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Research Article

The Strategic Use of Government-Sponsored Referendums in Contemporary Europe: Issues and Implications

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Abstract

Referendums, especially those which are not constitutionally mandated, have often been used strategically in the context of both democratic and non-democratic regimes by political actors wishing to achieve specific goals. Engaging with the extant literature on the subject, this article analyses four government-sponsored referendums which took place between 2015 and 2016 in Greece, Britain, Hungary and Italy. The focus of the analysis is twofold. The first purpose is to debunk the political risk calculation underpinning the government's decision to sponsor a referendum in each of the cases considered. The second is to suggest that the strategic use of referendum by governments in contemporary Europe can be better understood if read in light of the recent upsurge of populist movements.

Keywords

In recent times, the use of referendums meant as '[Devices] of direct democracy by which the people are asked to vote directly on an issue or policy' (Morel 2011: 2226) has increased in the context of democratic – as well as non-democratic – regimes worldwide. As reported by the Center for Research on Direct Democracy (c2d), 843 national level referendums were held worldwide between 1700 and 1970, while between 1970 and 2015 the global number of national level referendums was 1907 (c2d 2016). Aside from normative analyses hinging on the advantages and drawbacks of direct democracy (see for instance Setälä 1999), a central problem in empirical approaches to the study of referendums is how they are embedded and used in the framework of representative democracies (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001). In the context of the European Union (EU) in particular, referendums are one of several 'political opportunity structures' critically influencing the extent to which the EU is becoming increasingly politicised at the domestic level (Bellamy and Kröger 2016: 126).

A strand of literature has emerged over the last few decades showing that, especially when referendums are not mandatory, governments can use them as tools to achieve specific political goals (Morel 2001; Walker 2003; Rahat 2009; Qvotrup 2016). This article is a theoretically-informed analysis of the most recent cases of government-sponsored referendums in EU countries: the July 2015 referendum in Greece on the acceptance of the bailout conditions proposed by the EU; the June 2016 'Brexit' referendum in the UK; the October 2016 referendum on the relocation of asylum seekers in Hungary; and the December 2016 referendum on constitutional reform in Italy. The selection of cases was performed on the basis of the most diverse method as defined by Seawright and Gerring (2008): the units of analysis are referendums which were all held in EU member states and were sponsored by incumbent governments after the beginning of the 2008 financial and economic crisis. However, in spite of these commonalities, they display substantial differences in virtually all other dimensions, including the substantive issue at stake, the political orientation of the governing party, the countries' membership/non-membership in the Eurozone, the sub-region (Southern, Northern and Central Europe) to which the countries under consideration belong. The concept of 'government-sponsored referendum' adopted here is a broad one, referring to cases in which referendums were not directly mandated by the constitution and governments had some

leeway in initiating the procedure, framing the referendum question, setting the timeline for the vote.

The focus is not on the 'anti-hegemonic' (weakening the government's position) versus 'pro-hegemonic' (strengthening the government's position) effects of government-initiated referendums as discussed by Smith (1976) and Qvotrup (2000). Rather, the purposes of the article are a) to debunk the political risk calculation underpinning the government's decision to sponsor a referendum in each of the cases considered through a systematic analysis of official documents, party manifestoes and speeches; and b) to shed light on a phenomenon that is currently shaping EU politics both at the member states' and at the Union's level, suggesting that the strategic use of referendums in contemporary Europe can be better understood if read in connection with the recent rise of populist movements and their influence on domestic and EU-level policymaking. Unsurprisingly, populist movements often demand referendums as they represent a way to appeal directly to the will of the 'people', bypassing the normal mechanisms of representative democracy (Plattner 2010: 88). On the other hand, referendums which in many cases artificially – and often problematically – reduce complex issues to binary choices naturally lend themselves to the resort to populism, meant as a dynamic 'discursive frame' rather than a fixed attribute of certain actors (Bonikowski 2016: 14).

The next section summarises the main findings of the literature on the strategic use of referendums. In light of the theoretical framework outlined thereby, the following sections go on to explore the four cases mentioned above and to provide a comparative discussion of the case studies. The last section concludes the article.

THE STRATEGIC USE OF GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REFERENDUMS

As Lijphart famously put it, 'when governments control the referendum, they will tend to use it only when they expect to win' (1984: 203). Qvotrup's (2000) empirical analysis of 128 'government controlled' and 'non-government controlled' referendums held between 1945 and 1997 shows that even if government controlled referendums are a relatively small fraction (15.6 per cent) of all the cases considered, 'there is, indeed, some support for the assertion that governments only submit issues to referendums when they have a good reason to suppose that they will be endorsed by the voters', as only five out of twenty-five government controlled referendums had anti-hegemonic outcomes (Qvotrup 2000: 823). In a similar vein Walker (2003: 5) finds that

> [p]roposing and/or calling a referendum can be seen similarly in a bargaining context to the use of force. Elites will use referendums to garner legitimacy and therefore win a policy debate if they *believe* that the people favour their position over their opponent. [Emphasis added.]

According to Matsusaka (2003), when calling for a popular vote on a certain issue or set of issues, governments basically signal the will to break down the bargaining process with the legislature and interest groups. This necessarily entails a calculation factoring in the deadweight costs of running a campaign as well as an assessment of the odds on and extent of the political gains potentially deriving from a favourable outcome. Assuming the deadweight costs are negligible, the government will decide to promote a referendum rather than, for instance, a negotiated solution to a given problem, if it estimates that the odds of reaping political gains deriving from a positive outcome are high, and/or that the extent of political gains deriving from a positive outcome is large. Naturally, the exact definition of political gains and political costs depends largely on the main purpose of the referendum and on the context in which it takes place. Recalling the main categories of motivations

singled out by the existing literature, political gains can be defined in terms of: 1) consolidation of the government's power, as typically happened in the case of plebiscitary mid-mandate referendums in France in 1969, 1972, 1992 (Morel 2001); 2) successful solution of tensions within the governing coalition, as in the case of the Socialdemokratiet leaders' decision to hold a referendum on European Economic Community (EEC) membership in Denmark in 1971; 3) success in passing a law or policy that would otherwise not have passed, as in the case of the Danish Single European Act referendum in 1986, which allowed the government to overcome the veto of a parliamentary majority opposing ratification (Borre 1986); 4) reinforcing a certain measure whose legitimation is politically indispensable, as in the case of the 1998 referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland (Morel 2001); and 5) securing a more favourable outcome in international negotiations using the referendum as a bargaining chip, as happened in the context of the negotiations for the European Constitution, when Spain's Prime Minister José María Aznar raised the issue of a possible referendum in order to obtain an increase in the Spanish vote share in the Council of Ministers of the EU (Qvotrup 2016). Vice versa, political costs can be defined as the loss of political capital deriving from an outcome contrary to the position advocated by the government itself, as happened for the 1969 referendum in France whose direct consequence was the resignation of President De Gaulle or the 1972 referendum in Norway on EEC membership, whose negative outcome led to a resignation of the Labour government (Valen 1973). The government's strategic decision to call a referendum can also be described as a 'political risk' calculation in the sense highlighted and empirically tested by Althaus, specifically the calculation made by elected officers regarding circumstances 'that have the potential to discredit, disempower or detach a political actor from their ability to rule' (2008: 69). Examples of such calculation will be discussed in the following sections.

THE JULY 5TH 2015 REFERENDUM IN GREECE

During the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, Greece was in the eye of the hurricane. Troubles ostensibly started in October 2009, when the new socialist Finance Minister Papacostantinou disclosed that the country's deficit in that year would soar to 12.5 per cent of GDP, a much higher figure compared to the one estimated by the former Conservative government (Nelson, Belkin and Mix 2011). In May 2010, the government led by George Papandreou sought and obtained a first bailout worth 110 billion EUR by securing the support of the European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the so-called 'Troika', in exchange for a first package of austerity measures meant to reduce drastically Greece's budget deficit. A new short-lived cabinet led by Lucas Papademos took over in November 2011 and finalised the negotiation of a second bailout package in February 2012; political instability led to new elections in May and June 2012, resulting in a government led by Antonis Samara which in turn was replaced by radical left Syriza party leader Alexis Tsipras after the January 2015 elections.

The newly elected Government had pledged to renegotiate the bailout conditions and put an end to austerity policies. However, on June 27 2015, after five months of fruitless negotiations with the country's creditors, Tsipras called a consultative referendum, asking the Greek people 'to rule on the blackmailing ultimatum' imposed by the Troika (Chrysoloras, Srivastava and Chrepa 2015). The referendum question read:

> Should the outline of the agreement submitted by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund at the Eurogroup of 25/06/15 and which is made up of two parts that constitute their unified proposal be accepted? The first document is entitled 'Reforms for the completion of the

current programme and beyond' and the second 'Preliminary Debt Sustainability Analysis for Greece'.

The Government openly claimed that the decision to hold a referendum was part of its negotiating strategy, and campaigned in favour of the 'No', basically engaging in a 'game of chicken' with the country's creditors, and playing the referendum wild card in the attempt to extract concessions from counterparts. According to the Prime Minister, a 'No' outcome in the July 5th referendum would have lent credibility to the Greek Government's negotiating position, signalling to counterparts that what they were offering was truly unacceptable because the Government's 'bottom line' was higher than the 'price' offered (Neale in MacBride and Neale 2016). Resorting to a referendum in this context would have equated with the use of force in the context of a typical 'high-stakes' negotiation (Weiss, Donigian and Hughes 2010).

On July 5 2015, the Greek voters cast their ballot, which resulted in an outright victory of the 'No' option (61.2 per cent of the vote with a 62.5 per cent turnout). However, a few days later, the Greek Government was back at the negotiating table and eventually signed a bailout agreement whose conditions were possibly harsher than those which had been originally rejected. This clearly contradicts *ex post* one of the narratives proposed by the opposition, that is that Tsipras's actual motivation to sponsor a referendum was to obtain a strong popular mandate to pursue his hidden agenda including a 'Grexit' from the European monetary union (Milioni, Spyridou and Triga 2016). Had this hypothesis been correct, the government could have legitimately refused further negotiation in the aftermath of the vote, de facto triggering a Grexit; yet the fact that this did not happen lends credibility to the 'bargaining chip' explanation, also suggesting – in light of the fact that the government led by Tsipras eventually bent to domestic and international pressures – that the Government had no 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement' in place (Weiss, Donigian and Hughes 2010). It can be argued that once it found itself to be cornered during the negotiations, the Government tried to strengthen its mandate, performing a political risk calculation similar to the one described above. The expected pay-off was a stronger mandate to negotiate more favourable terms with the Troika. The cost in case of a miscalculation could have been the resignation of the Government and possibly the end of Syriza as governing party. It should be noted however that there was another dimension to such a calculation, that is the (strong) assumption that the counterparts in the Greek bailout negotiations would interpret the referendum outcome as proof of the credibility of the Government's intention to refuse the deal proposed at any cost, an alternative that could have triggered the exit of Greece from the Eurozone. While the Government's calculation about the domestic dimension of the referendum was correct and the July 5th vote undeniably reinforced the Prime Minister in his anti-austerity stance,[1] the calculation about the 'external' effects of the referendum was not equally accurate. In fact, the position of the other negotiators was hardened rather than softened in the face of the Greek Government's tactic.

THE JUNE 23RD 2016 REFERENDUM IN THE UK

In a speech delivered on January 23rd 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron officially announced his intentions to renegotiate the terms of the British membership in the EU, and subsequently to '[…] give the British people a referendum with a very simple in or out choice. To stay in the EU on these new terms, or come out altogether' (Cameron 2013). To understand better the political trajectory that culminated in the June 23rd 2016 referendum on EU membership, it is necessary quickly to recall the most salient features of a domestic debate hinging not only on the role and powers of the EU proper but also on the management of immigration in contemporary Britain.

Migration, a contested issue traditionally 'owned' by the Conservative party,[2] re-emerged as a key concern for British voters in the post-2010 years. In fact, the increasing salience of the migration issue played a major role in the electoral success of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which in May 2015 won 12.9 per cent of the vote in the UK, turning into the main challenger party in the country. UKIP, a euro-sceptical party founded in 1993 by the Anti-Federalist League in the wake of the campaign against the Maastricht Treaty, fared well in the 2009 European Parliament (EP) election with a 16.5 per cent vote, reaching second position behind the Conservative Party which received 27.7 per cent of the preferences (BBC 2014). In the 2014 EP elections, UKIP outperformed both the Labour and the Conservative Party winning 27.49 per cent of the vote and 24 seats (BBC 2014). UKIP's identity as a single-issue party had traditionally hinged on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. By 2009, it was clear that UKIP's candidates and supporters were closely aligned and their attitude leaned toward hard-core Euroscepticism, tighter immigration policies and distrust vis-à-vis mainstream political parties (Lynch, Whitaker and Loomes 2011).

Under the leadership of Nigel Farage, UKIP operated an electorally remunerative fusion of Britain's membership in the EU and immigration. Following this strategy, UKIP managed to secure 'ownership' of one of the most salient issues in the run-up to the 2015 general election (Dennison and Goodwin 2015). In fact, during the 2015 electoral campaign, the policy space covered by the immigration issue was by and large framed within the boundaries of a dominant discourse advocating for stricter border controls, with parties essentially 'positioning and defending their political identities within a populist mainstream' (Moore 2015: 20). The Labour party took a hard stance towards border control, embracing the notion that 'illegal immigration' should be stopped and making the strengthening of UK borders a top priority in its first 100 days action plan (The Guardian 2015). Nonetheless, Labour essentially rejected the linkage between immigration and EU membership, pledging to hold a EU in/out referendum only if further transfers of sovereignty to the EU should be envisaged (Labour Party 2015). In the face of increasing pressure from both UKIP and the most Eurosceptic fringe within the Conservative party, and in spite of his reluctance to give voters a direct say on Britain's EU membership (Goodlad 2016), the strategy chosen by Cameron went in the direction of an attempt to 're-appropriate' the immigration issue as such but also in connection with Britain's EU membership. During the campaign, the Conservative leader reaffirmed the party's commitment to introduce 'real change' by negotiating a new settlement for Britain in the EU and submitting it to an in/out referendum by the end of 2017 (Conservative Party 2015). In this sense, it can be posited that the calculation behind the incumbent Prime Minister's decision to sponsor a EU membership referendum was necessarily manifold. First and foremost, the promise of a EU in/out plebiscite was directly aimed at attracting the votes of UKIP supporters in view of the 2015 general election. This reasoning was clearly laid out in a speech delivered by Cameron a few weeks before the vote. Addressing prospective UKIP voters, Cameron (in Chapman 2015) stated:

> If you're someone considering voting UKIP because you want a referendum on Europe and controlled immigration, remember that a vote for UKIP makes it harder for Conservatives to win … Then you will get no referendum, and a return to uncontrolled immigration.

Once the Conservative party secured the mandate, in addition to the commitment made during the electoral campaign, the Government had further incentives to pursue a referendum.

A first aspect to consider is the obvious use of the looming referendum as a bargaining chip: Cameron tried to convey the message that he could in fact influence the outcome of Britain's in/out vote, and in so doing he tried to use the spectre of Brexit as a 'credible threat' to extract more concessions from his EU counterparts (Fairchild 2016). In fact, renewing his commitment to a new settlement with the EU, Cameron (2015) declared:

> I will campaign to keep Britain inside a reformed European Union […] with all my heart and all my soul, because that will be unambiguously in our national interest. But […] if Britain's concerns were to be met with a deaf ear, which I do not believe will happen, then we will have to think again about whether this European Union is right for us. As I have said before – I rule nothing out.

Nonetheless, a second, more compelling objective that the Prime Minister tried to pursue by placing himself at the forefront of the 'Remain' campaign was to maintain his party's and cabinet's unity. The tensions and discontent within the Conservative party were epitomised by the defection of two Tory MPs to UKIP in 2014 (Parker, Warrell and Rigby 2014) and their subsequent confirmation in office following by-elections, as well as by backbench rebellions, such as the one on March 2016 which involved 27 Conservative MPs voting against a measure to extend Sunday trading hours (Goodlad 2016). In this respect, it should be noted that at the time of the 1975 referendum on Britain's membership in the EEC, the Labour cabinet then in office was also deeply divided, with sixteen members campaigning in favour and seven against, which clearly exposed the fact that 'the prime purpose of the referendum was to save the Labour party from tearing itself asunder while securing for the nation a firm and final verdict on EEC membership' (Butler 1978: 214).

Identifying the extent of the political costs that the Prime Minister could expect to incur in case of a negative outcome is relatively easy. Although Cameron had set out to avoid the EU membership issue defining his period in office, placing himself at the forefront of the 'Remain' campaign could not but lead to his resignation in case of a negative outcome (Goodlad 2016). Thus, while the probability of success for the 'Leave' campaign was surrounded by uncertainty, the nature of the political costs implied by failure for the 'Remain' campaign was easier to identify from the very beginning of the Brexit campaign. When on June 23rd 2016, 51.9 per cent of UK voters expressed their preference for the 'Leave' option,[3] it came as no surprise that Cameron resigned, to be replaced a few weeks later by former Home Secretary Theresa May, whose nomination as Prime Minister triggered further defections and confirmed the crisis of the Conservative party in the second half of 2016 (Parfitt 2016).

THE OCTOBER 2ND 2016 REFERENDUM IN HUNGARY

In 2015, the EU was confronted with a fully fledged 'migrant crisis', with over a million migrants and asylum seekers arriving, chiefly from Syria, Africa and South Asia (International Organization for Migration – IOM 2015). In the attempt to provide a coordinated response to the crisis, the Council of the European Union approved by qualified majority a plan gradually to relocate 120,000 refugees from frontline member states Italy and Greece to other member states (Council of the European Union 2015). The Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia voted against this measure, with the Hungarian Government led by right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán defiantly opposing the relocation plan and eventually succeeding in de facto removing itself from the scheme (Robinson and Spiegel 2015). Nonetheless, on February 24 2016, Orbán announced the adoption by the Hungarian Government of decision No. 2004/2016 calling a referendum on the compulsory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary.[4] The ostensible reason for calling the referendum was the need for a popular pronouncement on the principle that the EU '… may not adopt decisions – those which significantly change people's lives and also determine the lives of future generations – over the heads of the people, and against the will of the European people' (Hungarian Government 2016). While the exact legal consequences of the vote appeared to be unclear, a number of elements suggested that the government's primary goal was to strengthen its own position domestically and in the EU context by resorting to an 'official opinion poll'. First, following the announcement made by Chancellor Angela Merkel on August 24 2015 about

Germany's willingness to welcome asylum seekers (Merkel 2015), the number of asylum applicants in Hungary had decreased dramatically, falling from 46,720 in August to a mere 490 in October 2015 (Eurostat 2016). Second, by the time the Hungarian Government announced its intention to hold a referendum, it was already clear that the relocation plan approved by the Council of the European Union was not being enforced: as of January 13 2016, only 272 asylum seekers had effectively been relocated from Greece and Italy to other member states (European Commission 2016). Third, long before the controversial approval of the EU asylum-seekers relocation plan, the Hungarian Government had already taken measures aimed at directing the public's attention toward the immigration 'threat', a strategy that has been explained as an attempt to outflank its closest competitor, the radical right Jobbik party. In fact, the idea to launch a referendum on the asylum seekers relocation plan was originally put forward by Jobbik (Byrne and Robinson 2016). Since it came to power in 2010, the governing coalition formed by Fidesz and the Christian Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt, KDNP) had progressively aligned its migration policies with those of Jobbik, in an attempt to win over its electorate (Juhász and Krekó 2015). In a public speech delivered on August 27 2014, Orbán reportedly said that Hungary would 'like to remain a homogenous culture' and 'illegal immigrants from outside Europe would endanger such a situation' (Tóth 2014), while in April 2015 the government initiated a public consultation concerning 'immigration, economic immigration and terrorism', asking questions such as '[t]here are some who think that mismanagement of the immigration question by Brussels may have something to do with increased terrorism. Do you agree with this view?' (Hungarian Government 2015).

From the Hungarian government's standpoint, considering the uncertainty surrounding the actual legal consequences of the vote, the obvious political gain hypothetically resulting from a favourable referendum outcome – that is, a victory of the 'No' vote with a turnout exceeding 50 per cent of the electorate – would have been a strengthening of the government's position both domestically and on the EU stage. On the other hand, the political risks taken by the Hungarian government in sponsoring the referendum were not particularly high. While the political costs of a negative outcome – that is a prevalence of the 'Yes' option with a turnout exceeding 50 per cent of the electorate – would have certainly weakened the governing coalition, the likelihood of such an outcome materialising was low considering the relatively high level of popular anti-immigration sentiment in Hungary (Juhász and Krekó 2015), the very framing of the referendum question, and the remarkable campaigning efforts put in place by the government. The most likely worst case scenario for the government was rather the possibility, which eventually became reality, that the minimum 50 per cent turnout threshold would not be reached. When the referendum finally took place, the turnout was 41.32 per cent, but the percentage of voters aligned with the government-sponsored 'No' option was 98.36 per cent (Hungarian National Election Office 2016). Thus, although in the wake of this result Jobbik urged Orbán to step down and Orbán's ambition 'to present himself as the poster-boy for refugee rejectionism' in the European arena was dampened (The Economist 2016), the extent of Fidesz's political setback was not so large as to prevent the Hungarian Prime Minister from presenting the referendum outcome as a vote against Brussels. Moreover, polls held in the immediate aftermath of the vote suggested that despite the referendum's formal failure, its results nonetheless paid off in terms of increased popularity of Fidesz at the expense of Jobbik (Adam 2016).

THE DECEMBER 4TH 2016 REFERENDUM IN ITALY

The 2013 general election in Italy produced a fragmented parliament, with the populist MoVimento 5 Stelle (M5S) winning 25.6 per cent of the vote at the expense of traditional parties such as centre-left Partito Democratico (PD) and Silvio Berlusconi's Popolo della Libertà (PdL). The centre-left coalition led by PD's leader, Pierluigi Bersani, won 29.6 per cent of the vote but since he was unable

to secure an absolute majority in the Senate, the President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano eventually appointed PD's deputy party leader Enrico Letta as the head of a unity government involving political personalities from PD, PdL and Scelta Civica (SC), a centrist party headed by the incumbent Prime Minister Mario Monti.[5] Letta's cabinet was nonetheless short-lived. After promoting an internal party vote that triggered Letta's resignation, in February 2014, former Florence Mayor Matteo Renzi was appointed Prime Minister and formed a new government whose agenda hinged on structural reforms, including a new electoral law, a new constitutional architecture and measures to speed up the country's sluggish civil justice system (The Economist 2014).

In order to secure consensus for its ambitious plan, Renzi struck an extra-parliamentary deal with Berlusconi, a move that cost the Prime Minister the support of the left of his own party. In contrast to a labour market reform and a new electoral law whose approval was relatively swift, the final text of the Government-sponsored constitutional reform bill was approved by both chambers only on April 12 2016, and it did not obtain the two-thirds majority necessary to avoid the possibility of a confirmatory referendum. It is important to stress that as per article 138 of the Italian constitution, confirmative referendums are not automatic but *can* be called only when a) a constitutional revision law is approved by the Parliament without such a majority; and b) a request in this sense is made by a fifth of the members of one chamber or 500,000 voters or five regional councils. On the occasion of the closest precedent – the 2005 constitutional reform promoted by Berlusconi and subsequently dismissed by the majority of the voters in the confirmative referendum on June 26 2006 – the request for a referendum was sponsored by the opposition and endorsed by 830,987 voters (Campana 2006: 172). Interestingly instead, a request to hold a confirmative referendum in 2016 was filed not only by opposition MPs, but also by majority MPs, confirming Renzi's intention, expressed on multiple occasions, to submit the reform to a popular vote in any case (Corriere della Sera 2016). Moreover, in addition to the request filed by majority MPs, the 'Yes' coalition headed by Renzi collected the adhesion of 580,000 citizens. In the framework of a highly divisive campaign, the government invested considerable resources in sponsoring a 'Yes' vote, while a variegated cluster of political actors including the left wing of the premier's own party, the M5S, the Northern League and Forza Italia campaigned for a 'No' vote.

Adopting an attitude reminiscent of De Gaulle's plebiscitary understanding of referendums, throughout his time in office Renzi repeatedly vowed that he would resign and abandon politics for good in case of rejection of the constitutional reform, effectively turning the confirmative referendum into a plebiscite on his administration as a whole, rather than on the contents of the reform. Moreover, the government adopted an anti-establishment rhetoric echoing the central messages of the M5S campaigns, insisting, for instance, that one major objective of the constitutional reform was to reduce the number of elected officials and so to attack the so-called 'caste' of corrupt politicians ruling the country. This narrative was somewhat present also in the formulation of the referendum question, which was criticised by members of the opposition as it allegedly tried to manipulate the vote by highlighting the positive aspects of the reform, such as the limitation of the operating costs of the institutions.[6] During the referendum campaign, leading exponents of the M5S attacked the EU for its austerity policies and called for a further referendum on Italy's Eurozone membership. In this sense, Renzi's attacks toward the EU (which he once compared to 'the orchestra playing on the Titanic', also referring to the Stability Pact as the 'Stupidity Pact' (Euractiv 2016)) can also be interpreted as an attempt to outflank criticism coming from Eurosceptic M5S. In light of the EU's desire not to damage Renzi in view of the referendum, this attitude was used to negotiate some additional flexibility for Italy's 2017 budget proposal (Politi and Brunsden 2016).

Trying to single out the calculation behind the Italian government's referendum gamble, it can be said that in spite of the difficulty assessing the odds of a successful outcome, the political gains associated with it were potentially remarkable: a victory of the 'Yes' vote would have consolidated Renzi's leadership of the divided Democratic Party and strengthened the incumbent government in view of the upcoming 2018 general election. At the same time, it would have represented a formidable political victory of the ruling coalition over the M5S, whose attacks against the 'establishment' embodied by the Renzi government typically hinged on the claim that it lacked popular legitimacy. On the other hand, it was clear from the beginning that a negative outcome would have cost Renzi his premiership, a scenario which eventually materialised after 59.1 per cent of the voters rejected the government-sponsored constitutional reform with a 68.5 per cent turnout.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The four cases discussed above offer several insights into the strategic use of government-sponsored referendums in contemporary Europe (see Table 1 below for a comparative overview). The first aspect that clearly emerges is the ubiquitous involvement of anti-establishment parties and the role of populism as a discursive frame. In Greece, the 2015 referendum was actually sponsored by the leader of the anti-establishment ruling party. In Britain, Hungary and Italy, the ruling mainstream parties basically adjusted their positions to cater to voters of anti-establishment parties: in Britain and in Hungary, the idea of calling a referendum was in fact originally proposed by an anti-establishment party and later incorporated in the programme of the governing coalition. In Italy, populism, meant as a 'speech-level phenomenon' (Bonikowski 2016: 14), was clearly at work during the 2016 referendum campaign. This was testified by the anti-establishment rhetoric adopted by the government in presenting the constitutional reform as the only way to overcome the immobilism of the 'old' political class (Bull 2016), coupled with the government's attempt to adopt policies distinctively owned by M5S, such as the proposal of reducing the costs of politics by cutting back on the number of lawmakers.

Table 1. The Four Government-Sponsored Referendums at a Glance

Country/date	Referendum Issue	Governing Party	Government-sponsored outcome	Actual outcome	Minimum turnout threshold	Actual turnout
Greece, July 5th 2015	Conditions for EU-backed bailout	Syriza	No	No	40%	62.5%
United Kingdom, June 23rd 2016	EU membership	Conservative Party	Remain	Leave	None	72.2%
Hungary, October 2nd 2016	EU-proposed relocation of asylum seekers	Fidész-led coalition	No	No	50%	41.32%
Italy, December 4th 2016	Constitutional reform	PD-led coalition	Yes	No	None	68.5%

Müller (2013: 29) suggests that from the viewpoint of populists, referendums have the function of ratifying what the leaders have already figured out to be the 'true' popular interest 'as a matter of identity, not as a matter of aggregating empirically verifiable interests'. A comparative analysis of the four cases considered resonates with this contention. In the case of the Brexit referendum, the complexity of the issues underlying the referendum question was such that it can be legitimately questioned whether it was indeed possible to achieve the aggregation of empirically verifiable interests without involving representative democratic institutions (Colignatus 2017). The same can be said about the Greek and the Hungarian referendums. In both cases, the intention to obtain a ratification of what the leader had already identified as the 'popular interest' surfaces clearly. Italy is another case in which the referendum was framed as a plebiscite on the government and its leader – thus, in fact, a matter of personality – rather than a vote on the contents of the constitutional reform.

Further analogies surface if one looks at the four cases discussed through the analytical lens of the crisis-solving – or crisis-worsening – potential of referendums as discussed by Milioni, Spyridou and Triga (2016). As already explained, referendums may be used as problem-solving devices by governments facing crises triggered by international pressure, citizens' requests or internal governing party/coalition tensions; nonetheless, referendums may also worsen, or even trigger, political crises. In this sense, elements of crisis-worsening can be traced in each of the referendums considered. In Greece, the decision to hold the July 5th 2015 referendum de facto further worsened the financial situation of the country with a sudden introduction of capital controls (Papadimas and Georgiopoulos 2015) without effectively improving the negotiating position of the government. While the long-term consequences of the Brexit referendum are still to be seen, it is undeniable that the decision to promote a popular vote on EU membership paved the way for the premature end of David Cameron's premiership, besides triggering a member state exit procedure for the first time in the history of EU integration. In the case of Hungary, the October 2nd 2016 referendum on asylum seekers quotas created a further obstacle to EU-coordinated efforts at tackling the 2015 migrant crisis. As for Italy, the perceived weakness of the country's banking system was amplified by Renzi's threats to resign based on the outcome of the December 4th 2016 vote (see for instance Dos Santos 2016; Sanderson 2016). Moreover, the electoral law sponsored by the Government was passed by the Parliament in 2015 under the assumption that the constitutional reform would be approved and the Senate's members would not be directly elected by citizens anymore (Pasquino and Capussela 2016). This circumstance had the obvious effect of magnifying political uncertainty in the aftermath of the referendum, making a revision of the electoral system indispensable for holding new elections.

Another feature shared by the cases analysed is the pronounced politicisation of the European Union in domestic discourse (Statham and Trenz 2012) during the referendum campaigns. In February 2016, European Council President Donald Tusk had already criticised the exploitation of anti-EU sentiment by European leaders contemplating or promoting plebiscites to achieve domestic goals (Barker 2016). In line with Tusk's concerns, in the run-ups to the referendums analysed above there were frequent attempts, by both governing and opposition parties, to channel popular discontent towards the EU, capitalising on the perceived legitimacy gap between the EU and its citizens. This happened even in the case of Italy, where the issue at stake had no direct linkages with EU membership or EU-sponsored policies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In concluding an in-depth analysis on the subject, Morel (2001: 63) observed that referendums had often put governing parties in awkward situations and suggested that it seemed unlikely that the use of government-initiated referendum would increase

> because it does not appear to be in governments' interest to do so: simply because they initiate a referendum does not mean that they can control its outcome or effects, something which would make any government wary of pursuing that path.

Nonetheless, recent developments in contemporary Europe seem to contradict this prediction. Between 2015 and 2016, four governments attempted to use referendums strategically in order to resolve political issues that had become intractable due to populist pressures, and only in one case, the July 5th 2015 referendum in Greece, was the outcome fully in line with the government's preferences. Indeed, the caveat, implicit in Morel's remark, about the difficulty of controlling the outcome of referendums seems to have been overlooked.

As the four cases discussed above show, the use of government-sponsored referendums has significantly affected domestic as well as EU-level politics in the past few years. On the other hand, the cases also show that the functioning of referendums in contemporary Europe has been deeply affected by the rise of populism as a discursive practice adopted by both mainstream and anti-establishment parties. It is then safe to conclude that against the backdrop of increasing distrust of mainstream political parties and of the recent trend toward popular decision-making in EU member states (Leininger 2015), the interplay between anti-establishment politics and the resort to referendums in consolidated democracies deserves more attention by scholars and policymakers. In particular, as it cannot be excluded that more government-sponsored referendums will take place in the near future,[7] looking at this phenomenon through the analytical lens of political risk calculation may help shed further light on this trend and its implications.

