Democracy in the EU	59	53	55	50	51	54
3.	Environment	56	45	47	53	51	51
4.	Gender equality	-	37	42	42	45	49
5.	Crime prevention	-	-	-	42	40	48
6.	Social welfare	-	48	50	44	47	42
7.	Asylum-seekers/migrants	-	19	26	26	37	41
8.	Energy and nuclear power	-	-	-	38	39	38
9.	Economy	54	47	46	47	45	37
10.	National independence	48	43	47	388	39	37
11.	Quality of food	-	-	-	-	46	33
12.	Unemployment	53	50	46	47	47	31
13.	Drug policies	46	-	47	32	30	30
14.	Defence issues in the EU	34	31	30	26	26	26
15.	EU's external policy	-	-	-	31	28	24
16.	Free movement in the EU	-	-	-	-	30	23
17.	Business policy/conditions	-	27	29	22	26	21
18.	Euro as Swedish currency	33	29	36	32	28	21
19.	Internet copyright issues	-	-	-	-	-	18
20.	Agricultural policy in the EU	23	21	25	22	21	17

Comments: Question wording is "How important were the following issues for your choice of party at today's election to the European Parliament?". Five response options were offered: "very important", "rather important", "neither important nor unimportant", "rather unimportant", and "very unimportant". Entries are percentages 'highly important'. Source: Swedish Television Exit Poll (SVT/VALU) 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019.

Some indications of what issues were seen as important by the voters can be seen in Table 6.4, where the top 20 issues are listed in order of importance by the voters in 2019, and compared to how important the same issues have been in the previous elections. Peace and democracy in the EU are usually at the top (58 and 54 per cent), and correspond to the overall EU-dimension. Among more specific policy areas, the environment tends to be considered a very important issue for party choice among Swedish voters (51 per cent). This is also an issue where the European parliament is an important legislator, and it is a policy area which many Swedes think the EU should do more.

There are some changes in the order of priorities since 2014. A larger share of the voters indicate issues of equality (49 per cent), crime prevention (48 per cent) and refugees/immigrants (41 per cent) as very important in 2019, compared to 2014. These issues have also been more noticeable during the campaigns in 2019. Other issues, that gained a lot more attention in previous election, are now not seen as important.

Overall, these results indicate on the one hand the importance of the EU-dimension and of issues of relevance to the political arena at hand – rather than protest against the incumbent government, or a nationalisation of the vote. Nevertheless, some of the issues high on list in 2019 are not as clearly the responsibility of the EU. There is clearly a large variation across the voters.

### **Concluding discussion**

The European Parliament elections of 2019 had an unusual context. Following the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, the Swedish support for the membership in the EU was record high. At the same time, the national election occurred not long before, and the prolonged government formation negotiations lead to discontent among some voters. According to the second order election theory, we would have expected such a context to lead to certain specific outcomes. One such outcome would have been a low turnout, but instead the turnout was record high, both in Sweden and overall EU.

Another expectation of the second order election theory is that large and government parties should perform worse in non-national elections, whereas small and challenger parties should perform better. Due to the cyclical expectation this is expected to be less noticeable closely after a national election, where instead nationalisation of the vote (i.e. voting for the same party due to the same national considerations) is expected. The results in Sweden show a large variation across parties. The aggregated



pattern is in general consistent with the second order election theory as the largest parties perform worse, and (some of) the smaller parties perform better, in European parliament elections. As shown in this chapter, the reasons behind why voters chose different parties in elections at different levels may be more varied than those expected from this theory.

To some extent, the 2019 election in Sweden was affected more by national politics than in 2014. There were fewer specific policy issues of relevance for the European Parliament in the campaigns, the candidates were unusually unknown to large parts of the voters – or new to the European Parliament, and the party leaders dominated visually in the posters and debates.

Nevertheless, other aspects contrast the second order election theory. The record high turnout is one, but there are other noticeable differences. Although the largest parties perform worse in the European Parliament elections compared to the national election, this is regardless of whether the parties are in government or in opposition nationally – including the main challenger party, the Sweden Democrats. Conversely, the Green party, which has been in government together with the Social democratic party, performed much better in the European Parliament election than in the 2018 national election. If voters only consider national politics, the result should have been much lower considering how the party was heavily criticised for decisions made while in government.

Another special circumstance in the 2019 European Parliament election in Sweden was the record high support for Sweden's membership in the EU. The overall high support mean that the majority of voters, regardless of party, are in favour of the membership. The only exception is the supporters of the Sweden democrat, where four of ten prefer Sweden to leave the EU.

Issues relating directly to the EU remain important for party choice for most voters. Especially peace and democracy in the EU remain high on the list of most important issues for a large

share of the voters. Likewise, environmental issues tend to be indicated as one of the most important issues for party choice by many voters. In contrast to previous elections, there were fewer more specific policy issues indicated as very important by the voters. This reflects that the campaigns this year focused less on such issues compared to previous years.

The Swedish result differs to some extent from the overall trend in most EU countries. When parties belonging to the two largest party groups in the European Parliament have lost vote shares and seats in most countries, the Social Democratic party in Sweden kept its seats and the Conservative and the Christian Democratic parties gained one additional seat each in Sweden. Liberal and green parties have been successful in gaining new seats in many countries, but in Sweden the green party lost two seats, and the shift of one seat from the Liberal party to the Centre party means a status quo in number of seats to 'Renew Europe' from Sweden. Most similar to the European trend is that the Sweden Democrats gained one additional seat.

The aggregated pattern in Sweden continue to correspond to what the Second order election theory would predict. Nevertheless, as this chapter has shown, there are several other reasons than content or discontent with national politics that influence voting behaviour in European Parliament elections.

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