ENDNOTES

[1] After the referendum of July 5th 2015, Tsipras negotiated a deal for a third bailout for Greece that cost him the support of almost one third of Syriza MPs. And yet, his popularity was confirmed by the results of new elections held in September 2015, from which the Prime Minister's party emerged with almost as many parliamentary seats as before.

[2] By 'issue ownership' here is meant 'the idea that voters consider specific parties to be better able to deal with some issues' (Lefevere, Tresch and Walgrave 2015: 755).

[3] The referendum question was: 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?'.

[4] The referendum question was: 'Do you agree that the European Union should have the power to impose the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly of Hungary?'.

[5] For an exhaustive discussion of the 2013 general election in Italy, see Garzia (2013).

[6] The referendum question was: 'Do you approve the text of the Constitutional Law concerning 'Provisions for overcoming equal bicameralism, reducing the number of Members of Parliament, limiting the operating costs of the institutions, the suppression of the CNEL and the revision of Title V of Part II of the Constitution' approved by Parliament and published in the Official Gazette no. 88 of April 15th 2016?'.

[7] In the immediate aftermath of the Brexit vote, even France's then economy minister Emmanuel Macron conjured up the possibility of a 'EU-wide referendum' as a final step after the elaboration of a new 'road map' for the EU (Thomas and Melander 2016).

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From the German Past to the European Union's Future. 'Constitutional Patriotism' and the Transnational Making of a European Political Concept (1988-2008)

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) is still in the making, and so are the concepts used to think and talk about it. They sometimes appear to mix various political and intellectual traditions randomly, forming an incoherent discourse. The purpose of this article is to analyse the processes by which certain concepts succeed or fail to become part of this discourse. It focuses on the career of the concept of constitutional patriotism, made famous by the German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas. It will first insist on the difference in French and German contexts of national politicisations of the concept. Then, its introduction in the European arena will be examined. The article will challenge the view of a linear Europeanization of political concepts. Rather, the career of constitutional patriotism will appear as a complex process of co-production in which a transnational thought collective, involving both scholars and politicians, has played the main part.

Keywords

The process of European integration not only challenges traditional political practices and institutions, it also challenges traditional concepts, old theories and established knowledge (Smith and Lequesne 1997). Over the years, a specific discourse on the European Union (EU) has been produced. The production of this discourse is understood here as encompassing 'not just the representation or embodiment of ideas [...] but also the interactive processes by and through which ideas are generated in the policy sphere by discursive policy communities and entrepreneurs' who struggle to give meaning to the new political object (Schmidt 2015: 171). The aim of this article is to provide a better understanding of the processes at work in the making of this discourse. More generally, it aims at addressing the processes of conceptual change in contemporary political discourse (Ball, Farr and Hanson 1995).

A striking case of such conceptual change can be observed in the late 1990s - early 2000s, at the height of the European constitutional debate. A discussion emerged amongst European Union scholars and politicians about the legitimate relationship between the EU and its citizens. Several prominent politicians and scholars made a case for a peculiar concept: 'constitutional patriotism'. Forged in German debates, where it had been shaped by the social theorist Jürgen Habermas, it was meant to conceptualise a new kind of bond between European citizens and the EU (Menent 2016; Müller 2007a). In strong contrast to nationalistic feelings, such patriotism was defined as an attachment of European citizens to European values and principles, rather than to a definite identity. As such, it was regarded by many as paving the way for the solution of one of the great problems of European integration: inventing a sense of belonging to the EU that would not imitate – and compete with – deep, historically rooted national traditions. Therefore, the concept enjoyed an important official success. Quantitatively, it was increasingly used by European institutional representatives; qualitatively, it was given the strategic function of summarising the core of a long-searched civic philosophy linking together European institutions and European citizens.

But not everyone was happy with this concept. The debate reached a political climax when, in 2000, the then German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, gave a famous speech on the future of European Union – and launched a controversy with the French Minister of Domestic Affairs, Jean-Pierre Chevènement. In a highly symbolic speech, held a few days after the 50th anniversary of the

seminal Schuman declaration of the 9 May 1950, J. Fischer made the case for a renewal of European integration, and argued for a 'federation of Nation-States'. Fischer neither used the concept of 'constitutional patriotism' nor cited Habermas. But J. P. Chevènement did, in a violent response attacking Fischer's speech and its 'typically German view of Europe', which he critiqued as an 'escape [from the past] in post-nationalism' and fear of the nation (Chevènement 2000).

This article intends to challenge the 'Europeanization under German influence' thesis implicit in the French Minister's position, as well as in scholarly analyses (e.g. Scicluna 2011). It will contest the view of a linear Europeanization of political concepts, defined as the progressive convergence around national pre-existing models (Börzel and Risse 2000; Radaelli 2004; Spahiu 2015). Rather, the career of constitutional patriotism will appear as a complex process of co-production in which a transnational thought collective (Fleck 1979) involving both scholars and politicians has played the main part (Vauchez and Mudge 2012). I will first give an overview of the uses of the concept in German debates, in order to underline the specific context of its invention. I will then show how it circulated in a different national context – France – and how it was eventually introduced into the European political discourse during the European constitutional debate.

STUDYING POLITICAL CONCEPTS IN CIRCULATION

Why are certain concepts introduced and regarded as legitimate in European debates while others fail? In this case, how can we understand the emergence of constitutional patriotism in European debates? In order to address these questions, it is necessary to start with an almost trivial observation: concepts of political theory and philosophy are Janus-faced, as is the very notion of 'political thought' (Freeden 2005). Concepts produced by theory or philosophy about the political are regarded as characterised by a rigorously constructed meaning, produced by highly specialised professionals supposed to follow rational procedures and scientific purposes. Concepts in use in political theory and everyday politics should therefore be carefully distinguished as belonging to two different spheres (Bourdieu 2004). However, political concepts do not exactly match these expectations. Being "political" can also refer to the fact that some of them are in use in the political game: they are the vocabulary which in some way relate to the problems of organisation and relations in the polity – a phenomenon once analysed in terms of 'double hermeneutics' by Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1990).

The fact that political concepts can at the same time be elements of the everyday political game and of its theoretical study is reflected in the empirical observation of their circulation. Conceptual circulation refers to the expansion process of the uses of a concept to new debates, a process which constitutes the "career" of a concept. It can be transnational – from one national debate to another. It can also be observed when theoretical concepts, usually mostly discussed by scholars, abruptly become fashionable in the political vocabulary, sometimes in the media, be it even for just a short amount of time. The career of a political concept therefore appears as a guideline pointing to a network of actors, stages and debates at first sight hardly related. Focusing on this circulation allows us to scrutinise the processes by which a political concept gains acceptance and is legitimised, not only in scientific arguments but in everyday political controversies and collective representations. In what follows, I shall argue that paying attention to this ordinary conceptual circulation can prove of great help in understanding the construction of political thought in the European Union.

From this perspective, investigating the career of a concept starts with tracking down its occurrences – where and when it is used. It also requires paying attention to the context of its uses – for to use a concept is to say that some words not only carry a meaning but also take place in a context where

they are produced and received (Skinner 1969). In the case of political thought, the relevant context to be studied is a complex one, mixing ideational, political, social and personal stakes. Finally, the concepts used in these changing historical contexts do not move by themselves in the light air of ideas. After all, to be used, a concept needs a user. That is to say that this investigation has to be actor-centred as well and gather sociological material on the actors involved, be they individual or institutional. Their role can be obvious, as in the case of actors discussing the concept frequently and decisively. But it can also be more discreet, in the case of actors who do not appear to be major thinkers or politicians, but who nevertheless play a pivotal role in connecting others together, or shaping their discussions by institutional or editorial activities.

Following these principles, this article is based on a chronology of the frequency of use of the phrase "constitutional patriotism" (fig. 1), in order to define how often and on which occasions the expression was used. It focuses on Germany, where the concept was invented, and France, where it was discussed early on. This is not to say that it has not circulated in other national debates (e.g. Ballester 2012; Aitchison 2008). But it would have been barely possible to examine more cases in sufficient detail. Instead, it seemed preferable to investigate two countries that have long played central roles in debates about the EU. Moreover, Germany and France typify two extremely different traditions regarding citizenship and national belonging – one based on culture and traditional ties, while the other is articulated around the state and political belonging (Brubaker 1992). Contrasting these two cases was therefore a way to tackle the diversity of contexts surrounding the discussion of constitutional patriotism. Thus, the publications and actors considered are mostly French and German: 198 articles using the concept from its beginning (1988) to the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty (2009, not included) were collected to be analysed. Articles were selected from both scientific journals regularly using the concept in different disciplines (philosophy, political science, law and sociology) and in reviews addressing a wider public (e.g. Esprit, Merkur). After collecting these first publications, the scope of the investigation was inductively broadened to include neighbouring countries (e.g. Belgium), on the one hand, and some relevant English publications, on the other – although in a less systematic way.

Finally, at the European level, occurrences of the term were researched in European parliamentary debates, as parliamentary debates are arenas where conceptual change can usually be clearly observed (Bayley 2004). In order to understand the social and political debates prevailing at the time of these publications, historical literature, newspaper articles and biographical information about the main actors were collected as well.

A CERTAIN IDEA OF GERMANY: BIRTH OF A CONTESTED CONCEPT

What does constitutional patriotism mean? 'The expression will sound in many ears like a contradiction in terms' (Müller 2007a). There is something uncomfortable in thinking of the association of a feeling of belonging to a community (patriotism) and the political and legal concept of constitution. Patriotism is an affective relationship bounding citizens to the nation-state, and to each other. The constitution is a legal and political text playing a foundational role in modern states and defining the organisation of the state and its relationship to citizens. In constitutional patriotism, the strong feeling of patriotism is thus connected to a rational law, and not to more emotionally moving objects such as nations. Defined in this way, constitutional patriotism is very close to the oxymoron contained in the idea of 'rational feeling' developed by the Kantian tradition about the concept of respect. To that extent, it is open to the same criticisms, especially that of being a contradiction in terms and of lacking any possible empirical experience. The meaning of the concept therefore is theoretically far from self-evident and in practice, it lacks empirical support.

DEBATING THE GERMAN PAST: THE HISTORIANS' QUARREL

Facing this conceptual difficulty, we might expect to find some help in considering its original meaning. The concept of constitutional patriotism was made famous by the German philosopher and social theorist Jürgen Habermas during the heated public controversy known as the Historikerstreit ('historians' quarrel'), which lasted from 1986 to 1988 in Germany. However, strictly speaking, Habermas was not the 'father' of the concept, since it had been first coined by the German political scientist Dolf Sternberger (1907–1989) in 1979, in a short newspaper article celebrating the 30th anniversary of the German Constitution (Grundgesetz) of 1949. Although he was a renowned political scientist and one of the fathers of post-war German political science, his concept barely resonated until it was used by Habermas. Significantly, it was not before 1990, once the Historikerstreit was over, that a posthumous collection of Sternberger's articles on the issue was published under the title Verfassungspatriotismus (Constitutional Patriotism).

This contested 'fatherhood' is more than purely anecdotal, inasmuchas Sternberger and Habermas hold totally different, rather opposite, definitions of the concept. According to the explanations Sternberger later provided, constitutional patriotism was to be understood as a wide-ranging descriptive notion: 'Patriotism in its European tradition had always and essentially something to do with the Constitution of the state, which means that patriotism is always and essentially a constitutional patriotism' (Sternberger 1990). In this descriptive sense, the concept was supposed to point out the hidden connection between a feeling of belonging to a community and the institutions of this community. That is to say that the main issue in patriotism should not be its national dimension, which leads to nationalism, but its relationship to the state embodied by the constitution. This attempt to praise anew the 'tradition of European patriotism' before the age of nations was then 'to be understood as a return to pre-national patriotism' (Müller 2007a).

For Habermas, constitutional patriotism is distinguished from nationalism and conventional national identity as well. But, contrary to Sternberger, he refuses to conceive of political belonging as based on an inherited identity, even be it the constitution of the state. Habermas observed that the historical coupling of nation and state, that strongly conditioned the development of democracy in Western European countries, was being increasingly weakened in the contemporary world (Habermas 1998 [1996]; Habermas 2001 [1998]). This opened the way for a new kind of political belonging, no longer based on a given, inherited, collective identity. Instead, in line with his previous work on communicative action and the public sphere, he called for a sense of belonging developing from the rational discussion of basic principles and values among equal citizens. Constitutional patriotism – attachment to the fundamental principles of a political community – was supposed to result from this rational process of collective negotiation. In short, where Sternberger intended to make a case for a pre-national patriotism, Habermas pleaded for a post-national one.

It should be underlined here that, in both cases, these definitions were hardly given at the time of the first use: Sternberger waited until a conference in 1987 to display the precise meaning of his concept, while Habermas at first only mentioned it in the last lines of a polemic article (in Augstein 1988). Therefore, constitutional patriotism was from the beginning ill-defined.

Finally, the context of the debates was undoubtedly a very specific one: in 1979 as in 1988, the debates were about the German past and, explicitly, its relation to WWII. The Historikerstreit, during which the concept was reborn, was a public controversy among historians, quickly joined by other intellectuals, on the interpretation of the Nazi past. It was launched in July 1986 when the historian Ernst Nolte (1923–2016) published in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung a seminal article pleading for a 'historicization' of the Final Solution. He claimed that a full scientific understanding of the events would require ceasing to consider them sui generis, and, especially, would require scholars to

address the causal role of the USSR. In proposing to emphasise other aspects of the Final Solution, it was suggested that it should be possible for Germans to re-establish a more positive relationship with their national past – and thus, to reconnect with a somewhat traditional form of patriotism.

This polemic statement started a violent and long controversy on the historical meaning of Nazism, the German past and identity. Several historians fiercely replied to him, denouncing an attempt to reduce the exceptionality of Nazism. They were soon joined by an experienced actor in public debates, Jürgen Habermas. It was not long before he became the representative of the 'discontinuity' thesis against the partisans of the historical 'continuity' thesis defended by Nolte.

AN ACADEMIC CONCEPT IN POLITICAL CONTEXT

This was all the more controversial as the debate between distinguished academics emerged from a tense political background. For the 1985 commemoration of the end of WWII, the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the American President, Ronald Reagan, visited the cemetery of Bitburg, where members of the SS are buried beside American soldiers. This was followed by the launching of a programme aimed at redefining the politics of memory in the Federal Republic. Nolte and his supporters were known to be close to the Conservative government (as was Sternberger), as in the case of historian Michael Stürmer, who was then Kohl's speechwriter (Specter 2010; Müller 2007a). Habermas being a distinguished representative of the second generation of the Frankfurt School and having a Marxist background, his friends were to be found in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) or the Greens, i.e. in the opposition. Political affinities paralleled academic ones.

The second act took place in Germany, shortly after the end of the Historikerstreit. It occurred on the occasion of the Reunification debate, in the years surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall (1988–1993). At this point, the historical question of dealing with the German past was turned into the legal question of grounding Germany's future. The Reunification debate was, for our purposes here, mainly a political and legal one. The questions raised by the prospect of German reunification, although complex, revolved around the question of the Constitution, for the 1949 Constitution was from the beginning supposed to be provisional, valid only as long as the country was divided. With the end of the Cold War and the prospect of Reunification, a constitutional change should have been expected. However, many voices argued for an emergency reunification, modelled on the integration process of the former Allied-occupied parts of the FRG (article 23 of the Grundgesetz). In doing so, East Germany was to be blended into West Germany, and to adopt its political organisation and rules.

But, for Habermas, this solution involved a major risk, for in avoiding a constitutional debate, it failed to address the question of loyalty of East Germans to the institutions of the Federal Republic. In his own words, it sounded like an annexation (Anschluss). Using his authority as an established public intellectual, he once more publicly made a case for a constitutional patriotism that would be the grounds for a shared sense of belonging in both parts of Germany. Two weeks after the fall of the Wall, he exposed his thesis to his academic friends in a short text on 'national feeling' and to the public in a series of articles in Die Zeit, a leading liberal newspaper (Specter 2010). Given the difficulty of legitimating reunification on a shared national past, he pointed to the risk of a nationalist revival, and of an increasing hatred of democracy in the East as in the West. This puzzle could only be solved by promoting and adopting constitutional patriotism as a civic norm, on the occasion of the debate on the new Constitution. According to Habermas, to overcome their past and prepare for their reunified future, Germans needed to move beyond the nation, and this could only be achieved by praising constitutional democracy in place of the nation and the corresponding

feeling of belonging to such a post-national democracy: constitutional patriotism. The object of this new patriotism was to be the universal democratic values embodied in the Constitution. Following Habermas's work on deliberative democracy, constitutional patriotism was thus closely associated with a reflection on the foundational and integrative role of democracy.

But, as an observer put it as early as 1988, things had changed in Germany:

> Jürgen Habermas, has argued that German identity must consist of constitutional patriotism (Verfassungspatriotismus), Willms [a political scientist belonging to the 'New German Right'] responds: 'Identity lies in the nation, not in the constitution.' Quite early in the debate on the national question, Willms recognized that the political climate was changing and that this might open up new opportunities for the right. […] He observed that the nation could be discussed in a way which had been impossible a few years before. The 'political-intellectual spectrum' had moved. What once had been dismissed as extreme rightist had shifted to the right. (Betz, 1988)

In this context, Habermas's argument was defeated and Germany reunified without voting on a new Constitution. Constitutional patriotism had failed to be generally accepted as the new legitimate civic norm of the old Federal Republic.
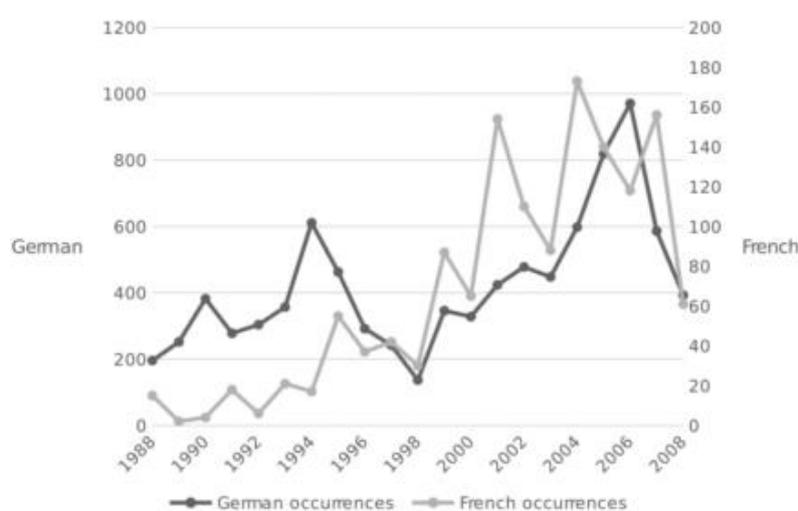
Figure 1 Occurrences of 'constitutional patriotism' in French and German books. Source: Google Ngram.

The specific character of the debates where "constitutional patriotism" was first used can thus be defined: it was first formulated in a German academic and political debate originating in German history and concerning national memory. If we consider that its origin is disputed, its initial definition unclear and the context of its first introduction very specific, it turns out that to bet at the very beginning that constitutional patriotism would become a key concept of many European debates would have been quite daring. However, it happened to be increasingly used by a great number of political theorists, in Germany and beyond, in France and eventually in the European Union, where it became a kind of an ideal view of the expected relationship of citizens to political institutions (Müller 2007b; Rambour 2004). The rest of this article aims to understand how it escaped Germany and entered European debates.

BECOMING EUROPEAN: EUROPEANIZATION UNDER GERMAN INFLUENCE?

The concept of constitutional patriotism was in the first place designed for German debates (Turner 2004). Nevertheless, is this sufficient grounds to jump to the conclusion that its use in European debates simply reflects the domination of German conceptions of Europe? Interestingly enough, this thesis finds support in political arguments. But, as we shall see, this does not fully capture the complex processes at work. In fact, the Chevènement vs. Fischer debate in 2000 is better understood as the crossroads of two national politicisations than as the result of an even process of Europeanization of the concept.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL PATRIOTISM INTO FRENCH DEBATES: FROM POLEMICS TO THEORY … AND BACK

The 'Europeanization under German influence thesis' overlooks a major step in the concept's career: its introduction into different national contexts – in this case France. It is not to be denied that the concept was still of much more common use in Germany than in France (fig. 1). Nevertheless, a brief examination of the articles using the concept in France at this time (1988–1993) reveals a curious fact. While in Germany, constitutional patriotism was mainly used in public political controversies, most French uses are to be found in philosophical or theoretical articles. Moreover, even when they deal with problems similar to those encountered in Germany (nation, identity, community), they are neither very concerned with the German case nor with legal debates. In other words, in crossing the border, the concept seems to have lost its German political and academic context (Bourdieu 2002). How could such an allegedly German concept have managed such a resettlement?

In the late 1980s, Habermas was far from unknown in France. Partly translated since the early 1970s, he had given a series of lectures at the prestigious Collège de France in 1983, where he had met Michel Foucault and other famous French intellectuals. However, his plea for a new German constitutional patriotism was not really echoed in France, where the general intellectual mood was suspicious about the reunification of its powerful neighbour (Bouchindhomme and Habermas 2005). The introduction of the concept was thus mainly academic, thanks to the work of a small group of French scholars and translators of Habermas's work.

Four names particularly deserve to be mentioned: Habermas's two main translators, Rainer Rochlitz and Christian Bouchindhomme, and two of his main French editors, Jean-Marc Ferry and Heinz Wismann. All of them had been trained as philosophers in the hermeneutic tradition of Gadamer and Ricoeur. Except for Wismann, who was older, they were at the very beginning of their career; to introduce Habermas's work, already famous but not a classic in France yet, was an opportunity to be associated with him, to use his name as a source of legitimisation in their domestic academic debates. They could all rely on a familiarity with German debates (indeed, Rochlitz and Wismann were born in Germany) and on personal acquaintance with Habermas – especially Ferry who, in 1989, worked with him as a research assistant. Finally, they were closely connected to each other, with Wismann playing a pivotal role as editorial director of a small but active books series ('Passages') he had founded in 1986, and where Habermas's books were published at this time. This network assumed the major role of framing the reception of Habermassian thought from the early 1980s on.

Compared to Germany, three major moves in its understanding can be traced to their role. First, in the editorial forewords they produced for Habermas's French editions, it is striking to notice that they almost completely turned away from his Marxist past. Assuming that it was then no longer relevant, and coming themselves from very different traditions, they played down its relationship

with the Frankfurt School in a way that strongly contrasted with previous presentations. For instance, whereas in 1973 Habermas was said to 'inherit the Frankfurt School' (Ladmiral and Habermas 1973), we are told in 1986 that 'he owes nothing to the Frankfurt School' and works 'alone' (Bouchindhomme and Habermas 1986).

Secondly, the genealogy of constitutional patriotism itself was rearranged, especially by Ferry. Although he, of course, described the concept as related to its first use during the Historikerstreit, he clearly stated that constitutional patriotism was already implied by the French Republican tradition as early as 1791 (Ferry 1992). It would in fact have been the 'true' revolutionary patriotism – a statement which is of much value in France. Doing so, he translated the concept into a mainstream French vocabulary and intellectual tradition and tore it away from its German origins. Even more so, it suggested an empirical case of effective constitutional patriotism and thus answered a critique regularly made of the concept.

Thirdly, a strong theoretical turn was given to the concept. In a 1990 article, Ferry justified his use of the concept as resulting from a 'more systematic, more theoretical questioning on what a nation is, what it involves concerning national identity' (Ferry 1990). Constitutional patriotism was defined 'from a systematic point of view' as follows: 'This concept is clear: [...] it means that political identity, from now on different from national identity, is grounded on universalist principles (in understanding) and thus transnational (in extension)'. This definition of constitutional patriotism as civic belonging is very close to Habermas's. Nevertheless, it constitutes a blatant case of a theorisation process (Strang and Meyer 1993), i.e. of interpretation of a contextual notion in terms of abstract categories, which makes it available for virtually universal use. Moreover, the universalist principles the concept conceals were explicitly made equivalent to its transnational dimension, that is to say, its ability to circulate.

These three processes resulted in distancing the concept from its original context and in strengthening its definition. On the one hand, they made it acceptable in the French context, by giving a proper genealogy to the author and the concept. On the other hand, the theorisation process strengthened the philosophical legitimacy of the concept, and firmly rooted constitutional patriotism in long-term debates – be they national or, as implied by the universalistic dimension it was given, transnational.

However, it would be oversimplifying to say that it was not relevant to early 1990s political debates: constitutional patriotism was at the same time linked to a new political issue: the European integration process. In Germany, it was a while before the concept was imported into European issues. Habermas's early attempts to introduce constitutional patriotism in European debates almost completely failed until the mid-1990s. Until then, fewer than 10 per cent of the German articles using constitutional patriotism mentioned European integration, and, even then, generally only to explain how difficult it was to think of a European patriotism. Constitutional patriotism had been so strongly tied with German domestic problems that it sounded strange for Germans to use it in connection with Europe. But while the question at stake in Germany was the place and integration of citizens to the German nation, in France the issue connected to constitutional patriotism was the place and integration of the French nation in Europe.

French debates on Europe have proved, at least since Maastricht, very heated academically as well as politically. They have revolved around the national question. In 1992, two lines appeared which did not follow the traditional political cleavages. They opposed those who dismissed the Treaty in the name of different pictures of the nation, from extreme-right to extreme-left and even amongst traditional pro-Europeans, and those who saw the Treaty as a decisive step for European integration. The patriotic question surfaced in this context: for instance, Pierre Bérégovoy, speaker of the

National Assembly, started one of his 1992 speeches by praising the 'daring patriotism' of Maastricht's defenders. Another MP and future vice-chairman of the European Commission, Jacques Barrot, also pleaded for a 'European patriotism' which was to combine with national ones. Not very surprisingly then, the 'European turn' of constitutional patriotism appears to have occurred in France before Germany, although the concept was still much more common in the latter.

Its French spokespersons were indeed strongly involved not only in academic work, but also in public debates on Europe, and were especially connected with the old, left-liberal Catholic and traditionally pro-European review Esprit. Ferry had been a member of its editorial board since 1988 and published several articles on post-nationalism inspired by the work of Habermas. In 1992, at the very heart of the Maastricht ratification process, he was a co-editor of a book, published by Esprit, discussing the European future, in which he and Habermas praised constitutional patriotism (Lenoble and Dewandre 1992). Similarly, a philosopher and fellow member of the board of Esprit, Joël Roman, published in 1992 one of the first French daily press articles using constitutional patriotism, entitled 'Europe has to be post-national'. No more than six years after Habermas's first use, the concept had been reframed as a European issue in French debates.

Two points are to be made here. First, if the arguments are quite similar in both countries, they are used in very different political contexts and debates, so that it is difficult to consider these debates as proof of a transnational discussion of constitutional patriotism. It appears more accurate to underline the different politicisations the concept became subject to than the apparently shared aspects of the polemics. Secondly, since the 'European turn' of the concept seems to have occurred in France following its own logic, considering constitutional patriotism as a mere Europe-wide extension of a German idea, resulting from German activism or influence, completely overlooks the shaping accomplished by the French scholars who used the concept.

THE RECEPTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL PATRIOTISM IN EUROPEAN DEBATES: BETWEEN NORM AND FACT

Constitutional patriotism has proved a contested political and theoretical concept. It has been discussed in a variety of debates of great significance not only for Germany, but also for Europe. Nevertheless, their stakes seemed more national than Europeanized. I want to focus finally on the way it entered European political discourse, i.e. how certain actors helped turn it into a legitimate concept in European institutional arenas, especially during the European Constitutional Treaty debates (2000–2008).

Two processes are to be underlined here. First, Habermas himself was an active proponent of a European constitutional patriotism from the mid-1990s. Indeed, in line with the controversies raised in France, he saw in European integration a very relevant case for the application of constitutional patriotism. He thus strongly pleaded for a European Constitution, towards which a new European patriotic feeling could be directed (Habermas 2001). The constitutional debate itself, if conducted properly, should have been the occasion on which a truly European democratic discussion on the values to be embodied in the Constitution would have developed – therefore triggering a sense of European constitutional patriotism. The controversy on the European Constitution, however, led Habermas to move the emphasis of his concept slightly, as some observers noticed (Lacroix 2009). Being attacked - first in Germany, where counterarguments had already been tested in previous debates (Grimm 1995; Habermas 1995, 1998) - for lacking an empirical basis, he increasingly developed a more substantial, less procedural, view of constitutional patriotism, weighting shared identity and values more than he had before (see Habermas and Derrida 2003). Significantly, in his

2011 book on the crisis of the EU, the vocabulary of constitutional patriotism is missing – replaced by the more traditional concept of 'civic solidarity' (Habermas 2012, 2011).

These arguments, developed in numerous and widely translated publications, conferences and newspapers, were important contributions to the constitutional debate. But Habermas was by then no longer the sole user of the concept, and its European discussion cannot be traced back to the German theorist only. A new generation of political philosophers reinterpreted constitutional patriotism in a more liberal and cosmopolitan way, which, they claimed, was more fitted to actual European political debates. Contrary to the Habermassian meaning of the late 1990s, this small group, often located in Brussels around Ferry (notably Justine Lacroix or Paul Magnette), promoted a second-generation interpretation of the concept (Lacroix 2002b; Lacroix and Magnette 2005; Magnette and Costa 2006): 'Constitutional patriotism's deepest meaning is not to be found in an effective identification […] but in a practice or a habit resisting any identification' (Lacroix 2002a). Such a practice means the involvement of citizens in political affairs creating and strengthening a shared feeling of belonging to a common polity. These authors saw it as a way back: constitutional patriotism in its original meaning was nothing substantial, but a mere civic process. It thus cannot be defined by one given set of values or a legal text but only as an open process, never bound to a specific form or historical tradition. To put it differently: for them, the point in the concept was not only to put aside the nation, it also had to make room for democracy. The debate should therefore be more closely related to democracy than to the nation and legal constitution: the real priority for the EU was to strengthen its democratic instruments and the involvement of its citizens.

Besides this new framing, we also note at this time an increasing effort of the new spokespeople of the concept to cross national and disciplinary borders, and to improve the circulation of their theses. Geographical circulation was favoured by the already-mentioned fact that far from making careers in French or German academic institutions, they were located in Brussels, and closely connected to European institutions. Considering disciplinary circulation, it is worth noting that they coordinated interdisciplinary projects, as made possible at the Free University of Brussels, where Ferry and his former students led the Centre for Political Theory. It is especially true of the relationship of these French (and Belgians) scholars to legal studies: Ferry led a private doctoral seminar since 1999, whose purpose was to allow students of law and political theory to meet. He also joined the editorial board of a review called Penser le Droit in 2005, while Lacroix held lectures in a French institute on legal studies between 2006 and 2008. In so doing, these scholars built bridges between their initial specialty, political philosophy, and other disciplines involved in thinking about the European integration process.

The interplay and familiarity due, on the one side, to common engagement with European issues, and, on the other, to the efforts of these scholars to find new audiences to bridge the gaps between different disciplines facilitated this conceptual academic circulation. Indeed, the scholars promoting the concept were located in a 'border-land' (Vauchez and Robert 2010) where scholars of different national and professional backgrounds met, debated, and tended to use a common language because they dealt with shared European issues and necessary mutual understanding. Through the mediating action of its defenders, constitutional patriotism became familiar to European specialists.

The new generation of users of the concept was also involved in European political expertise: if they only rather rarely held academic and partisan positions at the same time (though it was the case for one prominent Belgian political scientist connected to this network, Paul Magnette), they very commonly advised politicians or European institutions. It might be directly (e.g. Kalypso Nicolaïdis, was close to Justine Lacroix, and chairwoman of the International Group of Expert Advisors on the Convention for the Future of Europe for the 2003 Greek Presidency) or more informally, through meetings and reports organized by think-tanks, such as Notre Europe, created by Jacques Delors,

where Justine Lacroix started her career. Nicolaïdis and Ferry have since become members of the Spinelli Group, a militant political think tank gathering scholars and politicians for a 'federal and post-national Europe', which also counts Delors and Fischer amongst its members. As advisers or experts, they were close to institutions in need of technical tools. This generally requires an awareness of and sensibility to the current political problems and an ability to propose precise recommendations (Robert 2012). The reframing of constitutional patriotism in terms of democracy can then be understood as to some extent reflective of the general concern of European institutions and their experts for democratic legitimacy (Zimmermann 2004). But, more importantly, these academic mobilisations favoured the circulation of the concept from academic papers to political discourses, which they enter as technical opinions of qualified experts.

This is reflected by the increased penetration of the concept into the European political vocabulary during the constitutional debate. Even though its introduction remained limited in quantitative terms, the concept was linked to a very decisive question: the relationship between national and European belongings. Indeed, the European reframing of the concept of constitutional patriotism suggested a way towards the creation of a direct, specifically European, political link between the EU and its citizens, based on abstract principles and values - without repudiating the older national bonds. The constitutional process could thus appear, through public debate of the principles to be embodied in the European Constitution, 'as the prelude to the emergence of a European "demos" beyond the nation states' (Lacroix 2002a: 955). In this perspective, if national and European patriotisms were not thought of as mutually exclusive, it was nevertheless clearly possible to draw the conclusion that attachment to European democratic values should have primacy over particular national loyalties. It could therefore constitute a powerful tool in the legitimisation of the EU.

This potential did not go unnoticed. To take the European Parliament as an example, the concept was used five times in European parliamentary debates between 2001 and 2004 – which is not much, except that it does not appear to have been the case before. One of these occurrences may be found in a resolution proposal of 2003, signed 'in the name of the EPP' (European People's Party, the majority European party) by its German representative at the European Convention, Elmar Brok (CDU), also a member of the federalist Spinelli Group, and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo, former lecturer in constitutional law who was appointed President of the College of Europe in 2009. It required the European governments 'to set an example on European constitutional patriotism during the final Intergovernmental Conference negotiations' (Méndez de Vigo and Brok 2003) on the European Constitutional Treaty, instead of defending narrowly national interests. Constitutional patriotism was not displayed here as a contested theoretical concept, but as a norm of European political behaviour which should be adopted by 'truly' European leaders.

The concept was discussed beyond the European Parliament, as well. In France, the debate continued in different newspaper articles and books devoted to the constitutional project and pleading for - or against - the concept (Beaumont 2003; Chevènement 2005). It took hold in other European countries. For instance, the concept was notably supported by the Spanish socialist José Luis Zapatero, who became Prime Minister in 2004 and expressed his support for the concept on several occasions (Ballester 2012). The Conservative Spanish party later endorsed constitutional patriotism as well, and it was a Spanish MP who underlined the interest of this 'good and interesting' theory during a session of the European Convention, even though it was to defend the role of national parliaments in the constitutional process (Laborda 2002). Finally, the French President of the Convention for the Future of Europe, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, if he didn ot allude directly to constitutional patriotism, campaigned for a kind of 'European patriotism' based on 'European shared values' (Giscard d'Estaing 2006) – which, in spite of other differences, is closer to the concept promoted by the Habermas than to the more procedural meaning of the second generation. This

nevertheless underlines the fact that the idea of a value-based European patriotism had come to be widely accepted as a central normative issue in the constitutional debate.

Academic defenders of the concept underlined this entrance into legitimate political discourse, which in turn strengthened their claim in proving its relevance:

In public justifications, but even more so in state practice – countries in Western Europe are now converging on a notion of membership and political attachment that is best theorized in terms of the category of constitutional patriotism. In other words, what once appeared as a highly idiosyncratic construct for the very specific situation of post-war West Germany is now becoming an accepted norm and practice across at least Western Europe. (Müller 2007b) .

This 'convergence' would not only be found in 'public justifications', but also in effective practice, which would only be qualified by the descriptive concept of constitutional patriotism: in this view, the concept has to be taken seriously because it describes real practices and political norms. It all happened as if theoretical arguments were strengthened by the political uses of the concept at the European level.

The failure of the Treaty in 2005 and the subsequent economic crisis, did, of course, severely abate these optimistic interpretations. The prospect of creating a shared sense of belonging, directed towards European values, came to be regarded as grimmer than ever before (e.g. Kumm 2008). Constitutional patriotism was frequently analysed as unable to take into account the actual situation and diversity of the EU, and thus as failing to deliver an adequate model of how citizens could develop a strong attachment to non-national institutions. Indeed, the term was only rarely endorsed by major leaders after 2008. However, it did not disappear. It is still defended by academics as the only way out of the crisis (Müller 2008), and Habermas still enjoys a prominent place amongst scholars honoured by European institutions. Significantly, the concept is, up to now, still to be found within the grey literature produced by European institutions as a possible answer to future challenges (e.g. Pichler 2015; Prutsch 2017). If it is certainly less fashionable today than it used to be during the constitutional debate, constitutional patriotism has, perhaps for lack of a better concept, secured a lasting position in the conceptual apparatus used to think about the relationship between European citizens and EU institutions.

CONCLUSION

The European success of constitutional patriotism in the early 2000s was the result of a much more complex process than is assumed by the 'Europeanization under German influence' thesis. Instead of a linear process of Europeanization around German values, the circulation of constitutional patriotism involved a very different logic: theoretical and political on the one hand, national and transnational on the other. The different steps examined here are summarised below.

First, constitutional patriotism, although it originated in German debates, succeeded in European debates as a transnational (re)creation. Indeed, far from being the exact translation of a German concept, it was increasingly reinterpreted by French and Belgian scholars, who decisively contributed to shaping its European meaning. Secondly, the European uses of the concept were co-produced by political and academic actors. We observed constant connections between academic debates and political controversies. This was most of all observed at the European level, where political actors need concepts to think and legitimise the political process, whereas scholars need both political support for their work and the legitimacy given by the political uses of their concepts. First a national controversial concept, constitutional patriotism was gradually used as a political watchword in the

very non-national context of European institutions and finally depicted as a descriptive concept by its academic defenders.

Table 1: Circulation Processes in the European Career of Constitutional Patriotism

Type of circulation	*From one academic arena to another*	*From an academic arena to a national political one*	*From an academic arena to European political one*
Illustration	Introduction in France	Maastricht debate (France)	Political uses in the European Parliament
Process	Theorization	Politicization	Technicization
Mediation arenas	Academic institutions	General reviews, newspapers	Border-lands (think tanks, expert committees)

First, constitutional patriotism, although it originated in German debates, succeeded in European debates as a transnational (re)creation. Indeed, far from being the exact translation of a German concept, it was increasingly reinterpreted by French and Belgian scholars, who decisively contributed to shaping its European meaning. Secondly, the European uses of the concept were co-produced by political and academic actors. We observed constant connections between academic debates and political controversies. This was most of all observed at the European level, where political actors need concepts to think and legitimise the political process, whereas scholars need both political support for their work and the legitimacy given by the political uses of their concepts. First a national controversial concept, constitutional patriotism was gradually used as a political watchword in the very non-national context of European institutions and finally depicted as a descriptive concept by its academic defenders.

This suggests that the conceptual innovation in the EU's political discourse results from transnational and political-academic mobilisations rather than linear convergence around a predefined set of values or concepts. This conclusion is in line with other works on the history of European integration, which have especially underlined the constant implication of academics in the making of the concept of a 'community of law', for instance Vauchez (2015). Rather than identifying an 'essence' of the EU, this approach therefore points out the diversity of processes and actors who contribute to the production of its meaning. But the case of constitutional patriotism invites further investigation of the contemporary making of a European political discourse and of the 'protean' set of concepts – e.g. 'governance' or 'European citizenship' (Shore 2011; Tsaliki 2007) – used to discuss the EU today.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The opposite may, of course, be true as well: concepts first used by politicians may enter the vocabulary and tools of scholars. Given the purpose of this paper, though, I will only discuss the former case. Nevertheless, I precisely hope to point out the complexity of the relations between both kinds of discourse.

[2] Based on Google Ngram data, which, according to its developers, represents several million books, nearly 4 per cent of all books ever published. (Michel and Alii 2011)

[3] Ernst Nolte received a PhD in philosophy at the University of Freiburg in 1952, before specialising in the history of fascism. He taught from 1973 to 1991 at the Free University of Berlin.

[4] Born in 1938, M. Stürmer received a PhD in political history at the University of Marburg in 1965. He taught from 1973 to 2003 at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. He was during the 1980s an adviser to the conservative Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

[5] Jean-Marc Ferry was born in 1946. He is one of the main early translators and commentators of Habermas in France. He taught philosophy at the Free University of Brussels for years and has actively pleaded for a more integrated Europe.

[6] To take but one example, the piece 'Why Europe needs a Constitution', was first published in German ('Warum braucht Europa eine Verfassung?', *Die Zeit* June 28, 2001 and *Zeit der Übergänge* (2001), before being translated into English (*New Left Review* Sep-Oct. 2001, and *Time of Transitions* 2004), French (*Cahiers de l'Urmis* no. 7 June 2001), Swedish (*Arena* no. 6, 2001) and Danish (*Politiken* September 9, 2001). The text was presented in different lectures in in Paris, Rome, Madrid, Warwick and Hamburg, in 2000-2001.

[7] Justine Lacroix was born in 1970. After graduating Sciences Po (Paris) she worked for the European think-tank Notre Europe, and defended a PhD in philosophy at the Free University of Brussels under the supervision of Ferry in 2003.

[8] Paul Magnette was born in 1971 in Belgium. Before becoming a prominent member of the Belgian Socialist Party, he received a PhD in philosophy at the Free University of Brussels in 1999, where he later directed the Centre for European Studies.

[9] Emphasis added.

[10] See for instance his Leuven Conference on 'Democracy, Solidarity and the European Crisis', and the introduction delivered by Herman Von Rompuy (Leuven, 04/26/2013). http://habermas-rawls.blogspot.fr/2013/04/. [Last accessed: 07/15/2017.]

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Research Article

The Sino-European Solar Panel Dispute: China's Successful Carrot and Stick Approach Towards Europe

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Abstract

This article considers the Sino-European solar panel conflict, which occurred between 2012 and 2014. The article takes a particular interest in how China and Europe coped with the trade dispute, which arose after several European solar companies filed a complaint in the European Commission accusing the Chinese of unfair trade practices (i.e. dumping and illegal subsidising). An analysis of the internal and external challenges that were decisive for the outcome of the trade conflict is illustrated, after which the article makes some conclusions about the concept of economic statecraft, how it is applied and on the effectiveness of European economic diplomacy in the changing Sino-European trade relationship.

Keywords

In 2007, the Chinese state designated the solar power sector a pillar industry, hoping that China would become a global leader and exporter of green technologies (Cleantech Scandinavia n.d). And it did. In less than a decade, China became a huge competitor for Europe, which witnessed a rapid increase of Chinese solar equipment imports and saw its position as solar power pioneer of the world seriously challenged. A complaint of several European solar power equipment manufacturers on Chinese unfair trade practices in the industry led the European Commission to initiate an anti-dumping and an anti-subsidy case on Chinese solar equipment, which resulted in one of the most intense trade disputes in the Sino-European economic history (Tenuta 2015: 21).

The outcome of the trade conflict – a so-called price undertaking between China and Europe – is widely regarded as a victory for China (Bollen, De Ville and Orbie 2016: 286). The influx of Chinese solar panels was reduced. However, rather than the result of the MIP (minimum import price), this reduction was a consequence of the withdrawal of the European energy certificates that had triggered European demand for solar power in the first place. The MIP did not achieve a recovery in Europe's competitiveness in the sector and turned out to be at the expense of jobs in the downstream part of the solar energy sector. Furthermore, even if the MIP was intended to confine the application of unfair trade practices, several Chinese solar panel suppliers managed to keep on exporting their equipment under the MIP by using different loopholes between 2013 and 2016. Taking these considerations into account, the question remains why the solar panel dispute resulted in such a contested and inefficient measure.

This article clarifies how both external as well as internal factors were decisive for this outcome. China used a well-thought out strategy through which it was able to play upon divisions within the EU and influence the Union's foreign policy behaviour in the solar panel case (Mastanduno 2008: 226). On the one hand, China answered the European Commission's accusations of unfair Chinese trade practices with threats and retaliation. On the other hand, Chinese officials were able to exploit the competition for Chinese investment between the European member states, facing severe monetary pressure due to the financial crisis (Hanemann & Huotari 2016: 2).

Still, China's carrot and stick strategy might have proved unsuccessful were it not for the internal fragmentation between the European member states, divisions between the member states and the European Commission and the different interests within the European solar energy sector. Due to the Union's particular nature, which diverges from that of a state and which is recognisable by a constant tug-of-war between competing priorities and interests, it turned out to be particularly challenging for the EU to cope with China's application of economic statecraft (Smith 2001: 789/800; Garcia 2014).

The article contributes to the literature in two ways. First, by analysing both the internal and the external factors (i.e. the multiple and diverging interests within the EU and the different tools of economic statecraft applied by China) that were decisive for the outcome of the trade conflict, it diverges from existing studies on trade conflicts, which often only provide a partial view (Bollen, De Ville and Orbie 2016; Plasschaert 2016; Eckhardt 2013; Evenett 2013). Second, within the study of economic statecraft, there exists a bias towards economic sanctions or negative coercion in investigating the application of economic statecraft by a nation (Morgan 1999; Pape 1997; Smith 1996). As the article will illustrate, positive coercion – or measures to attract and convince - can be equally useful to influence a foreign actor's policy behaviour (Reilly 2016: 194; Mastanduno 2008: 235-236).

This study mainly relies on qualitative research. The analysis of the interests of the Chinese government to develop a strong and internationally competitive solar energy industry are based on policy papers and scientific literature. This is complemented by data concerning economic profit, trade and employment, which illustrate the global interests of China's solar energy companies and their sudden entrance onto the European area. The Sino-European solar panel trade dispute is a recent phenomenon. Consequently, scientific literature on the issue is almost non-existent. To clarify what happened, open sources, such as articles from newspapers like *The Financial Times* and *The Guardian* are used. China's official stance in the trade dispute is assembled from various public statements by Chinese officials, such as Li Keqiang, and ministries, such as the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. These statements can be found in open sources, such as *The People's Daily*, *The Financial Times* and *The South China Morning Post* and on the websites of the institutions concerned.

Six additional in-depth interviews were conducted in order to fill possible gaps in the analysis. An interview was done with a representative of Aegis Europe, an industry alliance representing 30 key industries aiming to promote manufacturing investment, innovation, jobs and growth in Europe and which supports the application of European tariffs on the import of Chinese solar equipment sold at a price lower than the MIP. A second interview was undertaken with a representative of Solar Power Europe, a member-led association, which aims to shape the regulatory environment and enhance business opportunities for solar power in Europe. Contrary to Aegis Europe, Solar Power Europe never supported the implementation of tariffs and still advocates their removal (Smith 2016). A third interview was done with a representative of a Belgian company that engineers, installs and monitors photovoltaic installations and thus prefers the free flow of cheap Chinese equipment onto the European market.[i] An interview with a Commission official, active at the Directorate General of Trade, was performed. This interviewee can be considered a representative of the view of the Commission, which has been in favour of the Sino-European settlement. A fifth interview was conducted with a representative of Global Bod Group, a Baltic group that manages several companies of high technologies, some of which are active in the solar industry. A final interview was done with Safe (Solar Alliance for Europe), a network of companies and associations active in the solar energy sector that rejects the application of measures against the import of Chinese solar equipment (Lee 2016).

The rest of the article unfolds in three sections. The first section explores the theory on economic statecraft and European economic diplomacy. This is followed by a short description of how China was able to dethrone Europe as the major solar equipment provider of the world. An analysis of the Sino-European solar panel conflict follows, after which some concluding remarks are made, which summarise and hark back to the theoretical debate of the first section.

ECONOMIC STATECRAFT: DEFINITION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Michael Mastanduno, statecraft can be described as 'the use of policy instruments to satisfy the core objectives of nation-states in the international system' (Mastanduno 1998: 826). While it has not always been the case, most scholars within the field of International Relations acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of statecraft, stressed by writers like Staley (1935), Hirschman (1980) and Baldwin (1985). Statecraft is not confined to the application of military instruments to satisfy military objectives, but can involve different types of instruments for a range of objectives (Staley 1935; Morgenthau 1975: 56; Hirschman 1980; Baldwin 1985: 21; Mastanduno 1998: 831).

The contributions of writers like Keohane and Nye (1997) additionally affected ideas on statecraft. They questioned the wisdom of making a rigid distinction and hierarchy between low politics (economic affairs) and high politics (military affairs), arguing we had turned to an era of complex interdependence, recognisable by a high level of complexity among actors, issues and flows, in which the importance of economic policies and economic statecraft had risen, while military force, which traditional IR scholars used to perceive as the dominant source of power, often only played (and plays) a minor role (Keohane & Nye 1997: 19/22-27; Morgenthau 1975: 56).

In recent years, the literature on economic statecraft has been growing significantly. Numerous writers have explored how political leaders try to exert influence in pursuit of foreign policy objectives through the use of economic resources (Huffbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg 1990; Smith 1996; Pape 1997; Drury 1998; Morgan 1999; Dashti-Gibson, Davis and Radcliff 2002; Drezner 2003; Lacy & Niou 2004; Morris 2010). However, when taking a closer look at this abundance of research, it becomes apparent that positive economic statecraft has received relatively little attention in the political science literature. As Baldwin (1971: 21-22) puts it: 'In discussing the role of sanctions in power relations, the pens of political scientists often slip towards negative sanctions, and almost never slip towards positive sanctions'. This bias is mirrored in how Daniel W. Drezner defines economic statecraft (Drezner 2003: 643): 'The threat or act by a sender government or governments to disrupt economic exchange with the target state, unless the target acquiesces to an articulated demand'.

As Michael Mastanduno claims, and as will become clear throughout the case study in this article, positive coercion – or measures to attract and convince - can be an equally useful means of economic statecraft and therefore should not be neglected when analysing the outcome of a dispute or a negation procedure (Reilly 2016: 194; Mastanduno 2008: 224/227; Baldwin 1985: 42-43). This is not to say that negative coercion is irrelevant. As Mastanduno rightly stresses: 'Economic pain may force the target government directly to reconsider its behavior or may create political divisions within the government which lead to policy change' (2008: 228). Still, the art is to combine positive and negative coercion to such an extent that the coerced power has little option left than to compromise. The following case study illustrates how China was able to apply such a carrot and stick strategy.

Within the field of positive economic statecraft, a second important distinction should be made. While positive tools of economic statecraft can be applied in order to trigger an immediate change in

policy behaviour (this is referred to as tactical linkage, carrots or specific positive linkage), a second type of positive statecraft, (the so-called general positive linkage, long-term engagement or structural linkage) is another way of reconfiguring the balance of political interests within the counterpart. In this case, the sanctioning state expects that sustained, long-term economic engagement with the target state eventually achieves the desired transformations in the latter's behaviour (Mastanduno 2008: 235; Mastanduno 2000: 304). This deserves a mention as the solar panel case study demonstrates how Chinese statecraft is not confined to short term economic incentives but also involves long-term promises and projects, which steadily mould member states' positions on Europe's trade policy.

To give an example, from the start of the solar panel conflict, Germany was not prepared to start a fight with China over solar power material (Chaffin 2013a). Rather than a consequence of specific Chinese economic triggers, this reluctance is a result of what has been called Germany's 'special relationship' with China, which had emerged over the last decade. As Kundnani and Parello-Plesner mention, this kind of economic connectivity implies the risk that a country like Germany puts its bilateral relationship with China before the defense of the European Union's strategic interests, which in turn opens the door for Beijing to treat Berlin as a proxy for Brussels (Kundnani and Parello-Plesner 2012: 2).

This discussion about tactical and structural linkage suggests that there can be a fine line between 'conscious acts of coercion', or rather less conscious, even direct consequences of an increased level of economic interdependence (Smith 2014: 41; Meunier 2013). While researchers like Knorr deny that 'purely economic exchange' involves politics or power, examples in the past have shown that economic transactions can be considered attempts to influence (Knorr 1975: 311; Baldwin 1985: 44). Whether the Sino-German interdependence has been consciously created by China is beyond the scope of this article. However, that the Chinese are well aware of the vulnerability created by this interdependence and tend to use it for their 'divide and rule' policies is certain (Smith & Xie 2010: 441).

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

There exists a range of papers, articles and books on how a lack of EU cohesiveness often comes at the expense of the EU's bargaining leverage over market access and its ability to shape international norms (Garcia 2014; Meunier 2013; Fox & Godement 2009; Kerremans 2006; Meunier & Nicolaidis 1999). This difficulty is inherently connected with the assumption that the EU has to provide some 'state functions', such as mustering coherent commercial strategies, but has to cope with an internal structure which strongly differs from that of a state (Smith 2011: 196). Consisting of 28 European member states and three different institutions (the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission), it hardly needs saying that finding a general consensus on trade policy within the EU is a hard endeavour.

The Lisbon Treaty was designed to tackle exactly this shortcoming as it promises to overcome the institutional divisions that have been a stumbling block when it comes to Europe's strategic diplomacy (European Union 2007; Meunier 2013: 997; Woolcock 2011: 8). However, evidence has shown that implementing the treaty has been easier said than done and the internal divisions, for example between the European Council and the Commission, continue to stand in the way of unified European external policies (Smith 2014: 39; Woolcock 2011: 4; Smith & Xie 2010: 444). Moreover, the issue is not confined to fragmentation between the different member states' interests and between the different European institutions. In the area of trade politics, the EU is confronted by the complexities of relationships between importers and exporters, producers and consumers (Smith

2011: 195). As the case study below indicates and similarly to comparable anti-dumping and anti-subsidy cases, such divisions within the European industry hence complicate Europe's economic diplomacy further (Smith 2014: 43; Eckhardt 2013; Evenett 2013). Moreover, these internal tensions are exacerbated by the 2008 financial crisis, which was not only a major economic blow for Europe but also intensified competition with the BRICS, China in particular (Smith 2013: 12-17). As Smith and Xie mention (2010: 445): 'The changing structure of the global arena, recognized by the rise of some emerging powers, can complicate the performance of unified and strong European economic diplomacy'.

The traditional definition of an 'international actor' is an entity that is able to formulate purposes and make decisions (Holslag 2011: 310). A strategic actor is assumed to be monolithic, possessing a unified set of preferences and hence capable of producing unified actions (Smith 1998: 80). Every situation in which Europe fails to act as a mature strategic actor is an opportunity for China and its companies to turn the European weakness to their advantage. In this sense, it needs to be reiterated that both internal as well as external challenges have to be taken into account in the following solar panel case's assessment. On the one hand, the Union's inability to speak with one voice provides an avenue for those who might want to play upon its internal divisions, thus weakening the EU's position in the world political economy. On the other hand, the fragmentation within the EU reflects external partner's strategies. As already mentioned by some scholars and as demonstrated by the following case study, the external and internal issue go hand in hand. Therefore, a distinction between them no longer holds in many areas of commercial policy-making (Smith 2011: 192).

CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON EUROPE

As early as 1996, China launched several electrification projects to introduce the use of solar energy in the country (Zhao, Wan and Yang 2014: 180). Nevertheless, it was only from 2007 on (when the European demand for solar energy boomed as a result of different market-stimulating measures launched by European countries from 2000 onwards) that the Chinese government included the industry in its list of strategic emerging industries (SEI) and spurred up the development of photovoltaic power (Zhang, Andrews-Speed, Zhao and He 2013: 3; MIIT 2014, 2010). China saw the growing European market as a perfect outlet for the huge amounts of solar cells and modules of which Chinese manufacturers could not dispose in China. This resulted in export-orientated government policies which made the export value of Chinese PV products increase at a tremendous speed between 2008 and 2011, when the export value peaked at 35.82 billion USD (Zhao, Wan and Yang 2014: 183).

One consequence of these export-orientated state policies, combined with stimulated western demand, was that in 2006 and 2009 respectively, China sold 97.5 and 96 per cent of its solar modules to foreign buyers. Considering its solar cell production, China was able to increase its global market share from 16 to 60 per cent between 2006 and 2012 (Yu, Popiolek and Geoffron 2014: 9-10). The number of Chinese jobs in the sector more than doubled between 2008 and 2011 and the price of solar systems took a tremendous dive of around 70 per cent. In 2015, the world's top ten solar module manufacturers still covered 52 per cent of the global market share and included seven Chinese companies, which together covered 44 per cent (Statista 2015).

As Chart 1 illustrates, Europe was barely able to profit from the world's rising demand for photovoltaic devices between 2007 and 2014. China on the other hand, climbed its way to the top in no time. The chart also shows that, even after the economic crisis and the western anti-dumping cases against China in 2013, the country was able to consolidate its global market shares with a value of more than 19 billion USD in 2014 (Clover 2014).
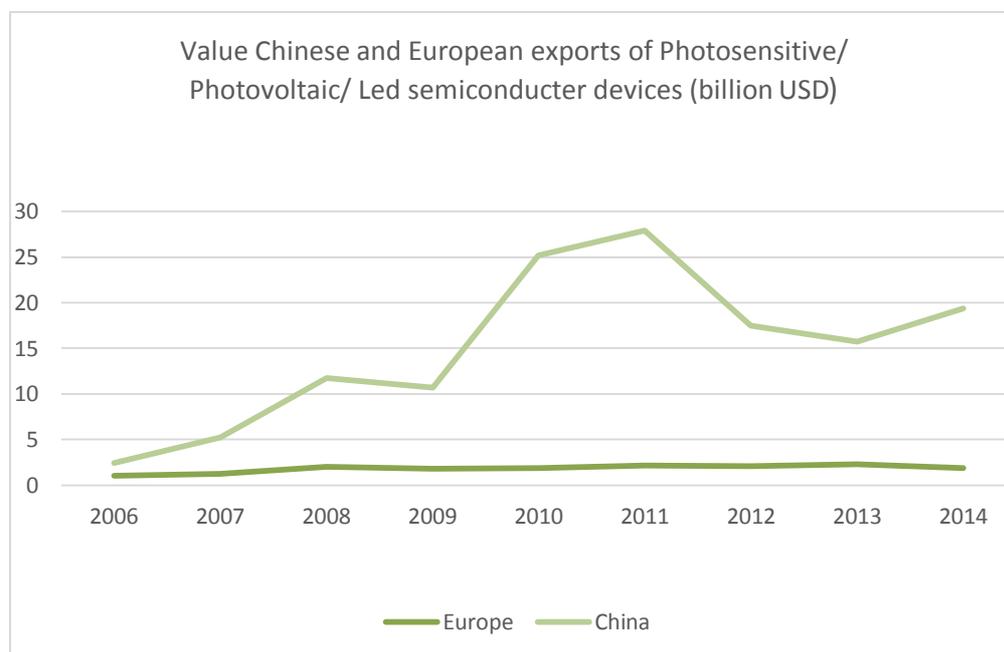
Chart 1: European and Chinese exports of photosensitive/photovoltaic/LED semiconductor devices

Source: Comtrade 2016.

The mass entry of Chinese solar products into overseas markets had consequences for Western solar producers, unable to offer the low prices that their Chinese counterparts provided. Between 2009 and 2012, forty European solar product firms became insolvent (EU Prosun 2012, 2013). Whereas in 2008, the European solar industry accounted for 179,000 jobs, only 109,000 of them were left in 2014. As demonstrated in Chart 2, in Germany especially - the country that was considered *the* solar energy pioneer of the world (Plasschaert 2016: 3) - the sector suffered a severe dent, as 80 per cent of the German jobs provided by the industry disappeared between 2008 and 2014 (Solar Power Europe 2015: 12).

The Eurocrisis forced European officials to withdraw the generous FIT policies (feed-in tariff) that had created the European demand for solar energy equipment in the first place. At the same time, China kept on speeding up its production of solar products. As a representative of Aegis mentioned (interview Aegis May 2016): 'The thing is that Chinese solar companies can almost not go bankrupt as China's state banks keep on granting them loans'. This exacerbated China's already existing problem of excess capacity. The increased pressure on the European solar panel market eventually moved some European solar energy companies to raise the alarm over the way Chinese unfair trade practices were disturbing competition conditions and upsetting the balance in the market.

Chart 2: Jobs in the European PV sector in 2008 and in 2014
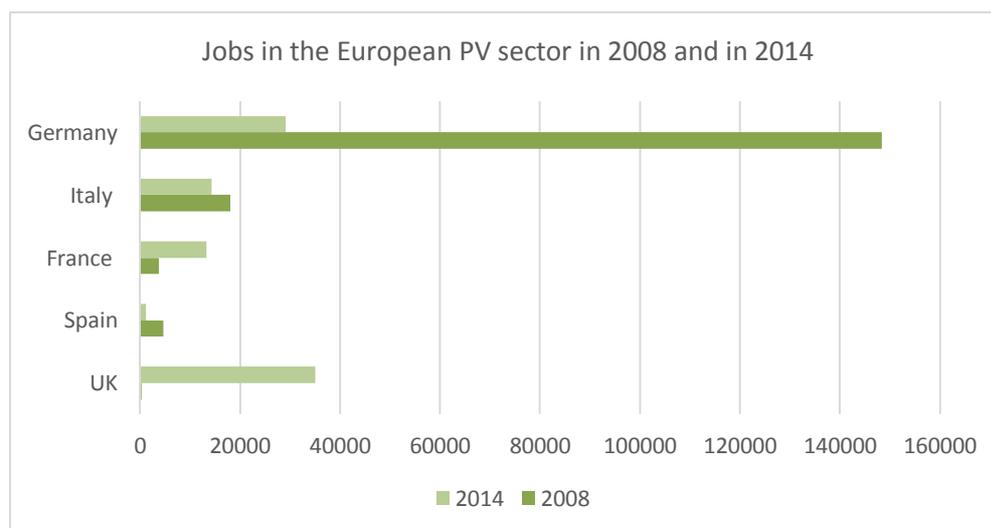
Source: Solar Power Europe 2015: 12.

THE SINO-EUROPEAN SOLAR PANEL DISPUTE

On June 25 2012, several EU solar groups, led by Germany's Solar World, lodged a complaint at the European Commission against potential Chinese dumping of solar panels onto the European market (Chaffin 2012a). The argument went that China was able to capture more than 80 per cent of Europe's market in less than six years due to dumping practices and illegal subsidisation of Chinese solar panel manufacturers by the Chinese government (Bondaz 2013). Given the high amount of insolvencies suffered in Germany in 2012, the complaint was initiated mainly by German producers. Germany's Q-Cells and Conergy went bankrupt and Solar World lost around 500 million EUR in 2012 (Chaffin 2012b, 2013b).

On September 6 2012, the Commission accepted the complaint and decided to start an investigation. That the stakes were high - the value of Chinese exports of these products to the EU had reached 21 billion EUR in 2011 - became very clear when Li Keqiang, then Prime Minister of China, reacted as follows 'We don't agree with this decision and emphatically reject it' (Kirschbaum 2013). Chinese officials also anticipated the solar case by warning that they would launch their own investigation into polysilicon, an important product to manufacture photovoltaic cells. This move was especially targeted at German suppliers for whom China is an important costumer. In 2011, China imported European polysilicon worth 870 million USD (Hook 2012).

However, Karel De Gucht, former Commissioner of Trade, was convinced to maintain a firm stance in the issue. He stated: 'It's clear that the dumping of these Chinese solar panels is harming the European solar panel industry. This jeopardizes at least 25,000 current jobs'. He recommended that such products should face duties averaging 47 per cent (Peel & Chaffin 2013). Moreover, the Commissioner was not planning on giving in very easily as he said of the Chinese: 'They are not going to impress me by putting pressure on member states' (in Evenett 2013). As the price at which Chinese solar panels were sold in Europe lay 88 per cent too low, the Commission decided to impose provisional duties from June 2013 on. Initially, they would average 11.8 per cent, but after two months the duties would rise to 47.6 per cent if no compromise with China was agreed upon by then (Walker 2013). As mentioned by a Commission official (interview Commission official May 2016):

'This arrangement was necessary to give the Chinese the time to come up with a proposal for what they always want, namely a settlement'.

Nevertheless, it soon became clear that, whereas the Chinese may not have been able to impress the Commissioner, they certainly impressed several national capitals, especially when China's threatening language was followed by action. The Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced that it would launch an official trade probe into European polysilicon (Hook 2012). Wacker Chemie, Europe's biggest polysilicon supplier immediately pleaded to Brussels to hold fire. Rudolf Staudigl, Wacker's Chief Executive, stated: 'If tariffs are implemented, Europe will be damaged more than China' (Chaffin 2013c). Phillipe Rösler, Germany's Economy Minister backed this statement and urged Mr De Gucht to negotiate a solution. From the start of the solar case, Germany was not prepared to start a fight with China (Chaffin 2013a). Prior to the initial Commission investigation in 2012, Angela Merkel did not hide her reluctance to support a trade action against China. She communicated the German position during a delegation to Beijing, which was aimed at confirming the Sino-German 'special relationship' and which resulted in 18 bilateral agreements (Hille & Chaffin 2012). The Chinese announcement about the polysilicon case accelerated German opposition in the panel case.

But China did not only target the opponents of European countermeasures. China launched a well-targeted probe on the imports of European wine (FT 2013; Mofcom 2013). Moreover, an editorial in the People's Daily, the Chinese Communist party's mouthpiece, warned Europeans that China still had 'plenty of cards to play' (Phillips 2013). No sooner said than done, China threatened an official complaint over luxury cars imported from the EU, again pointing the gun at Germany. A representative of Solar Power Europe commented (interview Solar Power Europe May 2016):

> Anti-dumping is phenomenally political. If the Chinese want to get the attention of Angela Merkel, all they have to do is pull out the *car card*. While the German guys on the desk wanted a vote in favour of measures, a call came through from Merkel saying that they should vote against the measures. That is how political cases like these get.

As European carmakers (most of them German) exported almost 500,000 passenger cars to China in 2012, the European car industry association pressed the Commission to refrain from imposing tariffs: 'Clearly it is in all interests that an amicable solution to current trade tensions can be found', the industry group said in a statement (Foy & Fontanella-Khan 2013).

Besides using sticks, China also used carrots to turn different member states against the Commission. At the time, China's GDP was still growing by nine percent annually while Europe suffered from severe financial problems, giving the Chinese an additional advantage in the issue (Cleantech Scandinavia n.d). Many European governments were rather focused on attracting lucrative investments and on helping their constituents to win commercial contracts in China than on the principle of a united EU trade policy (Chaffin 2013d). The agreements that were made during the Sino-German meetings in 2012 are just one of the many examples. 2011 was the first year that Chinese outward foreign direct investment to Europe increased at a tremendous speed; whereas in 2010, China invested around 2 million EUR in the EU, by 2012, this figure rose to 1 billion EUR. The national capitals badly needed this kind of money and did not have the stomach to fight China on the solar panel issue (Hanemann & Huotari 2016: 4).

In 2011, China launched the 16+1 platform, a new forum for cooperation with Central and East European countries (CEEC), which includes eleven EU member states. In 2012, former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao recommended twelve proposals to promote China–Central Eastern European (CEE) economic cooperation and friendship, Beijing pledged 10 billion USD to fund projects under

the China and Central and Eastern European Countries initiative. EU member states contest with one another to attract foreign investment. In pursuing this goal, they often override one of the flagship objectives of the EU, which is the development of a market-led, yet rule-based global economic governance system. Hence, the internal competition for Chinese investments creates the risk that the eleven countries in the 16+1 forum, also members of the EU, form a pro-China lobby and thus influence policymaking in Brussels (Fallon 2015: 145). A representative of Global Bod Group mentioned (interview Global Bod Group June 2016): 'We know that Chinese ambassadors went to local politicians and stake-holders to understand and influence a country's position regarding the solar case. This has been communicated to our industry association by several politicians in Central and Eastern Europe'. A Commission official confirmed (interview Commission official 2016): 'China worked on the member states and some member states had their own convictions, which influenced the Commission's decision in the solar panel case'.

Eventually, China had been able to convince 18 out of the then 27 member states to oppose the tariffs. The Commission found itself under pressure by the Council of Ministers, which was, at that time, able to reject final tariffs with a simple majority. As a Commission official confirmed (interview Commission official May 2016): 'It was a matter of political rationale to say that, in order to avoid that the Council defeats the entire case, it is better to have a price undertaking in place'. Moreover, this pressure was increased by the downstream sector, which did not welcome final duties either. As a representative of Safe mentioned (interview Safe June 2016):

> Safe is against dumping and illegal subsidisation and supports each country's right to protect itself against unlawful business conduct. In the case of solar, Safe appeals to European politicians to act upon the global, European and national renewable energy and climate protection goals and support solar energy.

A Europe Solar World member confirmed (interview Europe Solar World May 2016): 'Tariffs do not create new jobs in the upstream sector but on top of that put the jobs in the downstream part of the value-chain at risk'.

Hence, the possibility of imposing a MIP – an undertaking which was proposed by the Chinese government and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce two days before the provisional measure of 47 per cent between effective - rather than tariffs became the most probable outcome of the case. Mr De Gucht initially claimed to set this MIP at 58 cents per kwh, but the Chinese insisted on accepting no more than 50 cents (Chaffin 2013e). At the end of July 2013, an amicable solution was agreed upon. 90 Chinese solar companies agreed not to sell their products in the bloc below a price floor of 56 cents per watt. The agreement covered up to seven gigawatts of production of the EU market and the measure would remain in force until 2015. China was clearly satisfied with the agreement and immediately put its retaliatory cases on hold, which sent relief throughout Europe (Chaffin 2013f).

THE MIP, A CHINESE VICTORY

Nevertheless, the Sino-European settlement provoked outrage among several associations. Milan Nitzschke, EU ProSun's President stated: 'This agreement is not a solution but a capitulation' (Chaffin 2013g). A Commission official explained how the effects on the market of the MIP are still under investigation (interview Commission official May 2016): 'Current figures show how the negative spiral of the prices has stopped and that there are signs of consolidation on the EU Market. However, a restoration of competitiveness did not occur'. Module sales of the EU solar industry have decreased significantly (1.7 GW in 2014/15 compared to 2.4 GW in 2012) and studies have shown that European module manufacturing capacity reduced by almost 20 per cent between 2014 and

2015. Since 2013, further insolvencies of Union producers have occurred (ISE 2016; interview Safe June 2016).

But, as Karel De Gucht claimed, the case was not only about solar panels. It was considered a test of whether the EU is able to maintain a unified front behind a trade policy orchestrated by Brussels, even in the face of intense national lobbying by Beijing that heightened fears of a costly backlash. If this was indeed the case, the EU clearly failed this test. The initial idea of Europe to stamp out unfair trade practices was not carried out, as the MIP was a watered-down version of the Commission's intention to pressure Beijing to dismantle a system of dumping and illegal government subsidies. The divisions among the member states left Europe with no option than either imposing a weak measure, to which each of the member states could subscribe, or ending up with no measure at all. A Commission official confirmed (interview Commission official May 2016): 'The Commission *knew* that if it did not agree with the Chinese to have a price undertaking, there was a risk that there would be no measure at all'.

It is clear that there was one player who benefited from this case; China. First of all, it was able to maintain its market share in the EU. This is not to say China did not suffer from the shrinking European market as a consequence of the removal of European subsidies. As Chart 3 demonstrates, the withdrawal of green energy certificates in Europe in 2011 had a chilling effect on Chinese exports to the Union. Still, China was able to remain the dominant player in the European market and especially in the global market. As a representative of a European PV installation firm mentioned (interview representative May 2016): 'There are no new European entrants in the solar panel market because nobody is crazy enough to compete against these Chinese solar giants'. Internationally, it gives China the possibility to provide for the globally rising demand of solar energy without facing many competitors.

Chart 3: European imports of Chinese photosensitive/photovoltaic/LED semiconductor devices.
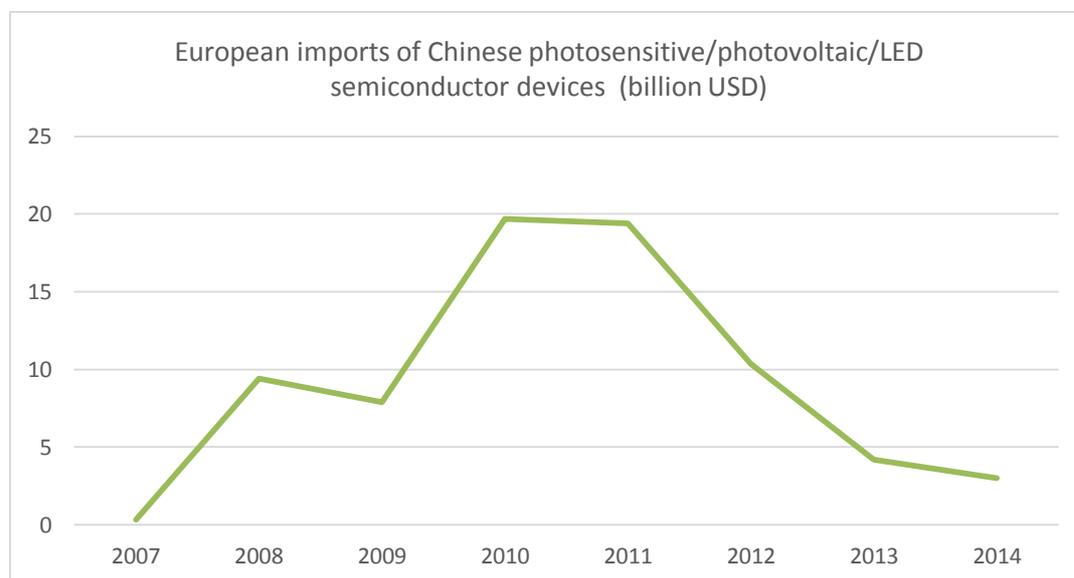
Source: Comtrade 2016.

Second, even if the MIP was imposed to stop the Chinese from selling at destructive prices, it remains an enormous challenge to enforce such a measure, a Commission official explained (interview Commission official May 2016): 'It is very difficult to control whether the material is indeed sold at the correct price or whether, in reality, a lower price, a retransfer or a reimbursement on a certain service is offered by the Chinese'. A representative of a European PV installation firm

confirmed (interview representative May 2016): 'It soon became apparent that the Chinese found ways to by-pass the MIP by offsetting the increased cost through some kind of hidden compensation'.

By exporting through third countries like Malaysia and Taiwan, Chinese firms succeeded in bringing in material without having to take into account European measures. Chart 4 shows how Malaysian and Taiwanese exports increased very quickly from the moment the MIP was imposed (Eurostat 2016). In 2015, the Commission imposed additional measures to sanction these practices (Beetz 2015). Still, this can be considered shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. Between 2014 and 2016, several solar panel companies committed fraud, covering hundreds of millions of euros (Clerix 2016). The European firm representative explained how his company now works with material imported from Turkey, at a price far below the MIP, provided by Chinese companies (interview representative May 2016).

Chart 4: European imports of Malaysian photosensitive/photovoltaic/LED semiconductor devices.
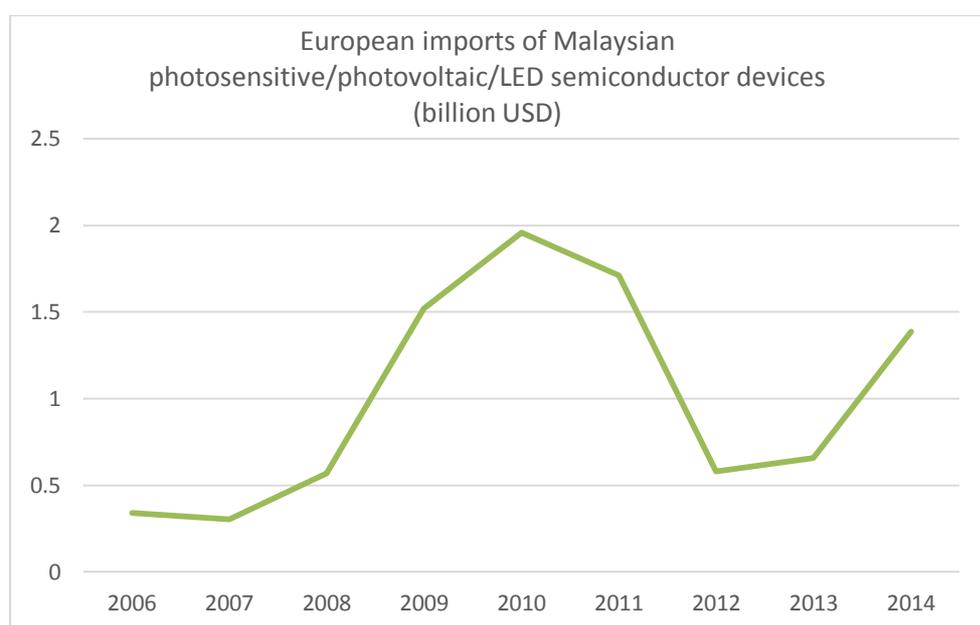
Source: Comtrade 2016.

One of the frequent comments arguing in favour of China offering cheap solar equipment on the European market is that European employment in the sector shifted from making PV panels to installing them. Another argument for cheap Chinese solar panels is that they benefit the European population as it is good for the consumer's purchase power. However, these comments miss the point in four respects. While it is true that the influx of cheap material created a surge in the employment provided by the downstream sector, mirrored by the job creation in the British solar power sector between 2008 and 2014 (Chart 2), this can hardly be called 'a shift' as the gain of jobs in the downstream part of the industry is still small compared with the losses that the upstream part of the sector had to suffer. Second, whereas in the short term the availability of cheap Chinese solar material can be good for the European consumer, the monopolistic position of a handful of (often financially troubled) Chinese solar companies in the world is likely to increase the prices again in the long term. Moreover, the lack of competitive pressure can reduce the appetite for innovation, a factor that is crucial for the further development of an advanced technology industry like the cleantech sector. Third, the argument that cheap material is to the advantage of European consumers does not alter the fact that selling goods for a price far below the market price (i.e. dumping) is not consistent with international trade rules, created to guarantee fair competition

between nations all over the world. Last but not least, being ignorant of dumping and illegal subsidising practices and replacing the local European production base of solar power equipment for the import of Chinese products purely on the basis of price goes against the quest for a more balanced Sino-European trade relationship, which has become an increasingly pressing need within the framework of the Sino-European strategic partnership (Smith & Xie 2010: 439).

CONCLUSION

In 2007, the Chinese government included the solar energy sector in its list of SEIs with the aim of turning China into a global leader in one of the most auspicious and up-and-coming sectors of this era. On the basis of an intensive governmental policy-mix, China surpassed Europe in no time and became the largest producer and market in solar power. While it can be considered an enormous achievement, this development also had a down-side. It resulted in Chinese overreliance on exports to the West and a huge overcapacity of Chinese solar cells and modules, which was exacerbated in 2011 due to the withdrawal of European consumption-motivating subsidies. Prices of solar power equipment tumbled, which led to the disappearance of several European solar panel producers, unable to offer the prices their Chinese counterparts were selling at.

A complaint from several European solar firms against Chinese dumping and illegal subsidising moved the European Commission in 2012 to initiate an official anti-subsidy and anti-dumping case against China, which resulted in one of the most intense Sino-European confrontations so far (Tenuta 2015: 21). While the European Commission was initially convinced to tackle unfair Chinese trade practices, it soon became clear that this would be easier said than done. China used a well-targeted carrot and stick approach to persuade the member states to vote against protective trade measures. A combination of attractive Chinese investments and retaliatory threats convinced 18 out of the then 27 European member states to refrain from supporting the Commission in the solar panel case. As punitive tariffs would have been a no-go for the Council, the remaining options for the Commission were limited and in 2013, a Sino-European price undertaking – based on a proposal from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce - was agreed upon.

The way in which the solar panel case evolved might have been different had it not been for the internal European divisions when it came to coping with the Chinese pragmatism described above. Once the European Commission tried to create a level playing field for the European solar equipment firms, the great heterogeneity in the relations of EU member states with China proved very difficult to reconcile into a unified trade policy. Within the industry there was no consensus either as the upstream and downstream parts of the sector had contradictory preferences when it came to import subsidies against Chinese products. This amalgamation of different interests gave the Commission no choice but to accept China's proposal to impose an amicable price undertaking.

The article contributes to the literature in two ways. Contrary to existing studies on trade conflicts, it analyses both the internal and the external factors (i.e. the multiple and diverging interests within the EU and the different tools of economic statecraft applied by China) that were decisive for the outcome of the trade conflict (Bollen, De Ville and Orbie 2016; Plasschaert 2016; Eckhardt 2013; Evenett 2013). Second, the literature on economic statecraft often remains limited as to whether and how negative economic coercion works. Without underestimating the validity of this scientific work, this case study shows that positive attraction or carrots also play a part in how certain states successfully influence the behaviour of others to get a desired outcome. In his article, *The power of economic sanctions*, Baldwin wonders whether one can influence more flies with honey or vinegar (Baldwin 1971: 19). This case study demonstrates that both methods can be efficient. In fact, combining these strategies can enhance the chance of being able to achieve your goal.

At the pinnacle of the dispute, when the Chinese government threatened to launch retaliatory measures against German polysilicon, Mr Rudolf Staudigl, CEO of the biggest polysilicon producers in Europe said: 'In this trade war, nobody wins' (in Chaffin 2013c). However, this case study comes to a different conclusion. The minimum import price turned out to be a weak and inefficient measure. First of all, the European solar equipment industry was not able to recover, let alone to regain its level of international competitiveness. Second, even if the MIP was intended to put a damper on the Chinese equipment sales in Europe, it seemed rather difficult to enforce it, as China's solar giants soon found several back doors through which they could avoid the measure. Mr Staudigl might have a point when he says that it is difficult to appoint a true winner in the solar panel case – China lost European market share mostly due to the European withdrawal of demand-supportive green energy certificates. But identifying the true loser in the case is less difficult, and it certainly was not China.

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ENDNOTES

[1] This interviewee explicitly requested the name of the company concerned not be mentioned.

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Commentary

Diversified Economic Governance in a Multi-Speed Europe: a Buffer against Political Fragmentation?

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Abstract

As it turns 60, the European Union appears engulfed in a crisis. In response to this, political actors have recently advocated a multi-speed Europe. A metaphor for the central idea is the integration highway: since member states are already moving with different speeds, countries need to be separated into different lanes to avoid a major accident. Although the idea of a multi-speed Europe has been criticised as an abatement of the initial dream of simultaneous European integration, this commentary views it as a realpolitik that will allow for greater flexibility in decision-making at times when a fast response to financial, humanitarian and security challenges is imperative. To illustrate this, a scenario is presented on how a multi-speed Europe policy can be applied within the Eurozone to shape two parallel common currency zones. A meticulous application of the multi-speed Europe principle to the Eurozone could address the shortcomings of the initial monetary integration plan and protect the long-term interests of the continent and beyond.

Keywords

EUROPE IN TROUBLE

As it turns 60, the European Union is in trouble. First the Eurozone debt crisis and then the refugee crisis have tested the effectiveness of the EU's political institutions. Brexit is currently discussed as a symptom of the failure on behalf of European institutions to address these crises effectively (Matthijs 2017). These developments have created uncertainty about the collective future of the European Union. In January 2017, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel articulated this concern, stating: 'It is no longer unthinkable for [the EU] to break apart' (Peet 2017).

Often criticised for inaction, the European Commission was spurred by these recent events to undertake initiatives to contain further centrifugal forces (Camisão 2015). In March 2017, the Commission adopted a white paper that presented five scenarios for the future of the EU (European Commission, 2017). Two of these revolve around the idea of encouraging member states to do more in selected policy areas where 'coalitions of the willing' will emerge, while allowing other member states to do less in areas where they see no added value for their countries. Days after the publication of the white paper, the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Spain met at Versailles and announced their backing to a multi-speed Europe that allows for different levels of integration (De La Baume and Herszenhorn 2017).

In many ways, the discourse on multi-speed Europe is an *a posteriori* acknowledgement of what already exists. In Europe, there are 28 EU member states, 31 in the European Economic Area, 19 in the Eurozone, 26 in Schengen. Supporters argue that if the multi-speed Europe policy is formally endorsed, willing member states can proceed towards a closer integration while more reluctant member states can opt for a slower pace of integration. Opponents warn that a multi-speed Europe policy will entail the disintegration of the EU common legal and institutional framework and may eventually reflect on the geographical integrity of the Union itself. The following dilemmatic questions emerge from the endorsement of multi-speed Europe as a formal EU policy:

1. Is the multi-speed Europe policy compatible with the current EU legal and institutional framework or are new legal and institutional arrangements required?
2. If new arrangements are required, what kind of institutional architecture can ensure effective and legitimate governance?
3. Finally, is it possible to implement a multi-speed Europe policy without jeopardising the political unity of the EU?

The quality of political responses to these questions will shape the future of the Union. This commentary aims to contribute to this timely discussion, starting from a review of the origins of the differentiated European integration debate. Then, it outlines a scenario to show how the multi-speed Europe principle can be applied to the Eurozone. This scenario aims to contribute to the debate on differentiated European integration by demonstrating the implications of the multi-speed Europe policy on the economic governance of the Union.

The idea of a multi-speed Europe has been on the table since at least 1976, when Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans presented a report to his colleagues in the European Council. This stated that the differences between the (then) nine member states were so large that it was impossible to assume that all the intermediate goals of European integration could be reached by all countries at the same time (Tindemans 1976). From the publication of the Tindemans Report in 1976 until the early 1990s, the discussion on differentiated integration remained static (Stubb 1996).

The study of differentiated integration was revitalised in 1994 when the German CDU/CSU party released its controversial Reflections on European Policy proposing the creation of a 'hard core' of EU members that would commit to a faster and deeper integration process (Jacquemin and Sapir 1996). Having to accommodate demands for flexibility in the process of European integration, the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 introduced for the first time a fully-fledged legal device for variable integration geometry[i] within the EU (Philippart and Edwards 1999: 105). Even so, in the final text of the Amsterdam Treaty, the word 'flexibility' was removed, in favour of the term 'closer cooperation', showing a continuing commitment to unified political integration (Philippart and Edwards 1999: 89). The Lisbon Treaty of 2008 went a step further and initiated a number of modalities of differentiated integration. This established several policy opt-outs, including a protocol partially excepting the United Kingdom and Poland from the Charter of Fundamental Rights (Ondarza: 2013).

Until now, differentiated integration has only been used in exceptional cases, as a last resort solution to stalled negotiations or when new special conditions had to be negotiated after a failed ratification. However, while differentiation has long been a reality, it has not been the result of systematic strategic planning. For these reasons, the recent political endorsement of multi-speed Europe as an official EU policy at the highest political level constitutes a turning point for the Union, and its consequences ought to be contemplated.

PROS AND CONS OF A MULTI-SPEED EUROPE

Supporters argue that, with the endorsement of multi-speed Europe as a formal EU policy, willing member states will be allowed to proceed towards a closer integration while more reluctant member states can select a slower pace of integration. The central motto of this policy proposal is that 'one size does not fit all', and entails that countries like Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain will be able to opt out of the first speed if they find that the adoption of strict integration rules is harmful for their economies and populations. The ability of member states to avoid implementing policies to which they object has been a long-standing argument in support of multi-speed Europe (Jensen and Slapin 2012). Ultimately, the endorsement of a multi-speed Europe policy is an

indication that the political mainstream increasingly converges on the necessity to allow for a degree of flexibility and differentiation in order to accommodate intra-European diversity (Koenig 2015).

The policy of a multi-speed Europe encounters significant ideological resistance, especially from those poised to occupy the slower speed lanes (Chryssogelos 2017). Many critics see a risk of dividing the EU into privileged and non-privileged states, into first- and second-class members (Ondarza 2013). Moreover, the political class in several peripheral member states is wary that the implementation of a multi-speed Europe implies the exclusion of their countries from the *acquis communautaire,* i.e. the process of their legislative convergence with the EU core (Stubb 1996). For one thing, the political leadership of countries at the geographical and economic periphery of Europe have used their participation in the first speed of the EU as a token of achievement towards their constituents that they will not easily give away.

At the level of political theory, critics argue that differentiated integration entails an effective abolition of the principle of uniformity in the development of the body of law and institutions of the European Union (Walker 1998). Furthermore, jurists and legal analysts have treated any breaches in jurisdictional uniformity as a compromise of the common legal framework of the Union or *acquis communautaire* (Harmsen 1994) that eventually threatens to erode the legitimacy of EU governance (Shaw 1998). These arguments are countered by a pragmatic narrative by political commentators who claim that, in the long-term, the effects of differentiated arrangements could turn out to be beneficial for European unity. The divisions introduced by differentiation may not be permanent, since initial non-participants may participate at a later stage. In that case, the successful integration accomplished by a smaller core of countries would act as a centripetal force for other EU member states aspiring to join in (Kölliker 2006; Neve 2007).

At the present time, a variation of the differentiated integration theme, multi-speed Europe, is close to becoming a formal EU policy. However, scholars report an 'astonishing' lack of theoretical research and empirical knowledge on the phenomenon of differentiated integration (Holzinger and Schimmelfennig 2012). In an effort to enrich academic discussion on the matter, this commentary starts with a concise chronicle of the Eurozone crisis events that identifies the structural problems associated with the single currency zone. Then, it presents a hypothetical application of the multi-speed Europe policy to the Eurozone core and discusses its impact on the economic governance of the Union.

THE ONGOING EUROZONE DEBT CRISIS AND A PROPOSED SOLUTION

Although the first decade of the common currency was considered a success, when the Eurozone started to absorb the perturbations of the 2007–2008 global financial crisis, the effects were felt unevenly among its members (Cisotta 2013). When the weakest of the Eurozone economies fell into recession, their leaderships were deprived of the possibility to devaluate their way out of the crisis. Bound to a currency union with more advanced economies at the central and north of the continent, their only option to stay competitive was through the painful (and largely tentative) process of internal devaluation (Stockhammer and Sotiropoulos 2014). At that point, the once aspiring monetary unification project started to resemble a political tinderbox.

This section moves beyond the frugal versus prodigal countries narrative, and attempts to explore the deeper causes of the Eurozone crisis. According to Joseph E. Stiglitz (2016), the institutional architecture of the Eurozone was flawed from the start. One of the shortcomings is that it did not provide the necessary fiscal tools to address the integration of economies that were moving with significantly different speeds. A solution for the rising budgetary imbalances within the Eurozone

would have been to proceed towards a common taxation system that would redistribute accumulated wealth from the European north to the European south (Bargain et al. 2013). This would also constitute a firm step towards a closer political integration between the Eurozone member states (Schwarzer 2012). However, a decision for unified taxation system would entail a high political cost for the administrations of the European North (Scicluna 2014). Hence, the fiscal imbalance between North and South continues to deteriorate (see Figure 1).
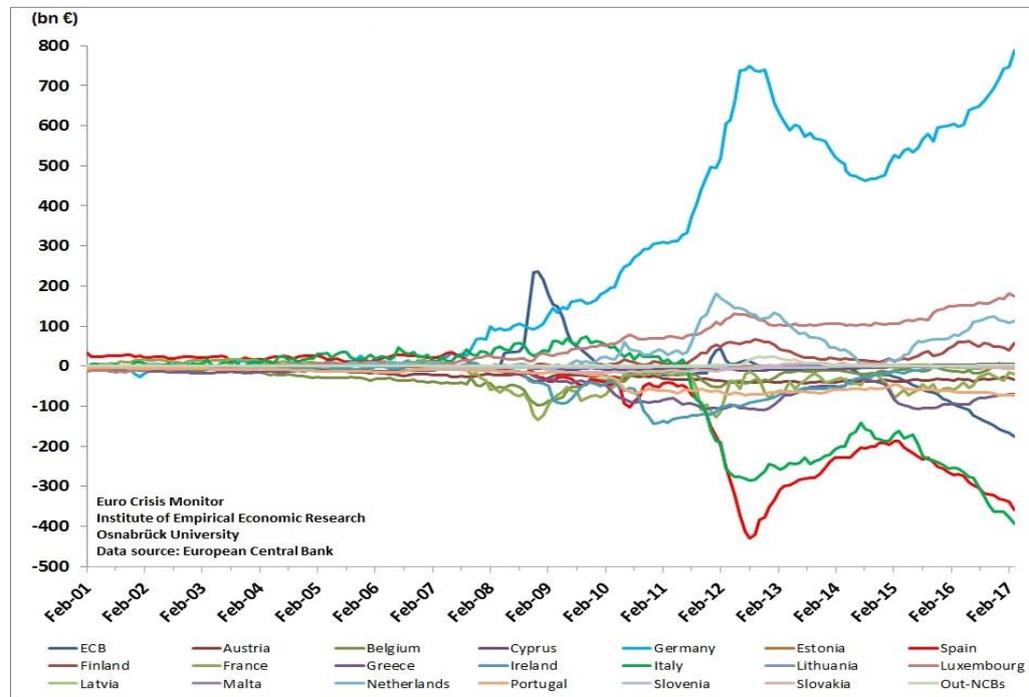
Figure 1: The haves and the have nots of the Eurozone. Balances of the trans-European automated real-time gross settlement express transfer system. Adapted by Steinkamp & Westermann, 2017. Data Source: European Central Bank

LIVING APART TOGETHER: BETTER THAN A BAD MARRIAGE

This commentary presents a scenario of two parallel common currency zones as a heuristic application of the multi-speed Europe policy that may provide a solution to the fiscal divergence discussed above. The scheme is predicated on the consent-based shaping of a two-speed Eurozone out of the current Eurozone of 19 member states. The first speed consists of the most robust economies of the Eurozone, those that are at the receiving end of the European Central Bank transfer system (Figure 1). The second speed consists of the weaker economies of the Eurozone, those that have suffered from the capital outflows and for whom the strong euro currency did not deliver. In this scenario, two different currencies would be introduced, a stronger currency for the European North and a more flexible currency for the European South, that can both act as a protective shield against exosystemic perturbations.

Each zone consists of countries with similar economic performances and fiscal mentalities, which will facilitate their governance and help restart the process of their political and economic unification. At present, several countries in the pipeline to join the Eurozone appear reluctant due to the ongoing political and financial dispute (Zimmermann 2016). A meticulous application of the multi-speed Europe principle starting from the consent based separation of the Eurozone into two influential, populous and peaceful economic zones could act as a carrot for prospective member states. This

draft presents the hypothetical expansion of these parallel economic zones to each include one extra member from the historical boundaries of the Euro-Mediterranean world (Figure 2).
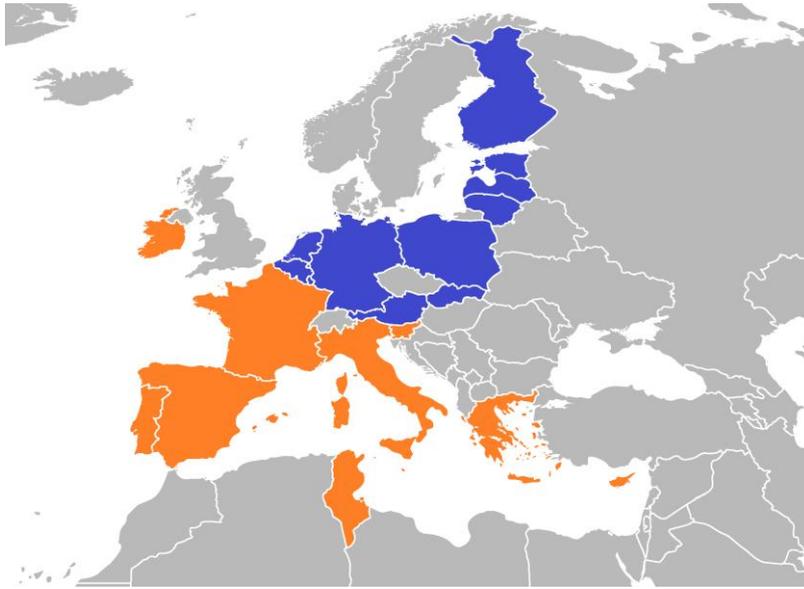
Figure 2: Political map presenting the hypothetical divergence and expansion of the Eurozone as comprised of two parallel common currency zones.

Several advantages could be accrued for participating member states in this scenario. Northern countries will be able to preserve their prosperity and proceed towards true economic integration based on shared social and economic values; the latter could include stringent fiscal policies. In this draft, Poland was added to the Northern parallel economic zone as a geographical bridge between the Baltic countries and Germany. The prospect of participation in a currency union of prosperous countries with robust economic prospects could entice a future Polish government. If that happens, a realistic expectation would be that Poland will be offered to host part of the institutions undertaking the task of monetary integration in an effort to stabilise the unification project and help dissolve historical animosities.

Likewise, the southern parallel economic zone will be able to proceed uninhibited towards monetary and social integration and to address common challenges such as external immigration. The projection of a peaceful vision of prosperity and democracy could keep societies in North Africa away from populist radicalism and help forge a working relationship with Europe. Moreover, the prospect of participating in the European common currency zones could act as an economic and political incentive for struggling countries to complete their democratic transition. Tunisia of 11 million, the only country that is considered a successful example of democratic transition after the so-called Arab Spring, is included in the southern economic zone to illustrate this. This daring political expansion on behalf of the Union serves two purposes: on one hand, it serves as a political and economic incentive for homologous countries to move towards democratisation, and on the other it can assist in addressing other policy challenges facing the EU, such as controlling human trafficking across the Mediterranean Sea.[ii] This would be an elegant way for Europe to demonstrate its friendly intentions towards North Africa at the political level and protect the continent from the dangers of a 'clash of civilizations' ideology. The formal use of a European currency by a non-EU member state could be legally solved after the example of other sovereign territories that use continental or shared currencies (Rose and Engel 2000).

France deserves a special note as it is the southern zone's most economically advanced member. For the French political and business class, the country's participation in a parallel Eurozone of the South

may enable it to reclaim its role in the Euro-Mediterranean region as a 'natural leader' (Šabič and Bojinović 2007). The leading role that France is expected to play in this proposed economic union (largely comparable with Germany's role in the initial Eurozone) will make up for any grievances within the electorate for the country's 'downgrade' to the second speed. Moreover, France will have more manoeuvring space to pursue its linguistic policy in an economic union where close to 85 per cent of the population would be speaking a Romance language as their mother tongue (World Bank 2017).

In the parallel common currency zones scenario, it is crucial that the lessons learned from the financial crisis are applied to render the new scheme sustainable. Three criteria emerge for the viability of a two-speed Eurozone: a) an internal taxation system for each zone that will help member states proceed toward economic integration; b) an open market negotiation of the exchange rates between the parallel currencies, that will preclude fixed currency ratios; and c) the preservation of existing EU institutional infrastructure (currently based in Brussels) that will exert regulatory control and guarantee the unity between the parallel economic zones.

The creation of two parallel economic zones in the presented scenario will not require the duplication of EU institutions, but rather the creation of two separate economic governance frameworks responsible for the implementation of independent fiscal and monetary integration policies. This revised economic governance framework can capitalise on accumulated institutional experience and avoid repeating the blueprint of the Eurogroup, the informal executive body currently in charge of the single currency zone.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Out of a plethora of scenarios for the future of a multi-speed Europe, this commentary has presented one based on the creation of two parallel common currency zones consisting of economically homologous countries. The central argument is that this scenario can induce a centripetal effect with the potential to renew the project of European integration. In the history of the EU, a group of countries moving ahead on a policy area has typically had an exemplary effect on other countries wishing to join in (Neve 2007; Stubb 2002). However, in its present state, the single currency zone has lost its appeal for prospective member states. A meticulous application of the multi-speed Europe principle starting from the consent based separation of the Eurozone into two influential, populous and peaceful economic zones could introduce a renewed, realistic integration vision for European populations and beyond.

The caveat by legal analysts concerning the threat to the integrity of the common European legal framework (or *acquis communautaire*) from differentiated integration policies is not to be taken lightly (Shaw 1998; Harmsen 1994). However, differentiated integration is already a de facto reality, and increasingly recognised by key EU member states as an option for the future of European integration. Moreover, regarding the Eurozone, it is questionable whether the single currency zone's institutional architecture is worth preserving in its present form. The Eurozone regulatory framework has received criticism for dramatically lacking both institutional clarity and democratic control mechanisms (Enderlein and Haas 2015).

The compromise between social, economic and strategic interests necessary for this scenario to be implemented is not easy. There are risks of political divergence associated with the creation of tailor-made institutions (or institutional sub-entities) responsible for the implementation of selected policy areas within the EU. Moreover, a multi-speed Europe policy is certainly an abatement of the initial vision of concurrent European integration. However, since this vision does not currently seem attainable, the next best solution to protect the political unity of the EU may be to allow for the

institutional expression of diverging economic trends already present. There is always time to complete the integration process when conditions will be favourable. However, if the European integration project fails, the alternative may be a vicious strain of nationalism that will revive age-old conflicts and usher the continent into geopolitical obscurity.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The overlapping terms variable integration, variable geometry, two-tier, concentric circles, structural variability have been used in parallel to differentiated integration to describe the strategic implications related with multi-speed Europe policies.

[2] See for example Murphy and Malin (2017) for the democratic transition in Tunisia and Dandashly (2016) for the integration of Tunisia as part of the EU security community.

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Teaching, Learning and the Profession

Remain or Leave? Reflections on the Pedagogical and Informative Value of a Massive Open Online Course on the 2016 UK Referendum on EU Membership

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Abstract

While the British electorate was asked to vote on a simple-sounding question during the UK referendum on EU membership in June 2016, the issues at play were extremely complex. In order to help potential voters make sense of the debate, the authors ran a free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the referendum in the weeks leading up to the vote. The core of the MOOC featured all the common characteristics of this type of course: weekly video lectures, quizzes, question and answer sessions, forums and personal journals which participants could use to share and reflect. To date, little research has been done on the potential for this course format to improve the public's understanding of, and engagement with, EU-related politics and policy issues. Consequently, this paper proposes some initial reflections on the opportunities and challenges presented by this MOOC for fostering broad public engagement with politics in the EU. By considering issues of format, attendance and attrition, participation and power dynamics, we identify the challenges for harnessing MOOCs as a pedagogical and communicative tool for counteracting the EU knowledge deficit.

Keywords

MOOC, Brexit, EU referendum, online learning

INTRODUCTION: WHY A REFERENDUM MOOC? THE EU KNOWLEDGE DEFICIT IN BRITAIN

The UK referendum on EU membership sparked public debate over thorny policy problems, such as international trading arrangements and migration, as well as more abstract questions concerning sovereignty and national identity. That a referendum on the EU could have been a pedagogical opportunity is not in doubt as studies show that British citizens are among the least informed in Europe about how the EU works (Hix 2015; McCormick 2014). It was precisely in this context of a persistent "knowledge deficit" amongst British voters when it comes to EU matters that the authors ran a free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the topic of the EU referendum in the weeks leading up to the vote. This article analyses the effectiveness of this MOOC as a pedagogical tool for counteracting the EU knowledge deficit and reflects on the wider lessons provided for citizenship education and political engagement through the use of such courses (Blair 2017).

Entitled Remain or Leave?, the objective behind the MOOC was to help those interested – not restricted to eligible UK referendum voters – make sense of the multiple issues at play. Open Education, a product offered by Blackboard as part of its software suite, was the MOOC platform host, which allowed students to register and obtain a certificate of completion at no cost. The core of the MOOC, which ran between 17 May and 22 June 2016, featured all the common characteristics of this type of course: weekly video lectures, quizzes, and question and answer sessions, as well as forums and personal journals which participants could use to share and reflect. To date, little research has been done on the potential for this course format to improve the public's understanding of, and engagement with, politics and policy issues, especially those relating to the EU. A search (September 2016) on the MOOC aggregator site mooc-list.com shows only two English-language survey courses on the EU listed.

It is certainly not easy for EU citizens to understand how and why EU rules and policies affect their lives. The legal and institutional complexity of the treaties contrasts unfavourably with the succinct principles and neater institutional design of, for example, the US constitution. However, the problem is not just one of comprehension. Citizens complain of a knowledge or information deficit based on the difficulty of obtaining reliable information on what the EU does and how exactly it constrains member states' autonomy. The European Commission's Eurobarometer survey (2011) has shown that 49% of EU citizens say they are unfamiliar with how the EU works.

The reasons behind this lack of information are manifold. Brussels has a large cohort of accredited journalists, but the media normally prefers to cover extraordinary events, such as emergency summits and crisis talks, not the everyday business of the Ordinary Legislative Procedure or the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice. The problem of media coverage of the EU is particularly acute in the UK. Whereas in the 1975 referendum on EEC membership the print media was overwhelming in its support (with the exception of The Morning Star, a communist paper) for the EEC, by 2016 Euroscepticism became deeply engrained in the fabric of tabloid and even broadsheet reporting (McCormick 2014). This hostility to the EU, unlike in comparable European countries, is nurtured by a neoliberal elite with influential media ties (Cathcart 2016).

Equally, national political parties have proved poor at relaying how they participate in EU decision-making through their MEPs and ministers sitting in the Council of the EU (Mair 2007). When in government, national politicians may find it convenient to blame the EU for unpopular rules and, when in opposition, claim they would get a better deal for their country. This attitude creates a climate where biased and erroneous claims about the EU flourish. In many countries, the presence of populist anti-EU parties – from both the extreme left and right – further undermines citizens' ability to stay reliably informed about the EU (Hakhverdian et al. 2013: 525). An additional peculiarity of the UK context is that the pro-EU constituency could not count on the unwavering support of the political elite. In line with what political scientists define as a growing pan-EU "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks 2009), the British political establishment, as with the media, were divided over the merits of integration.

Consequently, Remain or Leave? offers a unique insight into the potential that the MOOC format has to improve citizens' understanding of, and engagement with, EU politics and policy issues. To date, there is little research on the pedagogical value of MOOCs when it comes to counteracting the EU knowledge deficit or to contributing to active citizenship more generally, including the "post-truth" pathology of contemporary politics (cf. Hudson et al. 2016). The article is structured as follows. It first examines the literature on MOOC design and how this guided the development of Remain or Leave? Drawing on content analysis of users' contributions and an exit survey of course completers, it then considers issues of format, attendance and attrition, online participation and power dynamics that emerged during the running of the course. Finally, it concludes by reflecting on expectations and potential best practice surrounding the use of MOOCs for active citizenship.

DESIGNING REMAIN OR LEAVE?

The first MOOC was delivered in 2008 in Canada. This course allowed 2200 members of the general public to join 25 fee-paying students from the University of Manitoba in learning about 'Connectivism and Connective Knowledge' (cf. Downes 2008). Since then, the number of courses offered online has grown exponentially. Today's MOOCs resemble more traditional courses, with their hallmark features – instructional lectures, question and answer sessions, assessment, and

certificates of completion – simply delivered online rather than face-to-face. In order to differentiate between these different types of MOOCs, those based on connectivist theories of learning are sometimes referred to as cMOOCs, while those that reproduce traditional class-room pedagogies are termed xMOOCs.

The growing popularity of MOOCs has led to debates over the value, challenges, and impact they may present for education. In particular, most of the debate centres on the quality of the free online courses with mega-enrolment figures offered by the providers such as Coursera, Udacity, edX, FutureLearn, and OpenupEd . MOOCs elicit a double-edged fear: either that they are too dumbed-down to justify the hype or that they might be successful enough to revolutionise the whole sector as have other so-called disruptive technologies in various fields. In this context it is not surprising that MOOCs were at first backed primarily by premier and best-funded institutions, although the availability of free MOOC hosting platforms has subsequently significantly lowered barriers to entry.

MOOCs hinge on the scalability of knowledge dissemination that ICT makes possible beyond a classroom setting. That explains the insistence on the adjective Massive, for, as Glance et al. (2013:) define it, "the participation at any point during the running of the [MOOC] should be large enough that it couldn't be run in a conventional face-to-face manner". Online survey courses with gigantic student numbers are particularly attractive for STEM subjects where individual critique and feedback are less pertinent than in discursive subjects as illustrated by the first xMOOC: the graduate course on Artificial Intelligence delivered by Stanford Professors Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig, which has had an enrolment as high as 160,000.

MOOCs, especially in STEM subjects, have a high international following. However, completion numbers are as a rule rather low, with Korn and Levitz (2013) finding only 5-15% of initial enrolees complete the course. These numbers are in themselves unsurprising as the nature of MOOCs is that they have low entrance and exit costs and very little by way of external feedback to help retention. Consequently, the ability to complete a course is dependent on a high-level of motivation and self-regulation. The student population for MOOCs is nevertheless not as diverse as may be expected from a supposedly disruptive technology based on expanding access to university education. Results from an analysis of modules offered by the University of Pennsylvania on the Coursera platform show that 83% of enrolees had a post-secondary degree (Christensen et al. 2013).

While traditionally structured xMOOCs are now the norm, the value of the participatory elements of cMOOCs is hard to overstate. It is these joint learning exercises that mean online study is not just an isolating experience. Hence Remain or Leave? was designed to combine elements of both formats with the intention of using online discussion forums to generate peer assistance. Responses in the forums, moreover, were analysed and integrated into a series of weekly recap webinars, which drew on specific comments and queries submitted by course participants to explore themes surrounding the UK's referendum on EU membership. This included a final post-Brexit webinar that examined the state of play a month after the momentous vote.

The possibilities opened up by ICT for peer assistance in a MOOC mirror those now available for citizen participation using a number of e-participation platforms that have been introduced in various countries. Similar to the initial hype surrounding MOOCs, e-democracy has had to address an unrealistic burden of expectations regarding the ability of online platforms to disrupt politics and public policy (Schulman 2003). Prophets of technological determinism thus have had to lower their expectations of how far e-participation can empower citizens and acknowledge that technology is 'constitutive of social life' (MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999: 23).

For example, data from the Estonian Parliament's e-legislation proposal platform revealed that despite the unprecedented possibilities offered to ordinary citizens for proposing ideas for legislation directly to policy-makers, citizen mobilization was poor. Use of the online platform was dominated by a few mega-users (Glencross 2009). Reasons cited for a lack of wider engagement – despite the unique opportunities afforded citizens to voice their opinions – were platform functionality and the absence of incentives.

In anticipation of similar problems, the participatory element of Remain or Leave? was designed to incentivise as much student engagement as possible. The online discussion forums centred on two weekly questions posed in the online lecture component of the course. These were open-ended questions designed to draw out opinions and arguments based on the topic under discussion. For instance, the week five questions were as follows:

1. When considering how to vote, are you more concerned by short-term instability as compared to the long term consequences of this decision?

2. Knowing the risks associated with such a referendum, do you think it is a good idea?

To give expression to other ideas, there was also an open thread that allowed any participant to create their own discussion topic. In all cases, the incentive for posting was – as explained in regular email announcements – that the forums would be monitored and integrated into the webinars. Similarly, the webinars were interactive in that students could submit written questions in real time using the chat box function of Blackboard Collaborate. In addition, the MOOC offered 5 freely-accessible, multimedia lectures that were posted on a weekly basis, alongside readings, and quizzes associated with the following themes: sovereignty, the single market, immigration, divides among British voters, and risks of staying in the EU and of leaving it.

Lectures were recorded using Camtasia Studio and were scripted in a way that cut through partisan rhetoric and the mass of competing, often contradictory information. Each lecture consisted of 3 videos averaging under 10 minutes, which is slightly longer than the six minutes considered optimal in research on MOOCs (Guo et al. 2014). The emphasis throughout the lecturing was on examining the validity of pro- and anti-EU arguments in an even- handed fashion. No prior knowledge of the EU was required and great care was taken to avoid technical, policy jargon. IT support was available for users thanks to the support of a dedicated IT specialist responsible for resolving functionality issues relating to the MOOC.

ANALYZING THE DATA

Overview of participation

551 individuals signed up to participate in the course. The gender of participants was not systematically collected as part of the enrolment procedure. Consequently, instead of declared gender identity, we coded the gender identity projected by users' chosen enrolment name. For the sake of brevity, the paper will use the term 'gender' as shorthand for 'projected gender identity' (PGI). Overall, women constituted a majority of those enrolled: 291 compared with 235 men and 25 of unknown gender. Students spent a total of 1922.69 hours on the course – an average of 3.5 hours per student. In reality, however, users did not spend equal amounts of time engaging with course activities, and a small minority of particularly active participants account for the majority of online activity. The most active 5% (32 students) each spent an average of 34.27 hours engaging with course material and activities, accounting for over 57% of the total time spent on the MOOC

(1096.66 hours). Even within this very active cohort, the amount of time dedicated to the course varies greatly: the most active account spent 246.75 hours logged on; and the top 6 most active accounts spent as much time as the next 26 accounts combined. Forum data suggests that this cohort of active users was relatively gender balanced (17 women and 15 men).

Assessment

Student engagement with, and understanding of, the course material was regularly monitored using optional online tests. Assessment was carried out by means of five tests, one covering each of the weekly topics. 180 individuals took at least one quiz. Figure 1 shows the number of participants in each weekly quiz.

Figure 1 number of participants in weekly quiz
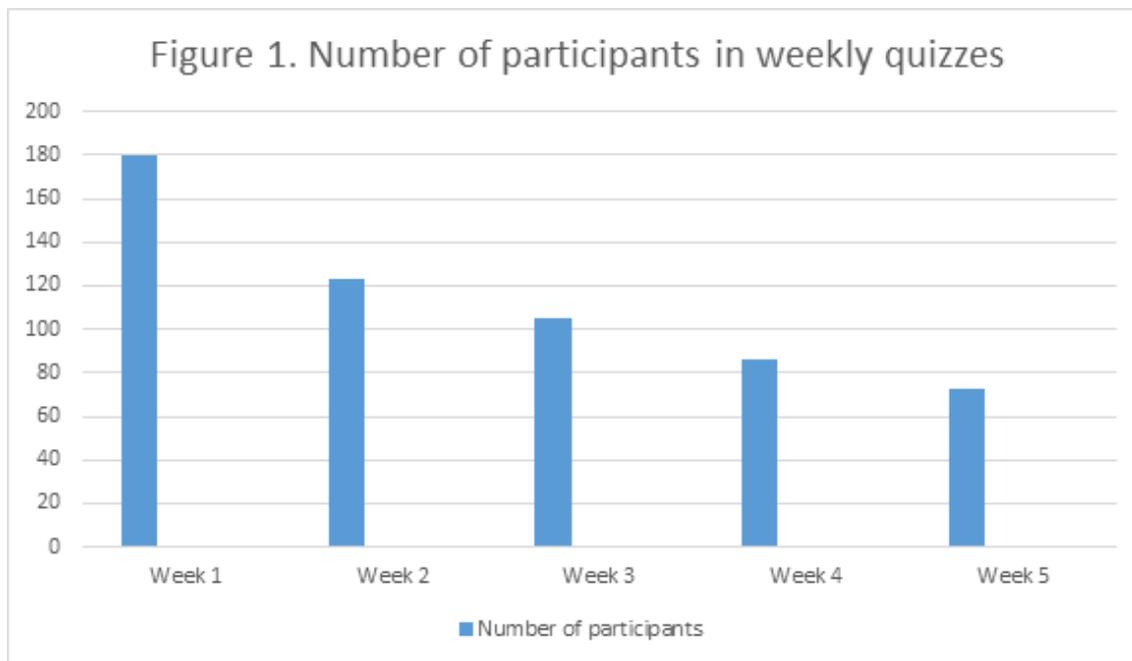
Participation in, or completion of, tests clearly suggests attrition over the course of the MOOC. The most significant attrition took place between weeks one, when 180 participants took a test, and week two, when that number went down to 123. Participation over the last three weeks was more stable, with an average of 16.5 fewer people attempting a test each consecutive week.

Certificates were issued to participants who completed all five tests and received a minimum of 50% on each. 68 students completed all five tests, and all of them received the required passing grades. A total of 68 certificates of completion were therefore issued. Overall, more women than men completed the course assessment: 39 compared with 28 men and 1 of unknown gender.

Forum participation

One of the most important components of the course was the use of online forums to stimulate discussion among participants, and identify areas of interest or uncertainty that were then used to inform the content of lectures and question and answer sessions. In total, 12 forums were created: two for each of the weekly themes, plus one 'open' forum in which students were free to discuss

anything they wanted, and one forum created after the referendum to accommodate reflections on the outcome.

Every themed forum except the 'open' one had a core question prompting discussion. For example, 'Immigration and border control forum 1' asked participants: "Which campaign do you trust when it comes to claims about immigration?"; while 'Immigration and border control forum 2' asked: "Would you prefer the UK to be able to control immigration instead of being in the single market?" In the process of debating these issues, students initiated 93 different discussion threads, in which they posted 408 comments. 228 posts were written by men, 150 by women, and 30 were

Type of participation	Level of participation
Forums	12
Discussion threads by students (total)	93
Threads initiated by moderator	2
Threads initiated by men	47
Threads initiated by women	36
Threads anonymously initiated	8
Comments (total)	408
Comments by men	228
Comments by women	150
Anonymous comments	30

anonymous as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Type and level of forum participation

Quality of the referendum debate

One of the key motivations for designing and running a course on the EU referendum was to help individuals make sense of the debate: the issues, facts, and implications raised in the discussion about whether or not the UK would be better off outside the EU. As such, we were interested in analyzing the MOOC participants' perception of the debate itself.

Overall, the view of the quality of the information, and of the role played by politicians and the media in relaying information to voters, was overwhelmingly negative, regardless of whether or not they were aligned with participants' preferences or voting intentions. In particular, the campaigns were equally singled out as a source of unreliable or misleading information. Even pro-EU members of the cohort recurrently expressed strong reservations about the quality, efficacy and truthfulness of the information and arguments put forth by the 'Remain' campaigns.

Participants did not distinguish between different campaigns on either side of the debate (eg. Vote Leave and Leave.EU), and conflated them in discussion. Concerning the grassroots elements of the campaign, the 'Leave' camp was broadly agreed to be more present and effective at disseminating its core message and reaching voters. Those with a preference for staying in the EU often criticized the 'Remain' camp for being too meek and lagging behind the 'Leave' campaign. The bigger focus in forums, however, was not the grassroots campaigns but the involvement of high-profile political spokespeople, such as Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, and David Cameron. In general, politicians were depicted as 'con artists' seeking to score political points rather than tackle issues of substance. Politicians associated with a vote to remain (eg. Jeremy Corbyn, Gordon Brown, Sarah Wollaston) were associated with positive statements slightly more frequently than those campaigning for a

leave vote, which is congruent with the cohort's overall preferences regarding the outcome of the referendum. More often, however, politicians of all parties and camps were presented as damaging to the quality of the democratic debate because of their perceived penchant for partisan exaggeration and distracting ad hominem attacks.

Finally, the role of the media was also the topic of strong criticism. National newspapers, especially tabloids and conservative broadsheets, were accused of being the driving force behind the propagation of inflammatory 'misrepresentation' – especially on the issue of immigration. Mistrust of the media was linked to the belief that commercial relationships between publications and politicians entailed their content was corrupt: bought and paid for by politicians in return for favours to media moguls. Participants drew a causal connection between the political debate, as it played out in the media and among politicians, and the public debate held among voters. There was broad consensus that, as a result of the over-abundance of false, misleading, and partisan information, the public debate quickly degenerated into a 'vile' and 'uncivilized' argument between groups with fundamentally different beliefs.

Ultimately, the negative sentiment associated with different aspects of the political debate further crystallized after the vote, when participants aired their discontent over the role they believed the media, politicians, and campaigns had had on the outcome. 'What concerns me was not having the referendum but the divisiveness of the campaigning methods, particularly on the issue of immigration', said M.H., while an anonymous participant stated: 'It's 5 days now and I'm still furious at the lies that swung a referendum that should never have been called.'

Topics of interest

Faced with what they perceived to be a low-quality political debate, users appeared to use the forums as a platform for discussing or clarifying issues they would have wished to hear more about in the media or from the political elite. As a result, forum discussions were rich and complex. In order to make sense of the issues and topics of interest to participants, the forums were systematically coded using grounded theory (cf. Glaser and Strauss 1967: 37). This method involves exploring data and developing conceptual codes in three phases. First, during 'open' or 'initial' coding, conceptual labels were inductively generated and assigned to the patterns and salient elements that emerged from the forum discussions. These categories were then refined in an iterative process between the data and the issues and themes generated by our research questions. Finally, clusters of codes were selectively combined by grouping categories according to their analytical focus. In total, the data fell into 23 thematic codes divided into five clusters.

The first thematic cluster comprised contributions on specific policy issues. Topics discussed under the 'policy' theme included employment, the environment, constitutional issues, foreign policy, immigration/border control, regulation, security, the economy, trade, and welfare. Analysis of this cluster reveals that three topics stand out as a primary source of discussion: (in order of importance) immigration/border control; the economy; and trade. Together, these topics account for nearly 65% of all discussions. Conversely, the environment and constitutional issues were discussed the least. In fact, references to constitutional issues, for example questions concerning a second vote on Scottish independence or the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, only began to emerge after the referendum.

The second thematic cluster to emerge from discussions concerned contributions featuring values and beliefs about the purpose and organisation of government. This 'principles' theme covered burden sharing, democracy, intergenerational justice, sovereignty, and solidarity. Under this theme,

those students who made favourable comments concerning the influence of the EU on different policy issues were most likely to value principles such as burden sharing, solidarity and inter-generational justice. As a result, they portrayed the EU as a means to: solve complex and border-spanning policy issues more effectively than if the UK were to try on its own; a means of making policies that takes better into account issues of long-term sustainability; and a mechanism for holding the UK government to account when it attempts to place short-term profit before long-term socio-economic goals. Conversely, students who most frequently highlighted the EU's shortcomings were the most likely to raise the issue of sovereignty. In these accounts, the EU was seen as an ill-functioning institution that burdened the UK with the outcomes of its bad decisions and must be cast aside in order to allow for social, political, but mostly economic progress.

The third thematic cluster concerned 'processes': contributions predicting or appraising political and institutional procedures. Discussions in this category primarily involved evaluations of the current functioning of the EU, and predictions of how the process of the UK leaving the EU would unfold. Analysis of students' references to issues of political and institutional process finds that, while there was a wealth of understanding of how the EU functions (from its trade agreements to its very organisation), students found it very hard to predict what would happen if the UK left. On the one hand, this is to be expected, considering the UK would be the first state to withdraw, leaving us without a prior example of what such a process would entail. On the other hand, this difficulty very clearly appears to be linked to a lack of meaningful or consensual information concerning what 'Brexit' meant and how it might be enacted. As a result, students speculated considerably but struggled to find a robust evidentiary basis for their ideas of what might happen in the event of a 'leave' vote.

The fourth thematic cluster to appear from participant discussions concerned 'politics' and comprised contributions regarding the referendum debate and the factors that influence it, and those about the purpose of politics in this context. Topics under this theme include the media, politicians, the purpose of politics, and the referendum. What stands out from this aspect of the discussion is the overwhelming sense of anti-politics. While students gave very sophisticated accounts of what they considered to be the role of the political, and discussed the many forms government can and ought to take, they almost unanimously dismissed the existing political system – from those who populate it, to the institutions (media, electoral system) that support it – as corrupt and untrustworthy. Nevertheless, this negative view of British politics remained in perpetual tension with the Burkean view of the majority of participants that the referendum should never have been called, and that it was the role of elected representatives (MPs) to discuss and decide on these issues, rather than the 'uninformed' electorate.

Finally, the fifth thematic cluster centred on society and its composition. This 'polity' theme included discussions on societal divides, especially cultural, electoral, and socio-demographic divisions, and national distinctions across the UK. Overall, students depicted the UK as a deeply divided country. In general, they mapped the borders of different groups onto the borders of the different home nations that make up the UK. Thus, the Welsh, Scottish, English, and Northern Irish were discussed as having diverging opportunities and challenges, which was used to explain why their population reported different levels of dis/approval with the EU. In terms of demographics and electoral divides, the primary focus was on a broad and amorphous group of socio-economically deprived voters who were recurrently identified as those most likely to express concern about immigration and free movement. Other socio-demographic factors, such as gender, age, or educational background, were rarely raised, if ever.

Sentiments regarding the EU

In addition to studying the themes discussed in the forums, we also sought to assess participants' sentiments concerning the EU. This was done by coding all explicit references to users intending to vote either remain or leave, as well as all comments containing an appraisal of the EU or its constituent institutions.

Concerning the clearest indicator of Euroscepticism (voting intentions), the cohort revealed itself to be primarily in favour of remaining in the EU. Comments to this effect outnumbered those in support of leaving 6 to 1. In terms of appraisals of the EU, however, the trend was reversed: there were marginally more negative appraisals (27 statements) concerning the EU than positive ones (25 statements). When looking at who wrote these comments, it became apparent that few people made Eurosceptic comments but tended to make them more often (9 people each averaging three statements), compared to a bigger group of quieter 23 'Europhiles' each making an average 1.13 comments in support of the EU. In both cases, men were more likely than women to make Eurosceptic comments, and women more likely to make positive comments about the EU or explicitly indicate an intention to vote 'remain'.

Some of those planning to vote 'remain' were sceptical about certain aspects of the EU and its functioning. This is borne out in the comments themselves. For example, 'Anonymous' explained:

> '[…] I take the view that we cannot have both the free movement of people and a first class welfare system, unless numbers of immigrants can be managed. […] Where I disagree with the 'out' campaign however, is where they assert (and it is not more than an assertion) that numbers can only be managed by leaving the EU. My own view is that the principle of the free movement of people will be reformed in any event within the next five to ten years. To influence that reform, it is essential that Britain retains its membership.'

Ultimately, the common thread shared by sceptical advocates of remaining was the belief that aspects of the EU needed to – and could – be reformed or improved. The case for remaining part of the EU was therefore often linked to the UK's capacity to act as a progressive force in the transformation of the EU and its institutions. Conversely, those who expressed an unwaveringly positive view of the EU argued that it was the EU, in fact, that forced the UK to adopt more progressive and egalitarian policies, especially in areas such as employment rights and the environment.

Head or heart?

The final aspect of the forum discussions that we explored concerned how participants represented their decision-making process. This involved recording what students said about the type of information they believed they needed to make their decision in the referendum, as well as the justifications and mechanisms they used to find and evaluate data. We used these to ascertain whether the cohort was planning to base their vote more on cost-benefit considerations or on the basis of affinity with normative values.

There was an active effort, on behalf of most participants, to actively present themselves as pragmatic rational agents seeking high-quality data, which they would then assess and use to form an evidence-based decision. As a result, the issue of the reliability and validity of information was often discussed. For many, the difficulty of finding relevant information on which to base their

decisions was compounded by their mistrust of the main sources in the debate (i.e. politicians, the media, and the campaigns). Consequently, participants prided themselves on using information from 'independent' sources, but even then often resorted to printing disclaimers, for example: 'I was interested to find this article, showing the results of a recent Ipsos Mori poll (I know – how believable are polls? – approach with caution!)' (L.R.).

Reflecting the premium they and their peers placed on 'objective' and 'reliable' data, forum participants near-systematically deployed two strategies to increase the validity of their claims: explicit referencing and triangulation. In total, users shared 86 referenced sources, of which 75 were made in a way that allowed other users to verify information for themselves (by sharing a link or adequate bibliographical information). Furthermore, participants often presented multiple sources to corroborate their point, a technique known as 'triangulation'. An analysis of personal engagement among users in the forum shows that the sharing of sources was often explicitly praised, perhaps contributing to a greater normalisation of the practice over time. The breakdown of the sources used by participants is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Nature of sources shared by participants

Source type	Number of sources
News (article)	22
Blog post	16
News (editorial)	6
Academic (non peer-reviewed)	5
Party document or politician's editorial	5
Video (lecture)	5
Video (news)	5
Website	3
Think tank and third sector report	3
Survey	3
Podcast	1
Academic (peer-reviewed)	1
Total	75

Ultimately, students using the forums often viewed themselves as more capable of seeing through the mis- or disinformation of the campaign than the bulk of the electorate. They talked about the 'regular' electorate as a separate group more likely to 'fall' for reductive and misleading arguments and base their vote on 'mere' emotions rather than reason: 'It will be an emotive choice for most people, regardless of the arguments for and/or against' (M.D.). This was also used to explain why anybody would vote differently than them: 'They don't seem to understand what they are voting for really' (J.H.). Taking a course, such as this MOOC, was therefore seen as a way for the responsible minority to learn more about the issues and bypass the low-quality political debate. S.R., for instance, argues:

> 'I'm a fan of direct democracy in certain situations, but to participate in such a process requires fully informed debate with broad public access to facts, as far as they're known. I see this MOOC as a good example of how that can be done, but of course not everyone will choose to spend time to learn more about the subject and to go beyond the media campaigns.'

Perceptions that the majority of voters were ill-informed or unable to make rational decisions were also sometimes used to buttress claims the referendum – and referenda in general – should not be used to determine the future of the nation. Quoting the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg, an anonymous post summarizes this sentiment: 'Like (sic) in the Scottish referendum, campaigns that are not just about policies or personalities but about identity can unleash feelings that can't be put back in the bottle. [...] Prompting the question: are referenda, given the emotional price they exact, even worth the candle, within a British context?', and M.D. asks: 'What are we doing, holding a referendum on something which will affect us for generations, when most people don't really feel it is high on their list of concerns?' This is congruent with the tendency for participants to depict an ideal polity as operating according to the Burkean 'trustee' model of representation, where enlightened individuals are elected to make decisions on the behalf of the public.

Ultimately, while participants overwhelmingly expressed a preference for putatively 'objective' information on the issues at stake, many of them recognized that none of the information on which predictions of what the future may hold for the UK, in or out of the EU, could be considered definitive and irrefutable – especially economic forecasting. Some even engaged with their own confirmation bias: 'we each discard the "facts" that don't fit with how we wish the world to be. After all, everyone has bias as their default position from a young age' (G.S.). Consequently, a small number of them made space for values and norms in the narrative of their decision-making process: 'Economic uncertainty is probably at the bottom of my list of reasons for voting. [...] there's economic uncertainty with "Remain" or "Leave". What is more important is deciding values and voting in accordance with them" (G.D.).

A SURVEY OF COURSE COMPLETERS

User engagement during the course of Remain or Leave? is very much in line with the average 10% completion figure demonstrated in various studies of MOOCs and the tendency for active engagement via discussion forums to be the preserve of a minority of extremely active students. An exit survey was conducted with the 68 students who had completed the MOOC in order to better understand what had motivated them, and what they had valued or found needed improvement. The response rate to the survey was 41% (n = 28). Without being representative of the whole cohort of 'completers', let alone all 551 students enrolled on Remain or Leave?, the survey offers a useful snapshot of who is likely to show sustained interest in a MOOC on a topical political issue and why.

First, survey results suggest that many of those who completed the course share two characteristics: most (18/27) had enrolled and completed a MOOC before, and most (46.5%) reported good or very good prior knowledge of the EU and related issues, while none reported 'very poor' prior knowledge. This suggests an already interested group of individuals who are used to seeking learning opportunities to further their understanding on issues of their choice. Nevertheless, despite an existing understanding of the topic, most respondents found that the MOOC had improved their knowledge of the six core themes explored in the course. Perception that the MOOC had 'somewhat' to 'strongly' improved their knowledge and understanding of key issues ranged from 81% for issues like the single market and sovereignty to 59% for UK politics. Only a minority (between 4% and 15%, depending on the issue) found that the MOOC had failed to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues.

Second, while the extent to which members of this cohort engaged with course material is uniformly high, the manner in which they chose to participate is highly differentiated. A majority (81%) of respondents reported engaging with the MOOC, either by following a lecture or logging into a

forum, at least once a week, with 31% of these students logging into the course more than once a week and 8% engaging with the MOOC at least once a day. The group is fairly evenly split between those who made use of the MOOC's deliberative and participative features, with 48% saying they had regularly used discussion forums to talk to each other. Other modes of deliberative participation, via social media such as Twitter, for example, had very low and infrequent uptake. Few respondents reported having been strongly motivated to finish the course as a result of engaging with their peers. This suggests that the cohort comprised individuals with strong personal motivation to participate and complete the course. Moreover, few participants reported having been somewhat persuaded to vote differently as a result of talking to their peers (2 out of 28). Nevertheless, the cohort reported having gained from peer engagement in different ways: 61.5% stated that engaging with their peers helped them learn something new and 58% said it make them rethink ideas or beliefs they had previously held.

Finally, most (89%) of those who completed the course found that the subject matter lent itself very well to the MOOC format, despite the complexity of the issue and uncertainty linked to learning about an unfolding debate. 100% of respondents said they were 'somewhat' or 'very' likely to enrol in a similar course in the future if it were offered. Feedback on the course format and content highlighted the fact that participants valued the MOOC as an impartial source of information. The course's perceived 'neutrality' was associated with efforts to discuss 'both sides of the argument' in a way that contrasted with 'the mainstream media' and 'untrustworthy politicians'. Moreover, the way that the course information was delivered was found to have facilitated sustained participation: respondents valued the jargon-free discussion of complicated issues and the comprehensive coverage of key issues. The overall sense was one of increased confidence in making and justifying opinions and arguments concerning the EU and the UK's relationship with it.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Ultimately, the course's unsurprisingly low participation and completion rates imply that neither the hybrid design, combining traditional pedagogy with collective deliberation and peer-learning, nor the topicality of the subject matter altered the major structural constraints facing MOOCs. This suggests the ability of free online learning to counteract the EU knowledge deficit is limited, which is something to consider in light of the EU's increasing financial support for developing the European MOOC sector. By extension, hopes that MOOCs can play a leading role in counteracting the 'alternative facts' employed by populist politicians may also be wide of the mark. In particular, the dominance of users already knowledgeable about the debate and engaging with multiple sources of information suggests the user cohort that engages with a politically-sensitive MOOC is not representative of the electorate as a whole.

The course was purposefully designed to foster peer engagement and learning, primarily by means of the online forums. Analysis of participation in the discussions suggests that the course met this goal, at least with regards to the core cohort of active 'mega-users'. Not only did students engage with each other, building on each other's comments, thanking and encouraging each other, but they also sought to support each other's learning, by sharing relevant references, clarifying areas of uncertainty, and challenging each other in a courteous and respectful manner.

One interesting aspect of the Remain or Leave? cohort concerns the considerable participation of female students. The little research done on who enrolls on MOOCs has tended to highlight the overrepresentation of young educated male participants (eg. Christensen et al. 2013; Emanuel 2013; Kizilcec et al., 2013). In contrast, this course featured more women enrolled than men, an equal

number of women and men in the most active cohort, and sustained engagement on behalf of female participants in the discussion forums. The sensitivity to the issue of gender and 'voice', and to the power dynamics that often prevent women from speaking up in public forums, were embedded in the course from the beginning. As a result, for example, engagement with the students by means of the weekly live Q&A sessions was designed to respond to equal numbers of queries posted by women and men. More work needs to be done to explore why different groups enroll and whether or not gender plays a role in structuring the type of engagement between users. Nevertheless, despite their association with white-collar men, this course suggests that MOOCs may yet offer an opportunity for redressing certain demographic inequalities when it comes to accessing structured learning opportunities.

Moreover, the Euro-positive bent of participants' forum contributions is obviously not reflective of the distribution of votes cast in the UK referendum. Although no specific user profile data is available to corroborate this claim, studies of MOOCs have shown that there is a preponderance of users who already have an undergraduate degree taking the courses (Christensen et al., 2013; Heywood et al., 2015). This could certainly help explain the ideological position of average users in Remain or Leave? as Goodwin and Heath (2016) have found that support for leaving the EU was 30% higher amongst voters with only GSCE-level education or lower.

Significantly, the online forum contributions did not discuss the potential causal connection between educational achievement and attitudes to the EU. What did manifest itself, after the referendum result, was a focus on the age divide in British politics over whether EU membership is considered a good thing. This narrative of "blaming" older voters for Brexit can potentially be connected with a more general anti-system/anti-politics sentiment expressed by users in the forums. Indeed, the manifestation of such attitudes is a very telling indication of public frustration with the processes and personalities surrounding British politics. Such dissatisfaction amongst a politically engaged and well-informed cohort of MOOC users who were generally positive about the EU, or at least acknowledged its benefits, is suggestive of a broader gap between citizens and politicians which online learning itself is not equipped to resolve.

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Book Review

Liviu Damşa, Birmingham City University

POLITICIZING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. STRUGGLING WITH THE AWAKENING GIANT

Author: Dominic Hoeglinger

Abstract

The systematic examination of the politicization of European integration in six Western European countries constitutes an impressive contribution of this book. The book also presents an imposing long-term quantitative-qualitative research method and it offers a number of theoretical propositions which could be extended to the study of politicization across Europe, in spite of the limitation of the study to selected Western European countries.

Keywords

European integration; methodology; Politicization; Western Europe; EU political parties

Irrelevant during the first decades of the EU project, increasingly salient after Maastricht and the French and Dutch failed attempts to pass the European Constitutional treaty via referendums, the politicisation of European Integration has arguably came to the fore for both European politicians and the public after the result of the June 2016 'Brexit' referendum. While the topic of politicisation of European integration has been getting traction in Political Science since the early 2000s and a number of important studies on this topic have appeared, Dominic Hoeglinger's Politicizing European Integration is a timely and informative book which adds a number of interesting insights to the scholarly debate on politicization of European integration, for at least two reasons.

First, Hoeglinger's study proposes to provide a systematic assessment of the actual extent of the domestic politicization of European Integration in Western Europe (p. 3). Whereas other authors offer such assessments, Hoeglinger's study relies on sizeable data derived not only from a large scale quantitative media-content analysis of the public debates on European Integration occurring between 2004 to 2006 in six Western European countries (UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland), but also from a similar analysis of national elections campaigns which have taken place in these countries since the 1970s and up to the 2000s (p.6). This reliance on an enormous amount of data allows the author to formulate and test a number of original and

interesting hypotheses, including, for example, the hypothesis that ideology is a crucial factor in shaping politicians' response to European integration (p.5), among the more substantive or ideological foundations that generally shape elites' attitudes to Europe (p. 5). Moreover, it allows Hoeglinger to go much deeper than previous authors, who usually do not go beyond 'black box' assumptions and fragmentary surveys, into developing dynamic analyses of the factors that influence European integration.

Second, Hoeglinger manages to present in a masterly way through Politicizing European Integration this huge amount of data and the complex theoretical propositions he builds based on these data. All the chapters of the book follow a compelling and useful framework, comprising a review of the literature and of the main hypotheses of this literature, an examination of the gaps of this scholarship, a discussion of theoretical choices made by the author and their justifications, an analysis of the data and of the ways in which these data support the authors theoretical propositions, and brief conclusions. The numerous tables inserted into the majority of the book's chapters improve the general readability of the study and contribute to the further systematization of the complex information presented by Hoeglinger. And overall, the consistent application of this framework through the book not only that it allows the author to deal in a meaningful way with an amazing quantity of information, but it also makes the book readable in spite of its complexity.

Politicizing European Integration contains an introduction, followed by seven chapters that address in a clear and functional matter key components of politicization. The book ends with brief conclusions, which restate the main findings of the study. The introduction sets up the background and methodology of the study, and it provides a useful outline of the book (pp. 1-10). It is followed by a chapter that discusses the challenges faced by those studying 'politicization' and the strategies followed by politicians to politicize the issue of European integration. This chapter also provides an operationalization of the concept of politicization of political debates around the dimension of European integration. (pp. 11-29). A subsequent chapter explores the public debates as sources of data allowing for the measurement of 'politicization' (pp. 30-41) and it discusses the research methodology as well as the criteria utilised by the author for selection of the media outlets which will be analysed in order to provide the empirical data for the study. (pp. 32-35).   A third chapter discusses the dynamics of the public debate on Europe and it examines the ways in which the orientations of the participants to this debate are structured (pp. 42-59), while a fourth chapter provides a deeper analysis of the structure and orientations of various domestic actors and national political parties towards European integration, in the six western countries surveyed in the study (pp. 60-80).   A fifth chapter moves the inquiry of the book into the issue-emphasis strategies of various political groups (pp. 81-90), while a sixth chapter offers an interesting analysis of the framing of European Integration by different national political parties (pp. 100-124). The seventh chapter starts to move the discussion towards the final conclusions, while presenting an interesting analysis on how strongly the issue of European integration is politicized over time and across the Western European political systems, in rapport to other salient issues (pp. 124-138). The brief final conclusions extend the tentative hypothesis related to the limited politicization of Europe introduced in the previous chapter, while linking this theme to the more recent crises that the EU project had to face after the 2008 global economic crisis (pp. 139-152).

Hoeglinger' convincing theorisation and narrative of the politicization of the European integration constitute the book's major strength. The narrow focus on selected Western European countries and on the past debates could also be seen by those interested in ampler theoretical generalisations as a major weakness. After all, the economic and political fluidity brought in by the global economic 2008 crisis and its accompanying developments within the EU, such as the 2009 sovereign debt crisis, the 2015 migration crisis, Brexit, or the myriad of national political debates around austerity measures or the EU responses to these crises offer a wealth of data which pinpoint to an increasingly

politicization of the EU integration within the EU member states. Moreover, an analysis of these data, and of the increasing populist turn in EU politics, might well point to different theoretical conclusions than those drawn by Hoeglinger, which are based on discourse analyses of public debates that occurred more than a decade ago. As such, these developments may deserve a more extended discussion than that offered in passing by the author in the final conclusions of the book. (pp. 139-144). Irrespective of these possible objections, it is hard for anyone to conceive that the Western European political landscape, honed as it was by decades of evolution, is susceptible of dramatic changes after any exogenous shock, no matter how big such shock could be. In addition, all the data utilised by Hoeglinger to construct his theoretical models and working hypotheses are derived from public debates which occurred when the EU project suffered similar, if not greater shocks than those witnessed post 2008. The long term perspective adopted by Hoeglinger allows him to construct convincing theoretical models, which could be easily tested by those who wish to extend these models to the political developments brought in by the successive post 2008 crises within the EU. And, even if the book was finalised before the British EU-membership referendum of 2016, neither Brexit, nor the recent political developments in Western Europe could be described as invalidating the main conclusion of the book.

Hoeglinger systematic study of politicization of EU integration does well what it sets out to do. It forwards our understanding of the politicization phenomenon in multiple ways, and it contains many interesting analyses and theoretical models which could be applied successfully to the study of the ways in which particular issues become politicized in Europe and beyond. The book offers good value for the money, and it is a valuable addition to this field of research, likely to be of great use to political scientists, postgraduate students and to everyone interested in European integration and more generally, in the works of politics within EU member states.

Book Review

Havva Karakas Keles, Maxwell School of Syracuse University

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Editor: Donatella M. Viola

Abstract

This timely Handbook offers a balanced and sound analysis of European Parliamentary (EP) elections in each European Union member state since the first direct elections in1979 with an emphasis on the ever-widening gap between the European Union and its citizens.

Keywords

European Union; European elections; European Parliament; European Integration; Political Parties; Elections

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After Croatia joined the EU as the 28th member state in 2013, all of the 28 members voted in elections to the European Parliament for the first time in 2014. With the new powers that Lisbon Treaty granted the European Parliament, the 2014 European elections also aimed to select the President of the European Commission, thus empowering European citizens to shape European institutions (p. 703). Against the backdrop of this development there was a steady decrease in the turnout at European elections. The Routledge Handbook of European Elections provides a thorough analysis of European elections and maps the ever-growing distance between the European institutions, elites, and the people.

As the thrust of this Handbook suggests, the steady trend towards lower voter turnout in European elections coincided with European Parliament's gaining of more powers. This trend suggests the need for a close re-examination of the European project at the citizen, member state and the EU levels. Edited by Donatella M. Viola and with EU member state chapters written by country experts, the Handbook takes on the herculean task of bringing the importance of 'European demos' and its choice to the forefront in order to draw our attention to, and to the lack thereof, 'accountability' and 'representation' at the EU level.

The Handbook, comprehensive both in scope and depth, is organized around two parts: general framework (Part I); and country reviews, and theoretical analysis (Part II). The Handbook's geographic

coverage includes 27 EU member states (excluding Croatia in most parts of the Handbook but in the last chapter). Its theoretical scope provides a comparative analysis of the utility of theoretical models in explaining European election behaviour in old versus new EU member states. The first two chapters in Part I set the stage by focusing on European Parliament's trajectory from a consultative assembly to a directly elected co-legislative body (Chapter 1) and on the European Parliament's internal organization (Chapter 2). This rich and in-depth thematic coverage of the birth, organization, and electoral dynamics of the European Parliament in the first two chapters provides a strong background for the third chapter which lays out the methodological and theoretical basis of the Handbook. Chapter 3 includes a clear-cut case study research design and a robust theoretical framework with an overview of the European Parliament election literature, and offers hypotheses based on two major theories on European elections (the second-order election model, and Europe salience theory).

Part II, building on the empirical, theoretical and methodological framework outlined in Part I, is the empirical and theoretical heart of the Handbook. Part II comprises the 27 country chapters (excluding Croatia), in addition to a chapter on the comparative analysis of European elections (Chapter 31), and also the epilogue (Chapter 32). The Routledge Handbook of European Elections goes far beyond tracing a linear relationship between voting behaviour in European elections in member countries and party composition in the European Parliament. Throughout chapters 4-30, every country chapter provides the reader with information on political landscape, historical background, geopolitical profile, main political parties and parties' attitudes toward the EU, public opinion on European integration, a brief account of national and European election systems, a brief look at the national and EP elections, a closer examination of the 2009 European election, and theoretical analysis of European elections in the light of election theories (mainly second-order election theory, and Europe salience theory). The theoretical analysis at the end of each country chapter tries to answer the following questions: Which theoretical model can explain the nature of the European elections? Which factors -national issues or public attitudes towards the European Union - have more explanatory power in shaping the European election behaviour?

Chapter 31 (Comparative analysis of European elections) deserves a special mention. It lays out the main findings of the Handbook's research agenda in a comparative manner. The analytical section of this chapter reveals that neither of the two theoretical models could explain all aspects of European elections. Overall, second-order election model (which argues that European election behaviour is based on domestic political concerns and European elections are secondary to national elections, etc.) has considerable explanatory power. The findings of this longitudinal and comparative research indicate that voters expressed their dissatisfaction with governing parties by voting for opposition and small parties at European elections. What came as a surprise to the editor of the Handbook was the fact that domestic political concerns were affecting European elections even after the European Parliament gained more and more powers with the treaty changes. However, research results in the Handbook also indicate that Europe salience theory and its relative power in explaining the voting behaviour in European elections cannot be disregarded, either. Based on the research findings of this Handbook, examples of strong indicators of the salience of Europe factor in European elections are the rise of the extreme right, Green and Eurosceptic parties (pp. 684-692).

The last chapter of Part II, Epilogue, is an analysis of the 2014 European election. The 2014 election is the first one after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. And the Epilogue written by the editor compares and contrasts the 2014 election with previous European elections. One striking similarity between this election and the previous ones that the analysis reveals is the low voter turnout. The question asked is

whether the public apathy towards and lower turnout at European elections put the democratic legitimacy of the European project in peril.

The Handbook's editor refers several times to the symbolic meaning of the image of the Tower of Babel on the cover of the Handbook and how this image inspired the design of the European Parliament's building in Strasbourg (p. xxxv, 732). She mainly highlights the parallels between the thrust of the story of the Tower of Babel and how European Parliament's Strasbourg building design represents European integration in progress (p. xxxv) and in a more precautionary note "vulnerability of the European unification process" (p. 732). The recent Brexit vote has reminded European people, European countries, and scholars that they can reinterpret the abovementioned parallel as 'reverse integration' or alternatively, 'removing a brick from the already incomplete European project'. This brings the question of the future prospects of the European project to the forefront.

This Routledge Handbook is an essential source not only for scholars and researchers, but also for practitioners and students of political science in general and of European politics, European Union studies, and electoral studies. Anyone studying, reading, or writing on the European parliament, European integration, and European elections could use it as a thorough reference book. The fact that the cases analysed and the theoretical models for the European elections are well supported by relevant tables and figures makes this colossal work a valuable reference book of European elections.

What's in an Anniversary? UACES and European Studies at 50

Maxine David, *University of Leiden*

Helen Drake, *Loughborough University London*

Emily Linnemann, *UACES*

What's in an Anniversary? UACES and European Studies at 50[1]

Anniversaries come in many forms. They invite us to reflect, they ask us to remember, encourage us to learn, and they allow us space to celebrate. They are definitely a moment to look to the future and to acknowledge, but not wallow, in sentiment and nostalgia. They remind us that we are each part of something bigger; here, of UACES, of the university, of the academy and beyond.

On this occasion of UACES's golden anniversary, we write here in our guise as present custodians of UACES's past.[2] Building on Drake and Linnemann's joint initiative back in 2013, we have overseen a two-year strategic project leading to this point: we have raised funds, co-opted partners, mobilised UACES members past and present, initiated and recorded memories, organised events, launched new financial support schemes for early career academics; deposited the UACES archive in a safe and appropriate place for the benefit of scholars of the future; and finally, in December 2017, held a 50th birthday 'party' in London;[3] and finished the UACES year with a round-table in Brussels to look ahead to the 'Future of Europe'.[4]

In September 2017, notably, we recorded a series of conversations with people who have made UACES what it is today, and those who will take it into the future. All participants were willing volunteers, and were invited to participate in our project to ensure that their specific memories and observations were not lost to time past. The exchanges took the form of conversations: yes, in front of the camera, and with sight beforehand of the areas we would cover; but also friendly in tone, and between individuals connected through UACES.

First were some of the recipients of the UACES Lifetime Achievement Award (Geoffrey Edwards, Emil Kirchner and Brigid Laffan), who collectively conducted an exchange with UACES Executive Director Emily Linnemann. These are scholars who have been highly influential in the field of European Studies and recognised as such by their peers. What could they tell us about European Studies as an academic field and about its institutionalisation in the universities where they spent their careers? What else might they have to say that could help us and our successors steer UACES into the next 50 years? Unsurprisingly, this conversation covered a good deal of important ground and the participants' observations tell us much about how and why UACES and the field of European Studies look as they do today. They also direct us, even if only implicitly, to think about whether and how academics respond to criticism from peers and others, about the boundaries of relationships, especially those between academics and policymakers, and about the responsibilities of academics when seen through a longer lens. This conversation thus has salience today and much of it was picked up in the other interviews, not least with the UACES Chairs.

In the second of the conversations, the current UACES Chair Helen Drake invited two of her predecessors, former UACES Chairs Jo Shaw (2003-2006) and Richard Whitman (2009-2012), to share their recollections: both of what they did for UACES, but also what UACES did for them. In the case of UACES, others have argued that the Association exists in large part through the 'accidents of persons and places' (Milward 1975: 74). Individuals and their sense of agency clearly have been crucial to the fortunes of UACES; but our research into the UACES archives demonstrates that it is just as much the successes of the Association in consolidating its more permanent foundations (its finances; its infrastructure, for example), particularly latterly, that have brought the Association into its second half-century of service to its members. This conversation between Chairs illustrates the challenges of striking this perpetual balance but reminds us also that the structures of the

Association are themselves the product of considerable thought and generosity of effort, individual and collective.

According to Wynn Grant, an academic association is in part characterised by its operation of a journal (Grant 2010: 1-2). Alongside *JCER*, UACES is inseparably associated with the internationally-renowned journal *JCMS*, of which it is part owner with publishers Wiley. We therefore asked past and president editors of *JCMS*, Simon Bulmer and Toni Haastrup, to tell us all. With *JCMS* as its focus, this conversation offers its own fascinations, perhaps mostly for its demonstration of – here too - the centrality of *people* to the development of a journal and a field. Additionally, the health of the journal and its contents are windows onto the state of the academic field and the academy itself. The thoughts expressed by the two editors illuminate precisely these twin environments. They talk about that holy grail of interdisciplinarity and of how disciplines and sub-disciplines move in and out of fashion; and they reflect also on the influence of external factors (such as the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF)) on academics' publishing strategies - and the consequences.

Consequences, of course, are felt most deeply and for longest by the younger generations. Equally, no academic discipline, association or institution would have a future if it were not for the turnover of generations. It is in the relationship between established scholars and those new to the profession that UACES has arguably wrought most change. In its earliest days, UACES did not admit student members. However, by 1971 they were entitled to a limited membership, with the right to attend events but not to vote in elections and at AGMs (UACES 1971). This membership has developed over time. In 2017, the journey from limited participation to full membership rights for students is complete and we could argue that UACES sees its student members as its foremost priority. We support a parallel governance structure, the Student Forum,[5] and since September 2017 have separate membership options for PhD students and early career academics. Our funding applications to external bodies emphasise the needs of our student members and, we note in passing, that in recent years we have extended our attention to young people who may – or may not – one day join the academic profession: sixth-formers.[6] Our final conversation, then, was between colleagues who in the past were chairs of the Student Forum.[7] Could they help us to understand the dip that we have encountered in recent years in student take-up of opportunities offering funding and material support? What are conditions like for doctoral students and how is the academic profession seen from those about to embark on it?

As a result of these conversations, we are privileged to have a wonderfully rich collection of oral interviews and conversations with people who have made UACES what it is today and those who will take it into the future. A number of themes emerged that were common to all or most of the conversations, and each provided valuable insights into the role UACES and its members have played over the 50 years of its lifetime as well as the types of challenges the field and the Association have faced over that time. Those themes included: the membership; interdisciplinarity; internationalisation; events-driven research; academic-policymaker relationship; contribution to social sciences; continuity and change; epistemology; and more.

Drawing on these themes, and with direct reference to the conversations themselves (also available in video format), in what follows below we have therefore given ourselves here collective licence to highlight key points that, as we see them, stitch the story of UACES into its broader contexts. In so doing, we want this tale, of course, to speak to the current UACES community; perhaps to bolster and inspire it. Crucially, we hope it will also resonate with the 'real world' out there: the highs and lows of UACES's past 50 years, it turns out, shine a light on current and urgent matters, not least the challenge of withdrawing the UK from its 44-year membership of the European Union (EU). It will fall to future UACES officers, staff, trustees and members to shape UACES's next 50 years and we offer in the remainder of this Preface, and in the Special Section as a whole, our collective efforts to curate UACES at 50.[8]

WHAT'S IN A FIELD? EUROPEAN STUDIES AT 50

Our conversations really underlined the importance of the stock-taking opportunity that an anniversary allows. Amongst other things, they revealed early scholars of European Studies to be pioneers, working in the avant-garde of higher education; pioneers also in relation to many of the structures within which academics have to work today, including (sometimes faux) departmental delineations, access to funding and the strictures of research quality assessment. As Alan Milward reflected in 1975, the nascent European Studies movement 'attracted support from a variety of educational reformers who would like to change the organization and curriculum of university and polytechnic education' (Milward 1975: 69).

Milward's article was written as what he calls the European Studies 'movement' was finding its feet within British higher-educational institutions. At the time, UACES was just 8 years old. He describes European Studies degrees at varied institutions and identifies them as a collection of different disciplinary methods, nearly all including some element of modern foreign language learning. He highlights the importance of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of Europe because 'the EEC is so complex an institution that it can not [*sic.*] adequately be studied within the framework of one traditional "subject" only' (73). The 'movement' he describes is one in which the traditional barriers to interdisciplinary study are broken down and replaced with new working methods. He recognises that this is a challenge for him and his colleagues and that in working in an interdisciplinary way they are trying to reverse a 'general trend' in British higher education towards keeping students strictly within one disciplinary field (74). He argues that European Studies is unique in encouraging its scholars to break out of 'the protective shell of their subject' because of the complexity and ever-changing nature of what they are studying. If they want to 'find out what they are talking about' he argues, they have to work with those from other university departments (74).

This sense of European Studies scholars as academics searching for a new way to work and a new way to define their own community is apparent in the conversations recorded for this issue of *JCER*. What is also apparent is that this community has faced challenges over the years and – as a result of the structural restrictions[9] placed on academia by politicians, funding bodies and university management – the work of self-definition and in particular the pursuit of interdisciplinary endeavour has very much ebbed and flowed. Emil Kirchner clearly identifies this when he says that 'we started out with this great concept, do European studies because we bring in different disciplines; economists lawyers and so on' (UACES 2017a). Jo Shaw remarks that she has always found the UACES conferences a welcoming place as a lawyer and highlights her own commitment to interdisciplinary research: 'I have been able to work with both political and legal scholars and bring some of the questions that they ask into debate with each other and be genuinely interdisciplinary' (UACES 2017b). That is not to say that her appearance at UACES conferences has not sometimes been greeted with surprise. She recounts being asked at a UACES conference '"You're some sort of lawyer aren't you?"'

In the conversation with *JCMS* editors, Simon Bulmer similarly remembers the value of working across disciplinary lines with his fellow *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* editor, Andrew Scott. Scott is an economist whilst Bulmer is a political scientist. However, both he and Toni Haastrup also identify several issues that arise for a journal which is trying to publish, at the very least, a range of disciplinary research articles. Bulmer's predecessor was an economist and, as such, the journal had 'a very economics orientation'. He recalls writing an editorial in which he and Scott foregrounded their desire to rebalance the journal by increasing submissions from politics academics. However, because of the perception at the time that *JCMS* was an economics-orientated publication they 'didn't have a politics manuscript to publish until one came in and saved the day'

(UACES 2017c). This highlights how easy it is for a journal to gain a reputation for only publishing particular kinds of article from particular academic disciplines.

As UACES's flagship journal, *JCMS* arguably needs to have a broader appeal and successive editors have put in place strategies to achieve this. It is an objective that the current editors Toni Haastrup and Richard Whitman are continuing to support. However, as Haastrup explains there are always limits to this:

> On the one hand [...] we do want these different disciplines and increasingly, we are actually encouraging interdisciplinarity [...] We don't get as many economics articles that have lots of econometric models because we do want people reading *JCMS*, a sociologist [for example], to get something from an economics article.

Another challenge for *JCMS* in attracting articles from economics scholars in particular is identified by Bulmer when he explains that 'the Research Excellence Framework or RAE before that in the UK, meant some tailing off of economists because they have a hierarchy of journals that they have to publish in'.

The quality-assessment of research in the UK also affected Kirchner's experience of working collaboratively with colleagues across his university. His ground-breaking efforts at the University of Essex to bring people working in 'six departments' together was scuppered by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which 'basically blew a big hole' through this scheme (UACES 2017a). The first RAE took place in 1986. The requirement (in Britain at least) for academic research to be quality-controlled through disciplinary sub-panels has demanded that academics align themselves more clearly with particular disciplines and departmental striations. There are signs that this is changing. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment taking place in 2021 is already seeking nominations for its sub-panel members. Interdisciplinary approaches to research are being emphasised once more and steps are being taken to ensure that research which crosses disciplinary boundaries is assessed equitably with its more clearly delineated counterparts (REF 2021). Whether this approach works to accurately and fairly assess interdisciplinary research remains to be seen but what it does suggest is that within the tightly-regulated UK higher education sector attention is being paid once more to the pioneering way in which UACES members work and have continued to work over the last fifty years.

UACES's nature as an association which exists outside of the structural restrictions of higher education institutions and divorced from the linked demands of quality assessment organisations and funding bodies means that it has the potential actively to foster interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity. Its conferences welcome political scientists, lawyers, economists and sociologists. Its journals publish work from historians alongside the work of legal scholars. But this does not mean that there is not more to be done. UACES has a commitment to continue to extend its appeal and bring together scholarship from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. This is not in order to create an 'ivory Tesco' (Milward 1975: 79) but rather to allow our members the space to work in new ways and to develop their ideas in conjunction with others who may bring a different perspective or methodology to the table.

It is not only interdisciplinarity which the participants in the recordings identified as a characteristic of European Studies. Another key feature of the field is its inextricable link with its object of study, the European Union. European Studies's growth has been concurrent with the shifts and changes in the EEC/EU itself; as Brigid Laffan puts it: 'there's always been a dialectic relationship between developments between the EU and scholarship on the EU' (UACES 2017a; see also Keeler 2005). Laffan goes on to note that in the early days of EU scholarship it was possible to know a lot about what was happening in the EU in different policy areas and institutions. However, as it developed

into a 'more complex polity and economic space' academics found it increasingly challenging to know 'everything'. Instead, scholarship became more specialised and events-driven. Laffan raises the possibility that in pursuing specialisation, scholars 'forgot some of the larger issues of European integration, the big macro questions of the nature of the polity that was developing.'

This development is also noted by Simon Bulmer and Toni Haastrup. Bulmer refers to it as an 'events following' which he says 'drives the way the journal comes out, how it looks to the reader' (UACES 2017b). This events-driven research has the effect of fostering comparative perspectives and, as Haastrup notes, this kind of research is now being encouraged by the new editors of the journal. Kirchner identifies the turn back towards comparative regionalism as a positive turn in European Studies and describes it as having 'something to offer in terms of other disciplines'. As he describes it, the development has been from a more 'narrow driven integration theory per se' to a more outward-looking focus which has 'been a good thing on the whole' (UACES 2017a).

Events-driven research is clearly on display at UACES conferences and in some of the concerns of our Collaborative Research Networks.[10] The UK's withdrawal from the EU is a current notable example but others could include the migration crisis, the Eurozone crisis and the renewed hold that illiberal democracy has on certain European Union member states. It seems that for many years to come 'a considerable number of the learned [will] have much to be thankful for in the uninspiring and rather sordid compromises of Brussels' (Milward 1975: 73).

Milward's somewhat tongue-in-cheek point is that European Studies scholars have always been closely linked with events affecting Europe but also with the decision-makers driving through changes. This is another striking feature of the European Studies field: its scholars' close links with policymakers. The UACES annual conference has, over the years, featured a range of influential speakers and our members can be found working in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at the European Commission and in the European Parliament. The researchers of initiatives like the ESRC-supported UK in a Changing Europe programme comprise many UACES members and select committees in both the House of Lords and House of Commons have invited our members to attend and give their expert opinion. This demonstrates the importance of the research being undertaken by UACES members and its impact outside academia. As impact, for better or worse, becomes an increasingly utilised method of assessing the quality of research, UACES members have been able to construct 'little relevant narratives' from their engagement with policymakers (UACES 2017a). But as Geoffrey Edwards notes, this positive outcome of academic/policymaker engagement wasn't always the overriding concern. As he says, 'we really had trouble throughout our history in a sense that at the outset we are always considered to be so pro-European, we are all a suspect'. He continues, 'we've always had this close relationship with practitioners which to some of the more recherché international relations scholars has [...] been problematic for us'.

The link between European Studies academics and European policymakers has frequently been read by critics of the field as proof of its pro-EU stance; we return here in our conclusions. When this suspicion comes from fellow academics it can cause problems – as Edwards highlights in the recording. When the suspicion of bias comes from a member of a government it takes on a more sinister tone. This more troubling intervention was exemplified in a letter sent on House of Commons stationery on 3 October 2017 by the UK Conservative Whip and MP for Daventry, Chris Heaton-Harris, to university vice chancellors across the UK. Heaton-Harris specifically asked the VCs to 'supply' him with:

> the names of Professors at your establishment who are involved in the teaching of European affairs, with particular reference to Brexit. Furthermore, if I could be provided with a copy of the syllabus and links to the online lectures which relate to this area I would be much obliged. (quoted in UACES 2017a).

This letter was greeted with consternation from academics of all disciplines and fields and denounced as 'McCarthyism' by the left-wing press and politicians (Fazackerley 2017). The letter instigated a campaign from the *Daily Mail* to discredit academics, many of whom were UACES members, and to encourage students to write to them 'exposing' pro-European bias within their universities (Martin, Witherow and Stevens 2017). UACES's response to the letter was a statement that the association 'vigorously contests any politically-motivated interference with the right of its members to research and teach' (UACES 2017a). The association takes its responsibility to protect its members seriously and its mission to promote the teaching and research of European studies for the public benefit will continue to be its first priority as we look to the future.

WHAT'S - OR WHO'S - IN AN ACADEMY? UK HE AT 50

Notably, the statement highlights that UACES is a 'community and a home to scholars at all stages of their careers' and offers support to all its members, whether they are based in the UK or further afield. This recognition of UACES as an international organisation which welcomes students and early-career researchers alongside more established academics may seem unremarkable to our current members. Over 50 per cent of UACES membership is based outside the UK and around 25 per cent are students (UACES 2017e: 4). However, this broad membership base was not always the norm within UACES. Indeed, when the association first started it was very much focused on providing support to UK-based scholars who had, at the very least, completed their PhD. The internationalising and broadening of UACES's scope has contributed to the growth of the association and has also led to a redefinition of what the academy is and who it is for.

From UACES's earliest days the question of who could and should be a member of UACES has occupied the executive committee. We have discussed elsewhere in this preface the changing status of student members. Our conversation with the UACES Student Forum chairs reveals how the establishment of an autonomous yet closely-linked governance structure within UACES has helped many graduate students develop confidence and key skills (UACES 2017f). It has given them a sense of place within the UACES community and encouraged them to get involved with conference-organising, publishing and increasingly has emphasised the opportunities of social media and online platforms for disseminating research. UACES Student members now have full voting rights during committee elections and at the AGM and this reflects the acceptance of PhD students as full members of the academic profession.

More contentious than the entrance of students into the UACES community in the early 70s was the admittance of non-UK-based members. Recorded in the minutes of a committee meeting which took place on 13 April 1972 is a query from Adrian Poole about whether some 'foreign i.e. Dutch' academics could join UACES (UACES 1972). In the discussion that followed some members of the committee expressed the view that the Dutch should start their own association rather than joining the UK one. However, this sentiment was evidently overruled as the final decision was that 'in principle' there was no reason why they should not be able to join. This decision has had an enormous impact on UACES's membership. As has been already acknowledged, over the half of UACES's members are based outside the UK (UACES 2017e, 4). Our conferences are international in scope (often welcoming delegates from every continent) and as Jo Shaw notes, during her tenure it was written into the UACES constitution that there must be at least one member from outside the UK on the Executive Committee (UACES 2017b). UACES would not be the thriving and vibrant association it is today without the valuable contribution of our members from outside the UK. This drive towards internationalisation emerges in several of the recorded conversations and is always pointed to by the participants as a valuable and important part of UACES's development as an association.

One of the roles played by professional associations is therefore, whether willingly or not, to determine who belongs to the academy and who belongs to the association's field. Membership has been spoken about above through the lens of professional status but there is the question too of research focus. For UACES, the possible scope is gratifyingly wide. Academics from a wide range of fields are welcome with current members representing the Humanities as well as the Social Sciences. Still, trends are evident and the conversation with Simon Bulmer particularly, highlights both the fact and the reason for change. *JCMS*'s early focus on economics has been replaced by a focus on politics, occasioned, as Simon says, partly because of the agency of different editors but also by the publishing environment pushing Economists to publish in a narrower range of journals, recognised by their research assessment panels. As a result, *JCMS* was successful in ensuring that it broadened its appeal beyond Economics, such that Politics and IR and Law are well represented. Today, Politics and International Relations dominates in the UACES membership. While this covers an extensive range, the Executive Committee of UACES regularly discusses the need to reach out to members, potential and existing, to ensure a more comprehensive range in which voice is given to scholars working outside Politics, International Relations, Economics and Law. Thus, questions of belonging lie at the heart of much that UACES does. There are various reasons for this preoccupation. The first is occasioned by ruminations on the nature of European Studies itself and the need to preserve its eclectic, yet focused, nature. Policy outcomes impact more than the political or legal life of citizens, understanding the effects of policy on culture, for instance, is significant and UACES takes seriously its need to do so.

Global events also have their part to play in driving the UACES agenda, as the Lifetime Achievers and Chairs have said. Whether looking at the EU Referendum, what Cas Mudde (2017) characterises as a return to nativism, Trump's election to the US presidency, Russia's historical revisionism, the enshrining of Xi Jinping's thought into the Chinese Communist Party's Constitution, we are given a multitude of reasons to remember our history. UACES's archival project has been one attempt in this direction but the association is aware that historians can do more to illuminate our current political circumstances and is reflecting on ways to ensure the longer perspective can be incorporated into analysis of contemporary events.

These two reasons alone suggest that European citizens are, if not members of the academy, the subject of the academy's work. This is hardly controversial, a government focus on understanding the impact of academic work is not confined to the UK, although it may be seen there most clearly. But it does raise questions again of what this means for academics in relation to neutrality and activism and for how they define their responsibilities.

WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE? EUROPEAN STUDIES AND UACES AT 100

With 50 years behind us and the British exit looming, our collective minds have inevitably turned to what lies before us, for European Studies is a discipline that grows and changes as the context studied changes (Milward 1975). We think that we have given reason to believe here, in the face of the numerous challenges facing the EU, its member states and peoples, that UACES's pioneering spirit will stand it in good stead. Future Chairs will have to decide whether the times call for a steady hand at the tiller or whether a more adventurous, risk-taking response is called for. Looking back over its long history gives the UACES Executive much reason to be confident about its ability to adapt. That confidence is rooted in the knowledge that its membership has ever been vigilant, reflective and, when required, ready with radical solutions.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that there have also been missed opportunities and learn from them. To give one example, as Ben Rosamond, for instance, has argued, much time has been

spent on theorising about integration but very little on disintegration (2016). One of the challenges for UACES will be to think about what it can and should do by way of anticipatory measures more generally. Should it, for instance, encourage its journal editors to commission works when scholarship seems to be falling behind event? This would be consistent with past times, witness Simon Bulmer's account of his time as *JCMS* Editor. Is this a necessary part of building, shaping and developing the field or in the current times, does it cross a line and amount to a narrowly-wrought engineering of the profession? Questions also remain to be answered about the place of European Studies in relation to other disciplines. Declining student numbers have had impacts in the form of departmental closures and the rebranding of programmes. As a result, European Studies is often "hidden" within Politics, International Relations, History, Sociology and other departments. Some railing against this pattern may be called for but is it more useful to ask about opportunities afforded - does this offer greater scope for interdisciplinarity and synthesis? Scholarship on Europe continues to make significant contributions to knowledge but is there more to be done to connect this to wider trends and other disciplines?

Perhaps, by way of example, during the next 50 years UACES will be part of a pendulum swing back to the inclusion of the humanities (including foreign language learning) into European Studies? At the outset, 'Europe' was studied in pioneering universities and departments through a combination of humanities and social science. To take the case of Loughborough University alone:

> European Studies emerged in the 1968/9 academic year when, in the School of Human and Environmental Studies, a Bachelor of Science was offered in the Institutions and Languages of Modern Europe. The new degree responded to a perceived need: '… for a course which combines languages with a knowledge of the Social Sciences, particularly Economics and Politics. This degree was originally conceived of as a "European Studies" degree. It is vocational in character, though not exclusively so, in that the course aims to produce graduates with a linguistic capability in two European languages, and a knowledge of Economics and the Political and Economic Institutions of major Common Market countries (Loughborough University of Technology, 1968/9: 75 cited in Drake and Linnemann 2018).

Michael Kelly and colleagues have recently reflected on the likely prospects for such a return to the future, once 'Brexit' is upon us, and the findings are instructive (Kelly 2017).

These types of questions are, one might say, the bread and butter of professional organisations. Others speak to deeper, more divisive issues. The UK's referendum on EU membership has been the source of various disagreements and controversies, not least among academics. Perhaps nowhere was this more heartfelt than in the debate on the British exit among those who saw a responsibility for remaining above the political fray as paramount, while others felt that their understanding of the negative societal effects of a British exit outweighed a concern for academic neutrality and placed them under an obligation to adopt a stance and defend it publicly. The impact of funding on freedom of speech was often the sub-text but rarely discussed openly. On a connected but somewhat separate matter, it would be remiss not to reflect in the days ahead on the effect on political and public perceptions of close relations between academics and policymakers; when academics act holistically – here, in their guise as citizens – what dilemmas are posed? UACES responded this year by putting this and other related questions to the membership through the academic activist panel at the UACES Annual Conference and it will continue to provide a forum for debating these tensions. Dealing with controversy brings risks and UACES will need to continue to connect firmly with its membership to understand the range of opinions and possible responses.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The title refers to the chapter title of Drake and Linnemann (2018), which itself was inspired by Alan Milward's seminal article on European Studies as an academic discipline in the UK (Milward 1975).

[2] Maxine David, current Editor-in-Chief of *JCER*; Helen Drake, current UACES Chair; Emily Linnemann, UACES Executive Director.

[3] https://www.uaces.org/events/uaces50/ [last accessed 11 December 2017].

[4] https://uaces.org/events/futureofeurope/ [last accessed 11 December 2017].

[5] To be renamed 'Graduate Forum' in the course of 2018.

[6] Through engagement with schools in the form of simulated EU negotiations on the freedom of movement in 2016 and 2017, UACES has in fact revived a dimension of one of its earliest objectives, namely to inform and educate, full stop, about continental European nation states and in particular their adventures in European integration.

[7] Participants were Viviane Gravey, Liz Monaghan, Miguel Otero-Iglesias, Simon Usherwood and Anna Wambach. Simon Usherwood acted as facilitator for the conversation.

[8] Full details of the UACES@50 project can be found here: https://www.uaces.org/fifty/

[9] We acknowledge too that structural changes can be interpreted as opportunity rather than restrictions, an idea we return to in the concluding remarks.

[10] http://www.uaces.org/networks [last accessed 11 December 2017].

In Conversation with: UACES Lifetime Achievement Award Winners

EMILY LINNEMANN SPEAKS TO GEOFFREY EDWARDS, EMIL KIRCHNER AND BRIGID LAFFAN

LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING

Facilitator:	Thank you everyone for being here today. I am Emily Linnemann, I am the Executive Director of UACES and it is really nice to be here with some of the lifetime achievement award winners that UACES has awarded the prize to over the years, and we have Emil Kirchner from the University of Essex, Brigid Laffan from the EUI and Geoffrey Edwards from the University of Cambridge.
	So, first of all, just to get started, it would be great to hear from each of you when you joined UACES and what prompted you to do that in the first place.
Emil:	I became a member in 1980 and what prompted me was basically trying to meet other people who were in the field of European Studies. I thought it was a good opportunity. In those days, I was still young and seeking cohorts of similar interests is what motivated me.
Brigid:	I joined in either 1980 or '81. I was a very young scholar at the time, based at an Irish university very few people on the island of Ireland working on the EU at the time, and I knew that I had to get off the island to meet people who worked on the EU. So, in a way, the two different UACES and ECPR were really my training as an academic.
Emil:	ECPR particularly.
Brigid:	It really helped me transform myself from an early career scholar into a reasonable scholar and UACES; we must remember also in the late 70s early '80s that academia was not that internalised. Political science wasn't as internationalised as it is now, and so these were the opportunities that you met colleagues, like minded people working on the same things, and for me, it was absolutely central to my development as a scholar.
Geoffrey:	I joined in 1975, having done European community issues in the Foreign Office immediately before, so it seemed logical to continue when I left. I left and I joined the Federal Trust for education and research and UACES rented a single room from the Federal Trust in central London at that point and so I immediately went onto the committee as an ex-officio member, since I was the rent holder as it were. At that point, we all crammed into this very small room whenever the committee met.
Facilitator:	I have seen all that in the minutes and it's really interesting the way in which we had to team up with people in order to be able to have even an office space. Things have changed I think. Over the course of your careers what would you identify as the major changes and shifts in the discipline of European studies?

Emil: Well, if I go back I think there was a lot of theory when I started out. I myself did functionalism, Neo-functionalism I think over a period of about 35 years if I reflect back. Theory has become less dominant and it's become more events driven, you have the refugee crises, the Euro crises. Many such events which now seem to dominate the agenda much more but on the other hand we have to become more competitive, so there is something to offer in terms of other disciplines and the same looking externally international relations have become more of a focus. So, from a more narrow driven integration theory per se' we have expanded quite a lot over those years and I think it's been a good thing on the whole.

Brigid: I would agree with that, we were schooled in the greats. Haas, Hoffman, Lindberg and Scheingold, all of those early theories of European integration. There's always been a dialectic relationship between the developments in the EU and then scholarship on the EU. One of the other characteristics of us that were involved at a very early stage is that we knew an awful lot about what was happening in the EU at the time it was possible to know a lot about lots of policy areas, institutions but as the EU developed and become a more complex polity and economic space then the capacity to in a sense have a grasp of everything that was happening in the EU declined so what we saw was a differentiation in scholarship I think with much more specialisation.

So, people became specialist in different aspects of integration, there were various turns like the comparative politics turn, the governance turn, the identity turn, the constructivist turn and all of that was really important but one of the downsides I think was as Emil said, it become somewhat events driven. We forgot some of the larger issues of European integration, the big macro questions of the nature of the polity that was developing so there has been enormous change.

Geoffrey: I'm not so sure I would agree with that last point; of course there has been huge change. It certainly shows that the discipline if we want to call it a discipline has expanded as the competencies of the European Union have expanded necessarily. I think it is still the case that the political scientists dominate and we lack economists and we lack lawyers and so on in the right numbers of sociologists; that was mentioned at the conference.

But one of the things that I think that has been so interesting in terms of that widening of interest and preoccupation it has also meant specialisation so it does mean that we have been widening and deepening at the same time which I think has been all to the good but I don't think we've necessarily lost sight of some of the bigger issues. I mean we've had two or three panel discussions, even at this conference on the bigger issues. Whether it's the particular issues of migration or the Euro crises but it's been set within a context of integration/disintegration.

It's been set within a context which has also a strong theoretical bias and I think one of the interesting things about theoretical development is that we've given up, yes, the grand theories but we now seem to have such huge variety of different mid-range theories which I think is particularly interesting. Because

when you think in terms of international relations for example it's nearly always been the case that the Brits and other Europeans have been off to America to learn what the latest theoretical position is.

Whereas on European issues, okay so we had trouble becoming recognised as a particular discipline rather than just an offshoot of something but I think now we offer, the Europeans offer the Americans some innovative and interesting new ideas about theory which is all to the good I reckon.

Brigid: Can I just say that when I said we had lost sight of the big questions I think they are back on the table because of the crises of the last ten years. But before then one could read paper after paper that one learnt about the minutia of particular decision routes.

Emil: Very descriptive.

Brigid: Policy but not the bigger question. But in a way crises have forced the big questions so you are absolute, I mean we don't disagree I think that the big questions are now back on the table and in a way the study of the EU both contributes to the development of social science and is now main stream in the social sciences.

Emil: I don't know whether you want to add the major challenges I think; one was and still is intriguing us interdisciplinarity, we started out with this great concept, do European studies because we bring in the different disciplines; economists, lawyers and so on in the discipline and it's been hounding us in many ways. I remember my own experience at Essex; we had six departments at one stage coming together and then the research assessment exercise basically blew a big hole in the back through your department it was and so on.

So, it is still an enormous challenge and when you go to the Jean Monnet Action Programme they still emphasis interdisciplinary, inter-projects, inter-teaching and so on. But it is a huge challenge and in my opinion rather than having succeeded we are actually having a regressive way going the opposite way, it's regrettable. But it's just one of those things in quite an adventurous way we've started out, yes, inter-disciplinary there is something to offer European studies which others do not do but it remains to be a challenge.

Facilitator: I think the new plan for say REF, which I think has become REF 2021, they do mention interdisciplinarity but I am not sure they really providing a solution on how they are actually going to assess inter-disciplinary research within the kind of framework that currently set up. Do you think UACES has a role to play in helping to improve interdisciplinarity and if you want to say that that's a good or a bad thing or whether it's a concept that needs revisiting?

Geoffrey: I think UACES has always been faced with the problem of always trying to overcome it. Whether it was in the 1970s trying to get more economists, I think when we appointed Peter Robson as the editor of JCMS, the idea was to get an economist to try and bring fellow economists in. We never had quite so much trouble with the lawyers, Allan Dashwood was there from the beginning and so on, so lawyers have not been such a problem but it has been the economists who for their own reasons have been drawn away from anything, as far as I can see anything practical in to number crunching and so on.

	I am not sure UACES or anybody else in political science has the ability to overcome that.
Brigid:	Economics as a discipline it's one of the few disciplines in the social sciences that has a high level of confidence in what it does and how it operates.
Geoffrey:	Misguided confidence.
Brigid:	Economists tend to, you can go to any economics department in the world and they all behave the same way, they know what the top five journals and that's what they do.
Emil:	That's exactly it.
Brigid:	They are very theoretical; I think one of the things that the crisis particularly the financial crisis, the global and not just the European has done is it's brought political economy back into fashion and if one can't in a sense it isn't possible to co-opt the theoretical economist then I think economic historians and political economists is where there might be some leverage.
Geoffrey:	I think if our business schools and so on …
Brigid:	Yes, and some of the best economics is being done in business schools today.
Emil:	Yes, and it is so reflective. If you look at the trend of market studies you look at the trend European integration the contributions by economists is very small because as stated they have their number one, number two, number three, economists [channels] they want to be seen in there and they don't want to waste their time literally publishing something somewhere which they know they won't get the recognition. So, its opportunity costs as they call it.
Facilitator:	So, we have talked about the discipline and how that's changed and how definitions or understandings of interdisciplinarity have shifted, what about academia as a whole? So, the academic profession, how do you feel that's changed over your time as a member of UACES?
Geoffrey:	I think just one, because I'm not sure I can answer the bigger question but one of the things that I find really interesting, is the way in which especially in European studies in it's relation to the academy and it's relation to policy where we really have had trouble throughout our history in a sense, that at the outset that we are always considered to be so pro European, we are all a suspect.

That fell perhaps into abeyance once the UK became a member and so on but we were always in a sense suspect from international relations or political theories and so on as being perhaps a bit too policy orientated, perhaps forgetting some of the bigger issues and so on. That has had real problems simply because after all we did have something to offer policy. There was a structural problem in so far as policy makers always wanted to talk to us; it would be terribly easy to talk to officials whether in national capitols or especially in Brussels. |

So, we've always had this close relation with practitioners which to some of the more recherché international relation scholars is always been problematic for us. But I think that problem of us being fairly close to the practitioners has lead us being suspect in some of the eyes of the other disciplines. I think that has now changed with the REF in so far as we are all now constructing these little relevant narratives.

Brigid: Impact studies.

Emil: Impact studies, exactly.

Geoffrey: So, perhaps the circle has come around and we are less suspect but we are actually still involved with policy.

Emil: I think in terms of there are two ways of looking at that; we have made a tremendous contribution to academia when you look at the number of journals which have been created. The number of books that have come on the market, that's a huge contribution. Secondly, we have opened also something called comparative regionalism, which science hasn't done, IR hasn't done and that I think is actually in many ways the future, this comparative regionalism. Where we really open up in many ways and learn from what is happening in Asia and Latin America as well as they learn from us the European experience.

I think has been delightful in many ways but a huge contribution to academia. We should be proud of ourselves in some ways as to the contributions we have made. Yes, there are those niggling questions about in terms of REF and so on; it's always when you compare them in the discipline, where have you published? Where is the [trend] of common market studies ranked or where is the academic science review ranked and so on? Yes, there are differences but there is only one way of looking at it, there are other ways.

Brigid: I would say I've observed two big shifts in academia over my career and not just in European studies. One is the internationalisation of our universities, but academic markets, particularly the UK academic market but not only, are much more open then what they were. When we started most of the departments were almost mono-cultured, mono-national whereas now there's been a dramatic change and shift in that. I think European studies attract a multi-national, multi-cultural group of scholars, precisely because of what we are working on.

Then the other quite different dynamic has been when I joined as a young scholar the department would tell me what its expectations where of me in terms of teaching but it really didn't bother me much after that. You developed your course outline, you delivered your lectures, you assessed your students and you did your own work. You went to departmental meetings but it was all very calm and collegiate whereas over time driven by increase in student numbers, more centralisation within universities, academic life has changed and its much less self-regulation and much more top down regulation than when I started out.

	The other thing I observed is when I was a very young scholar; our university still had what we would call in Ireland characters. You know, professors of history who spent the afternoon in the pub regaling their students with all sorts of stories. Universities don't have room for these people anymore.
Emil:	I think there is one other aspect worth mentioning and that is looking a little bit at the outside. The Jean Monnet Action Programme has done really a substantial help to us as European studies, lectures and researches. The funding alone is in many ways, we had chairs, and we had modules and then later on the centres and now projects and networks and so on, it's a huge contribution. Secondly, the Erasmus program, we should not forget, again we profited from that.
	The exchanges would have taken place and so on, we plugged into a kind of framework which if we had to create that on our own would have been extremely difficult. So, I think we should give credit there too, to where we got help from.
Brigid:	Yes.
Geoffrey:	All of which Brexit raises questions.
Emil:	Yes, exactly.
Geoffrey:	I mean in terms of funding, in terms of teaching and teacher and in terms of students.
Emil:	Horrendous.
Facilitator:	I think we will come onto Brexit in a moment but I just wanted to just again return slightly to that internationalisation. So, I wanted to pick up Brigid, on what you were saying about internationalisation of higher education generally and I just wondered what your thoughts were, particularly someone who hasn't worked in UK academia but how UACES has affected academics, universities outside of the UK?
Brigid:	It's very clear to me that UACES is easier in the US at one time may have been larger and may have attracted a larger number of people to its bi-annual conference. But certainly, for the last ten years I think UACES is the largest European studies association in the world. Certainly, the largest in Europe but I think in the world and so it's hugely important not just to scholars in the UK academia but European academia. You tend not to get Americans traveling to Europe for conferences that much but certainly its multi-European association now.
	It's been very important in terms of what it does for young scholars, not just in providing the opportunities to deliver the first and early paper but all of the other things it does for young scholars. So, I would say Ireland had a very small association of European studies that I was secretary of for several years but we were tiny so without UACES we'd have been locked into this tiny tiny academic community. So, I think it's been hugely important, not just in in the UK context which is obviously its role but much more widely in European terms.

Geoffrey: The only thing that I will just emphasises the point about young scholars because I think that has been a critical role for UACES. But I think also the way in which it's not just at giving papers at the annual conference but the funding of smaller conferences and research groups.

Facilitator: Going forward we have obviously mentioned one of the particular challenges that is coming down the road for European studies, but what do you see as the major developments in European studies in the next few years and you may want to bring into that Brexit and how that might affect the discipline.

Emil: Well, I think youth really has to be the focus. If we do not now recruit sufficiently and there are dangers because Brexit being one, we have de-emphasising European studies now for some time, language programs have gone down, if we lose sight of that I think then the future looks indeed very bleak so whatever efforts can be made to reach out and help bring in those young scholars, PHD students or MA students even to some extent into the fold, I think the more important it will become.

That's certainly one development and Brexit is coming. The second is what we referred to already, the need to engage more in comparative regionalism, so that we as UACES can go out and say okay UACSA in America what are they doing? Arbeitskreis in Germany, but also looking at Asia is becoming more and more a focus there, enterprising in terms of the conferences and so on. So, comparative regionalism I think we have to show the young scholars it's not just Europe it's part of this strive to say this global environment, it's climate change and so on, we can connect.

I think the two are linked in many ways, looking at youth, trying to bring them in and offering them more scope in terms of what can be done in comparative regionalism. That's not to say IR, again, should not be excluded either but I think we need to be thinking a little bit more in terms of how can we move on to the good things we have done in the past and compliment them with some new ideas.

Brigid: I would say, firstly in substantive terms what are the sorts of areas we need to focus on and understand to get a better grasp of what happening. I would say we know a lot about systems of multi-level governance, the act of constellations, the policies we know a lot less about multi-level politics and the problem they are in. So, I would say we need to marry multi-level governance and multi-level politics which requires those who work on elections, public opinion to work more with people who work more on policy processes so I think that's disaggregated at the moment and it's problematic.

I fully agree on the comparative regionalism, the role of the EU in the world of perennial area of research, extremely important and the relationship between European integration, inter-dependence and wider processes of globalisation so I would say in other words there are a lot of substantive issues that are analytically challenging, theoretically challenging and empirically challenging out there. So, there is no shortage of substantive issues.

Then on the supply side or what Brexit may mean, I think we simply don't know yet. I would envisage that the UK will ask to continue to be part of Horizon 2020, the Monet programs and all of that and we'll pay a fee for that. Therefore, the United Kingdom Universities will continue to be part, but there is something about not being a member state that plays into the dynamic.

Emil: Yes, of course.

Brigid: I'm part of a consortium at the moment that's developing a bid for Horizon 2020, we are not the co-ordinators but I was very struck by someone saying well, we can have one UK partner but certainly not two. In other words, they are factoring in the shift in the UK, so I think there will be costs unfortunately and consequences. Although I don't envisage a situation where UK universities will be completely outside these programs, that's not what I envisage. But whereas now the UK is a leader, it will forego that leadership position.

That is detrimental to higher education in the UK but also to Europe because the UK has an extremely strong and vibrant higher education system and there is no reason for it to marginalise itself within the EU but unfortunately the macro political dynamics are much greater. I think that paradoxically the European question will bedevil the United Kingdom following Brexit. Whereas this was a relatively low salient issue in politics prior to the Bloomberg speech in 2013, yes it bothered some people.

But it really wasn't seen as a major issue by most people. I would predict regardless of how Brexit pans out in other words what form of Brexit, that the European question will bedevil the United Kingdom for decades ahead and I remind everyone of the role of the Irish question in British politics in the 19th century and 20th century. The Irish question was rarely off the agenda, it brought governments down, it had a major influence on parliamentary processes in the United Kingdom.

It was a major constitutional issue and it was never resolved until paradoxically I would say 2011 when the Queen visited Dublin or Ireland. The irony is that Brexit has destabilised that normalisation in relation to Ireland but that's not the point I want to make. The point I want to make is that the European question is now core on the UK political agenda. It is the big issue, and it will not be resolved by Brexit.

Geoffrey: No absolutely not. I absolutely utterly agree with that. Just on the Brexit issue, we talked about research and I hope in the bargain we may be able to strike in terms of remaining within the research area that somehow, we can also manage to keep European students as domestic students rather than foreign students. I've always been amazed why we get so many European students now when we charge them quite so much when they can be pretty much free of fees at home. If they now become international students this is going to have a terrible effect.

But the other thing I think about Brexit is not the researching on the students it's the actual people that teach it and I think the degree of uncertainty, the incompetence of the home office, the lack of credibility of the home office has got in terms of sending letters off to people, absolutely appalling, I mean how anybody can have any trust in the British Government sometimes amazes me.

	Because I think that degree of uncertainty and the unpredictability of tenure and so on is an appalling issue.
Facilitator:	Do you think UACES as a membership organisation can do anything to support its members, to mitigate some of these challenges, do you think it should have a role in this sort of thing?
Geoffrey:	I mean is UACES about to establish a centre in Brussels or become a European body so that it can still receive funding and so on? I think that might be one answer but I think the point that is being made earlier, if you are one of the or the largest group of European studies then the network is likely to continue. After all Brexit is not the priority of anybody else in Europe, there are an awful lot of issues and problems that still need to be studied and researched and so on. We can make a contribution as Brigid said; I think everybody would hope that we could still make a contribution to that.
Brigid:	I would say that UACES has got to because it's focused on the study of Europe and bringing together people who work on Europe, it has a fundamental role to play in the next phase because Europe will still be an issue for the United Kingdom but also the dynamic of integration. There are all those issues and given that there is such a concentration of scholars I do think UK universities will become less attractive to continental Europeans. That's unfortunate because even though Brexit, we are not leaving Europe as the strapline, well that's not how it feels to everyone else.
	It's seen as leaving Europe. But I think domestically there is also a very important role to play, education role to play because one of the most striking things about the referendum campaign and even now is the lack of basic knowledge of how the EU works. We know that if people don't know and don't understand the political system there are issues of trust and buy-in. I'm very struck by people who should know, don't know.
Geoffrey:	But who didn't want to know, that was the really sad thing about that campaign.
Brigid:	So, I think UACES also has a very important educational role and public information role to play in the future. Because it's not that I expect everyone walking the streets to understand how the EU operates because if you ask them how the Polish parliament operates if we went out and did a VOXPOP now they wouldn't. But it's that they know enough to feel comfortable whereas clearly that was not the case in relation to the EU during the campaign and I think of course the problem the UK faces with the press on this issue is very serious. Because it's misinformation, it's deliberate misinformation.
	I think UACES in a sense becomes more rather than less necessary but obviously we will have to work in a more challenging environment.
Emil:	I agree with all that has been said really, what can or should be done. I think there might be two other areas, we have the Academy of Social Sciences in this country and one of the really big objectives is to fight educational cuts, to support drives like European studies I would assume to link with them. Ivor Crewe, for example, now the chair of that Academy of Social Sciences, I'm a fellow of that, that is why I know what is going on and the campaigns they introduced which is really quite far reaching.

They even published pamphlets on the topic and so on, so I think we should perhaps link with them. The second is the only really hope European socialist, European parliament I can see become more representative or seek contacts with MEP's, I know they will not be British anymore but otherwise use perhaps some of your colleague's, Germany, France and so on to lobby on behalf and so on. Because overall it is still in the interest of the European parliament to promote our cause to these people so these would be two areas that I can see some scope.

Facilitator: Well, thank you all very much for sharing your thoughts and hopefully it's given UACES some food for thought for the next 50 years as well.

Emil: That would be good.

Brigid: That would be good.

Emil: We will be knocking on the door in 50 years' time.

Brigid: The next ten would be good.

In Conversation with: UACES Chairs

HELEN DRAKE SPEAKS TO JO SHAW AND RICHARD WHITMAN

[LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING](#)

Facilitator:	My name is Helen Drake and I am the current chair of UACES and I'm here with Jo Shaw, former UACES chair and I'm here with Richard Whitman, also former UACES chair, my predecessors in other words. Hello Richard, Hello Joe. I would like to ask a few questions about your time as UACES chair, so maybe the first question is just to test your memory and ask you to tell us when you were chair and what it was like for you being chair for example, how did you go about setting your agenda and your strategy?
	UACES has a constitution, did that give you ideas or did you devise your agenda and your strategy from other sources? So, I don't mind who goes first, maybe Joe, do you want to go first?
Jo:	Well, I am the older vintage so maybe yes. Although I think when I joined the committee in 2000, I think Richard might have been on the committee at that point?
Richard:	I was, yes.
Jo:	Then he left the committee and then came back again as chair later on. I was on the committee from 2000 to 2003, and then I was chair from 2003 to 2006. So, it's quite some time ago so you will appreciate that the memories are not necessarily that fresh. But none the less it was a great experience to be chair. That time I think was a crucial period of time when UACES was really building up its engagement with the student forum, and also was developing its internationalisation, I think those were two things that Clive Archer had already started and I was very pleased to carry on building those.
	I'm not sure I innovated in terms of strategy and approach but I perhaps pushed a number of things in that domain which Clive had already started developing. One thing in relation to internationalisation was that you talked about the constitution; we changed the constitution so that that institutionalised having a member of the committee who was part of the growing group of members, now very significant group of members who are not based in the UK.
	Of course the UK based group in very international because of the still strong internationalisation of British universities but very large numbers of people were now active in UACES who were based outside the UK. It seemed to me to be important to ensure that they had some voice on the committee so that they felt that it was more and more a European association and not just somehow a UK association that had some type of irredentist ambitions almost vis-à-vis the other European ECSA, the other European Community Studies Associations that are organised under the frame of the commission sponsored world ECSA.

So, those where some of the things that really inspired me in terms of my work. I'll pass to Richard now.

Richard: Well in between the two of us there was another chair, which was Alex Warleigh-Lack, so I came in from 2009 to 2012. I think it's interesting to look across that period because I think by the late 2000s we had already established, it was a well-established idea that the conference went overseas without it being something that was exceptional because you may remember when you were chair it was the Zagreb conference.

Facilitator: That was the first conference?

Jo: No, Budapest.

Facilitator: Budapest, okay.

Richard: Yes, there was an anniversary conference in Budapest but that was seen to be exceptional I think and then I think from Zagreb onwards I think really the idea was established that essentially because of the membership, it was an internationally focused association and therefore the idea should be that going overseas wasn't exceptional, it was part of the bread and butter of the way the association functioned. The fact that the conference really was for most people the centre piece of their engagement with UACES, and so we also had by that time established the idea that there was a very active competition actually to host the annual conference.

Whereas I think in the past the idea had been really that it was UK universities, I think one of the things that was very well established by the early 2000s was that we had overseas institutions that were willing, able and even to tussle between themselves to host the conference which I think was reflective as Jo said of the changing composition of the membership where we were the 50% mark in terms of the number of members who were non-UK based and then non-UK nationals. It was even larger actually in terms of the composition of the membership.

I think the other thing that we did establish by the late 2000s was what we might call the something that was always there in the history of UACES which was practitioner engagement. But I think it developed in a more structured way in a sense that we started having events in Brussels which were intended to sell European studies research back into Brussels. Which was an innovation under Alex and we had that established by that time. Of course the stable of UACES publications was also developed because JCER came into existence as well alongside JCMS and the book series also transferred from Sheffield University press to Routledge.

Facilitator: If I could interject perhaps on the internationalisation, along with Emily Linnemann, our executive director, we've been back to the early minutes, back to the late 60s when UACES began its life and there were interesting discussions we've seen from the papers not just the minutes. First of all about whether students should even be members, so it was not a student membership association at that point so it's interesting that you talked about the student

forum when you set up because that is now a very important aspect of UACES and that you both developed that.

But also internationalisation, looking back to those early papers there were discussions and in fact in the first ever mission statement the wording was along the lines of UACES in its early incarnation would have relations with continental universities and then some of the very first committee meetings talked about what those relations would look like and there was quite a strong opinion that other countries should have their own associations and it strikes me as current chair that one of the big developments has been the way that UACES is now the biggest European studies association in the world.   Not just in Europe …

Jo: It's bigger than EUSA now.

Facilitator: Its bigger then EUSA now, bigger then the European Union Studies Association which is the USA equivalent so yes, your efforts in these respects have been part and parcel of quite significant changes to the association and its remit.

Jo: I think that one of the things that UACES has evolved over time has been at the conference. When I first attended some UACES events and I think Richard's a predecessor to me than that because as an academic lawyer I was slightly more not quite so central to some of the disciplines at a certain point, although there had always been lawyers involved in UACES. But when I started to go to a few events then the annual conference was in January and that seemed like a very dark time of the year to have it.

Then somebody came up with the idea of having a research conference as well, which was the September one and that was very very lively and I think that coincided with the period of time when Drew Scott and Simon Bulmer were JCMS editors and they infused a lot of academic engagement and credibility and really took JCMS from strength to strength. That I think fed back into the idea of having the research conference, people came up with various opportunities to build that up, special events, anniversaries, one thing or another as the years went by.

By the time I took on being chair, joined the committee the September conference was established as the event. Although it's grown over the years, it still retains a certain size and focus that the large international conference don't have so you actually do think that there is some real academic work going on within the framework of the conference, it isn't just about networking.   It isn't just about you've got to be there because it's hiring venue and that type of thing. It has a genuine academic exchange dimension to it and I was delighted to see that you were playing around with different types of sessions this year.

Different types of questions about what academics do and should be doing in European studies so each chair brings their own dynamic.

Richard: I think I would agree with Jo, the game changer was having the research conference because prior to 1995, which was the first research conference I mean the winter conference as it was, was essentially a gathering of academics and practitioners and I think a lot of people thought it was a way of topping up

your lecture notes in terms of seeing what practitioners were saying about particular policy areas. But from '95 onwards of course what it also did then was create the capacity for people to be involved in the conference as participants by delivering papers rather than just being consumers of plenary type sessions.

In term that fed the internationalisation because then it was a conference opportunity that people could make paper proposals to attendants. I think originally it was every other year, I know the first one was Birmingham and I think the second one was Loughborough, the second conference. But for a while you are right, the two things ran in parallel didn't they?

Facilitator: You are right, going through the papers again the January one was a one day event and it was invitation only as in the speakers were by invitation only and it was not the great and the good but sort of prominent members of the profession plus practitioners. So, the research conference was supposed to be something very different and now they have merged. I would like to think that we have kept the best of both in that we still do have the plenaries and we still invite a speaker so that people can top up their lecture notes as you say while also participating.

Richard: One thing I know was also an anxiety and I don't know if it still holds is the sort of blend within the individual panels themselves, between more experienced academics and PhD students. Because I know it's something that we sort of agonised over in the past, make sure that it was useful particularly for PhD students, to have panels which provided that function. But I think also now that you've got the student forum, you've got that learning venue which is separate but obviously still connected to the main conference, haven't you?

Jo: The things grow in parallel but in terms of the development of ensuring that the early career researches get a good deal out of UACES, again this year you've introduced an early career membership.

Facilitator: A new tier.

Jo: A new tier of membership between the PhD students and as it was the four members which I think is important. It was one of these things of Oh, didn't we do that before? But clearly not.

Facilitator: It seems so natural. Sorry, if I could just add one of the things is that the early career tier, those members are full members in their own right, in the way that student members are full members in their own right as well as the more mature members shall we say so there is not a junior membership, it's just a recognising that they are at a different point in their career and so on. I'm glad that that has been noticed, it's a good thing.

Jo: I think what's important about UACES is the way in which understanding career development is organic to the organisation, to the institution, it's part of the DNA of institution. It's not a professional association that exists and then you have to be a member of it because you would be casting yourself out from your academic discipline. It's something different because it's between some of the different traditional disciplines. European studies has had to work hard to maintain its raison d'être to secure a future not just in the UK but in other parts

of academia in Europe and North America and so on where it's come under threat of what is it?

Facilitator: That does move us into perhaps the second broad questions, it moves nicely in which is the meaning. The meaning of UACES both for yourselves as academics and then for your careers more generally but yes, with regards to what some would not even call a discipline, European studies, so I would be really interested in your reflections on that, the significance of UACES, especially 50 years on in those respects.

Jo: Well, I've always been an inter-disciplinary scholar, my training is in law but I think one of the funniest things ever said to me at a UACES conference was "You're some sort of lawyer aren't you?" by which I think that was meant as a compliment but it's hard to tell. But I like to think that I have been able to work with both political scientists and legal scholars and bring some of the questions that they ask into debate with each other and be genuinely inter-disciplinary rather than just plurally or multi-disciplinary. That's where UACES can offer that opportunity to both be within your discipline but also to play with the lines that are between them.

As a lawyer as chair of the association I certainly felt very comfortable, I always thought of UACES conferences being one where I felt I could be in my slippers, I was very comfortable there and …

Facilitator: It's a nice image.

Jo: Yes, and it wasn't somewhere where you felt you had to be somehow on your best behaviour and so on. I think that UACES conferences have existed in a way, in a good synergy with this inter-disciplinary field of European studies. That's what I like to think in the sense that it has continued to grow as a conference despite the challenges that the field has faced in the UK with the REF, the RAE and other things. But then of course we predated the impact agenda by working very actively with practitioners in a way that perhaps now ought to be bearing fruit, but who knows.

Richard: I've always thought about UACES more as a clan in the sense that people have quite a lot of loyalty to the association but it's not on the basis of the same kind of affiliation that you get with a discipline. In the sense that there is an acceptance of difference and different interests but at the same time what brings people together is obviously their interest in European integration, broadly understood even if they are coming from quite different disciplinary backgrounds. I think also the other thing that has been noticeable about the subject area is they haven't really suffered from theological disputes.

I think that also gives the conference a bit of a different feel because it's not as if the case that people sort of herd to particular panels because they have a sort of particular perspective or they work within a particular school which means they wouldn't necessarily go to another panel. So, there is more of an opportunity to graze I think in terms of different areas. But I think one of the developments that kept that but also helped things to allow for a bit more congealing in some areas such as the collaborative research networks and having things where there

are a group of people who perhaps have met through conferences, who have identified a shared research agenda, who have then been able to make a bid to be able to do thing either within the conference but also outside the conference in terms of pushing on an area of research.

I think that's been a far more successful model than the one that other associations have had were you have a sections for example or where you have groups which are much permanent standing structures. Which can sometimes become quite atrophied because it's the same old people who are doing those or working in them where as the CRN's are designed in a way to have a fixed term duration to do something and then a follow on CRN. But otherwise they would die sort of a natural death and then you get a new set of ideas come forward.

I think that combination has worked quite well actually, sort of having the general conference if you like, the general panels but also having the CRN's infusing the conference panels. But as I say also doing things outside and I also I think they have driven quite a lot of research that probably otherwise wouldn't have been there. Because their thresh hold for creating one is much lower than for example a large research project, the next 2020 type project where you would require much more leg work and obviously much more paper work to put something into existence.

Facilitator: It's very, if I could just sort of, in response to your insights there, maybe perhaps in particular to do what you said about the research networks and so on perhaps we are trying to publicise that sort of thing more in a time period now when we fail or that we detect, especially younger scholars careers are far more tightly perhaps circumscribed by institutional constraints and funding constraints and so on to the extent that we've noticed even a fall off in demand for things that we are giving in terms of funding for PhD field work, funding for these sorts of research networks.

So, it's good to hear that they do still represent an intrinsic value and that we can continue our younger scholars to take them up. But maybe to close on this subject without wishing to be negative, is it not the case that the academic career particularly in the UK, so UACES is concerned with that but not only perhaps does it squeeze scholars more do you think? In so doing push them towards the big beasts? Whether it's the big funding councils or is there still a role for our sort of offering which is not a big research council and so forth?

Jo: Well, you would have hoped so, there's always whenever I come to UACES conferences and unfortunately not every year, there are always a new early career cadre of legal scholars for the first or second time, who haven't been along before. There's maybe still more space to develop that interest and that engagement and perhaps also take on some of those leadership type roles. Leadership may the wrong word but leadership at the appropriate level if you will to launch a new network or whatever.

There is still enough space in the legal academic career to develop that, that it wouldn't be so constrained. I can't really speak for how the political science has become more regimented. I have a sense that that's the case.

Facilitator: You mentioned the REF, which is a factor there.

Jo: I have a sense that that has impacted quite heavily in other disciplines but I not perhaps the best to comment on that.

Richard: One of the periods that perhaps might have been the high in anxiety in European studies was the disappearances of European study as a RAE panel. Because certainly for UK based scholars that in terms of the way that research is measured you know that kind of plugging in to that unit assessment and when that disappeared I think it was potentially a moment of great vulnerability in terms of European studies within the UK. But I think it's interesting that UACES and European studies certainly in the UK have certainly weathered that storm.

It's also weathered the decline of language teaching which European studies were very much a part of and you've ended up with conferences which are still at the same scale. Which was the case with previously but I think one of the things that's absolutely consolidated now and I think this a great thing is that non-UK nationals are the sort of defining feature of the conference. The balance has shifted clearly across time and I think that's great news for UACES. I think it's also very very good new scholars of European studies in the UK, in the sense that you've already got a kind of network that you can plug into very easily.

At pretty low cost as well, I mean that's perhaps one of the other things that we don't give UACES enough credit for, is the sort of cost of access are quite low. I think not just the financial cost but also I think the cost of just sort of getting in there and being part of a panel and so on. Other professional associations have different mechanisms by which they would use conference papers, access points for people in terms of sections or parts of the conference and so on.

I think the gateway or the sort of gate keeping aspect to participation in the conference is set quite low in a positive way that allows people to come and sort of try and then potentially come back again which is not always the case with some other associations.

Facilitator: We've got enough time left to broach a third and final issues which is let's call it Brexit, that's the easiest way to describe the current situation whereby the UK has embarked on a process to withdraw from the European union. Now you both know as previous chairs that UACES began its life before the UK joined what was then the community and in fact the failure to join in the 60s on two occasions. As far as I can work out from looking at the papers was the spur to the creation of what has now become UACES as in a worried group of academics in the UK wanted to set up a group to learn about what was happening on the continent and then within quite a short space of time to study the accession process and then membership.

So, 50 years on as you know sort of one of the things that I've spent time on as chair this year, 2017, is 50 years since 1967 and here we are 50 years on with the UK negotiating to leave. So, I suppose my hope, my expectation is that UACES will outlive the UK's formal membership or current membership of the EU. There's even more to understand, we go back perhaps to being the worried

academics who feel we need a forum to understand what's going on and to understand what will become the EU 27.

That's how I pitch this and it would be great to hear from both of you whether it's advice or guidance for my successor, who in a year's time will be, whoever they may be will be taking up the chair, how do you see the associations future. You may not gaze into the next 50 years but how do you see the association's future in; let's call it a Brexit/post Brexit environment. Any thoughts, your insights are welcome.

Jo: I'm not sure I can say very much about how I would predict the association might go forward but I would like to say something about the role of law and legal scholars in all of that. Because I think there is a parallelism between the two phases, not just in the way that you described it but also in terms of how then at those two phases suddenly everybody becomes a European Union lawyer or as we would now say a European Union lawyer so as the same way that legal scholars were quite prominent in the early years of UACES, that perhaps the middle years was not so obvious.

In the same way that sort of epistemic communities of lawyers in different parts of professional and academic practice are clearly as people like Morton Erasmus have shown very clearly very much a part of engine of integration that got moving in the 1950s and 60s and into the 70s. So, in this field suddenly people are tweeting out little gifts of Michael Dugan telling one of the Houses of Committees exactly what a non-tariff barrier to trade is. I tried to asking leave campaigner's what they were going to do about non-tariff barriers to trade during the referendum campaign.

It was like don't be silly, it's all about tariffs and of course it's not about tariffs, I've been trying to teach about non-tariff barriers to trade for 30 years and nobody has been much interested. Now of course they are interested and we're all now European Union lawyers, we're all experts on Article 50, we're all experts on this, that and the other in a way that has always been there in an underlying way. There have always been those key lawyer political scientist collaborations that are crucial to the developments of the discipline and I'm thinking about Simon Bulmer and Kenneth Armstrong on the single market for example back in the 1980s.

But there is that sort of parallelism, so the one positive that you can take out of it in terms of inter-disciplinarily is that it really proves that you need people working together across the disciplines in a way that I think the ESRC program on Brexit has taken quite a while to get to grips to understand just how crucial competence are or voting issues. As well as regulatory questions about what do we understand by mutual recognition or what is the difference between the Norway option, the Canada option, and the Ukraine option and so on and so forth?

So yes, the centrality of legal solace ship to that process and legal understanding is at least something positive that we can take out of it and UACES has to be part

	of that answer because of its capacity to bring those discourses into conversation with each other.
Facilitator:	Thank you. Yes.
Richard:	Maybe it's to a contrast between where things were in the late 60s and where they are now. I mean it was a smaller group of people studying but also people from quite different but connected networks. That you had other organisations like Chatham House for example where you had the same people, John Pinder who was the recipient of the first UACES lifetime achievement award, these were people who were a group of people who were all quite active in seeking to understand to explain but also to make the argument for UK/EU accession.

I think where we are now is clearly we've got more professionals who would suggest that they are studying the EU. We've got a far more diffused field and actually one of the challenges is how do you bring people together who are operating in their own individual silo's in a way that sort of make connections that are useful at this particular moment in time, so I think that is something that is worth thinking about because one of the big changes across time and you see this very clearly in the literature is that there were a lot of EU generalists.

Now we've got a lot of EU individual area or sub-area specialists and how you are able to marry those two things together. Which I think is a real challenge, but I think also perhaps there is an issue of moral, esprit in terms of at the start of the association there was clearly a project and a direction of travel which was that was the idea that the UK should be part of European integration process. Whereas now there is that uncertainty isn't there? As to what the destination might look like for the UK.

So, thinking further down the road is it the case that one of the core focuses is going to be the UK exceptionalism or is it going to be the case that we have sort of the recurrence of the older debates? Which is the re-entry trajectory or where is the UK in terms of being semi-detached and so on and that throws up all sorts of different issues, particularly for the study of the EU in the UK. But also how you then become a sort of blended association in a way with a lump of people who are on the outside all thinking about how you connect in a different kind of way.

Whereas the majority perhaps are preoccupied with how the show continues to operate.

Jo:	Exactly, exactly. Because that's the difference so coming back to what we were talking earlier on in terms of a lot of the energy of the association coming from people for whom Brexit, everyone is saying well Shultz and Merkel didn't spend most of their debate talking about Brexit, well duh, of course not. It's the same I'm sure with many of the panels in the conference are quite rightly getting on with understanding new modes of governance, new different types of economic or geopolitical security threats and so on, you know understanding Russia.

So, maybe we cannot make the mistake of going in with British exceptionalism were we to go around the circle again maybe we can help to try and overcome

that. I'm sceptical as to whether that's possible in this sense that in wider society British exceptionalism is incredibly healthy and continuing and sadly a lot of people have just got a lot of thick sacking on their head and just can't really understand it. But maybe academics can play a role in trying to do that.

The fact that UACES has got this substantial group who are business as usual is a lot of questions that aren't just Brexit.

Facilitator: On that note I think that is a good place to end that yes, it's not all about Brexit. Jo, Richard thank you very much, my time as chair has been made all the easier and more enjoyable by the foundations that you put in place but also by the fact that you are still part of the group, a clan sounds like others are excluded, it's not but that you are still here, you still come to the conferences and that means an awful lot I think.

In Conversation with: JCMS Editors Past and Present

MAXINE DAVID SPEAKS TO SIMON BULMER AND TONI HAASTRUP

LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING

Facilitator:	So, hello, I'm Dr Maxine David and I'm very pleased to have here with me today two editors of JCMS, one former, one current. We start with Professor Simon Bulmer who is at the University of Sheffield. I'm sure he'll be known to everybody, and Dr Haastrup who is at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Thank you both very very much for agreeing to do this.
Toni:	Thank you.
Facilitator:	So, if we could begin maybe with you, Simon. Just talk to us, maybe share some of your memories of being a JCMS editor. I believe you were an editor with Andrew Scott who was an economist from '91 to '98, is that right?
Simon:	'98, that's right, yes.
Facilitator:	So, I think especially Toni might be very very glad to hear a little about those early days, and I think it would be very interesting for us to just get some sense of what has changed, evolved, if you like, in the fortunes of JCMS and our discipline.
Simon:	Okay, I think a lot has changed. The whole technology of running a journal, the ownership of the journal, the founding editor of the journal. We've had Uwe Kitzinger who was a stakeholder in the journal until midway through our tenure as editors. There was no such thing as Manuscript Central. I remember Drew doing, Andrew Scott, setting up a software system. We were at the early stages of email, we didn't have Skype and all those kinds of things. So, we were meeting a lot, he was in Edinburgh, I was in Manchester, we were meeting a lot, have editorial meetings. Fortunately, we got on and still get on very well. He was my best man actually and I was his.
	So, it was quite a social event doing it. When we took over, we took over from Peter Robinson at St. Andrews University. He was an economist of international integration, and the journal had a very Economics orientation including comparative, regional integration, which is rather less on the agenda, if at all, at the present time. Our editorial platform was to balance with politics, and also to bring in the interface with legal studies.
Facilitator:	So, the comparative work that was being done then, that was mostly economically-directed, not much to do with Political Science at all?
Simon:	Yes, that's right, there was a lot of customs union theory, looking at West Africa, and then later while we were still editors at the North American Free Trade area,

these kinds of things. So, comparative perspectives, which today in the journal, I don't think you'll find much resonance.

Facilitator: I think Toni, you were talking about doing more work on comparative regionalism now, are you?

Toni: Right, I mean I think precisely because the journals have swung the other way, there wasn't that much comparative regionalism then. You don't necessarily find people submitting on comparative regionalism. I know that the editors that we've just taken over from Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, had this as part of their agenda, right, and they even went on a trip to Asia where they were looking at the regionalisms in Asia. Olivia actually looked at some of the past issues. So, probably in the last three to four years, you will find some articles on comparative regionalism, people working on Latin America for example, but of course, to a large extent, European Union is often the reference point

When we took over in July, they were quite explicit that we did want comparative regionalism back, we did want more interdisciplinarity because we've accepted it has swung the other way.

Facilitator: So, I wonder in terms of that swing, do you think, each of you, that that is more to do with perceptions of the journal so people just stopped submitting on it, or is it actually much much more about events in the world and scholarship following events, getting these peaks and troughs and regionalism is just back on the agenda? How would you explain it?

Simon: I'm not sure I can comment about on whether regionalism is especially back on the agenda, but I mean I think there are probably three or four things that drive the way the journal comes out, how it looks to the outside reader. One is, as you've mentioned, events.   There's obviously a bit of event following in European Integration Studies. The second is there are paradigm changes over time in the disciplines.

So, in politics, the government turn constructivism, more narrative approaches and so on. So, you see then Europeanisation, you see those coming through. Sequentially, I think a third factor is the external environment. English journals, referee journals became the norm not only for Brits and Americans, but across the continent.

So, there are far more continental submitters than before. Whereas on the other side, the structure, the Research Excellence Framework or RAE, before that in the UK, meant some tailing off of economists because they have a hierarchy of journals that they have to publish in and the journal wasn't on the list.

Facilitator: Oh interesting, okay.

Simon: So, applied policy, you tend to get from people in management schools or outside the UK system because of that REF constraint. The other thing in a limited way, and perhaps even more limited now is the way that the editors steer the policy of the journal for their tenure and I think probably at the time

we were editing it, for instance, the 30th anniversary of the journal, had a double special issue with some pretty path-breaking articles like Liberal Intergovernmentalism by Moravcsik, the Capability -Expectations Gap by Chris Hill and others, the work by Joe Weiler for instance on the law of politics interface. Were able to steer it in a way that I'm sure whether that still exists, but Toni will perhaps correct me.

Simon: I mean I would say to a large extent, that exists. Of course, you're absolutely right, there's been a change in the system, right. We don't necessarily commission special issues. We have a lot of submissions, but in terms of the submissions we have, they are quite diverse from the different, you can say, disciplines within which JCMS is ranked. So, we do get submissions from Law, from Economics, from Political Science and from International Relations. I think JCMS tries to retain a generalist audience.

So, on the one hand, yes we do want these different disciplines and increasingly, we are actually encouraging interdisciplinarity. So, perhaps now, we don't get as many Economics articles that have lots of econometric models because we do want people reading JCMS, a sociologist to get something from an Economics article.

To an extent, I think we are, in that sense, shaping the journal because we are saying to economists that you have to learn to communicate to others, not just through numbers and symbols.

Facilitator: What are those conversations like and I mean it would be interesting as well, Simon, to hear from you because you had an economist and then you had a political scientist, how did you bring those, but perhaps you first, Toni, about how difficult are those conversations to have especially with various type of scholars who rightly think they know their stuff and their audience?

Toni: I mean I think the way that we've approached this so far, bearing in mind that we've only recently taken over this, often people are submitting research that they consider to be quite good because they do know what the standing of the journal is, and often they are writing on topical issues but that would be sustainable.

So, if we as editors, if we think that it's a good thing, this is something that we communicate unofficially to colleagues about the changes that they would need to make in order for us to pass this to reviewers, right. Obviously because we're looking for a diversity of reviewers because again, we are trying to foster this interdisciplinarity. They do tend to take our advice in that sense if we really think that this is something that the journal should want to take forward.

Simon: I think from the perspective of 1991, it might be interesting to note that we had written an editorial about how we wanted to take the journal, including a balance between Economics and Politics, and didn't have a politics manuscript to publish until one came in and saved the day from Mike Shackleton as I recall. Otherwise the statement would have looked a bit empty frankly. I think also the interdisciplinarity, I mean that was a multidisciplinary issue.

Interdisciplinarity, as an example, I would given one that we had on Law and Politics, which was something that we pushed because of our editorial policy. I

think this pushing special issues in a particular way and trying to corral people, facilitated them with editorial budgets. I don't know how it is now. We were able to do that once or twice, and perhaps that also might allow me to say something about the annual review.

Facilitator: Yes, I mean we're obviously all familiar with the annual review, but I have no idea how that came about and why it came about really.

Simon: Well, that came out during one of these editorial meetings that happened to take place in Glossop between Andrew Scott and myself, that we recognised that there were similar exercises in German. There was a Jahrbuch Europäische Integration. Much bigger. There were yearbooks of that kind of thing but there was no record of what had happened.

                 We thought that that was a gap and that was something to pursue with the journal to be part of the package, but outsourcing the editor of the annual review is always different from the editor of the journal because it's a different kind of commissioned article basis, but that developed and trying to develop different disciplines as part of getting that record for the year.

Facilitator: So, I mean you had quite a long editorship. So, when did the annual review start and how quickly did it start to evolve?

Simon: Yes, I'm not sure exactly when that would be. I think around about '93, '94. We had a bit of a spurt there. I suppose the first year, you're trying to find your feet and there's stuff following through that's already in the pipeline from the previous editors, and it was around '92, '93 that we tried to make our impact. One way was through this 30th anniversary special edition and conference at the [Ford Foundation] and UACES supported.

                 Then the annual review, I think, followed on from that. So, we had then more or less set our direction and things could go a little bit more on the regular flow after that, but I'm going to have to look now online to see when it did actually appear. It's always slightly complicated because you're doing a review of the previous year. So, sometimes those two things lead to a little bit of confusion.

Facilitator: But it's interesting because I mean, you're both talking about changes. You've got quite a long gap between your different editorships, but there's an awful lot of continuity there as well. I mean obviously, I know, Toni, you've kept the annual review on, you've appointed new editors. Why do you think it's still an important thing to do?

Toni: I think, I mean to a large extent, we see the role of JCMS as being the bridge between academia and the research that is done in academia, and non-academics, whether that's policy officials or just those who are interested in European politics, the European Union or how Europe interacts with the rest of the world. In that sense, the annual review does still serve a special function because it is reporting what's happened in Europe over the year, but it's also able to highlight things that may not appear in the news but it's essential to policy making, about at the same time showcases the type of new research that is coming out in a very specific area.

	So, we do think that it's quite important to keep the annual review as that bridge. We understand for example, policy officials who use it in the commission, that it is useful to know what academics are thinking and how they're communicating, what the European Union does, but also challenges their own practices as well. They don't actually get that in echo chamber as is often the case for most of us. So, we do think it's a very nice complement, it serves a different function as Simon has said, but it's a very nice complement to the main journal.
Facilitator:	And let's hope that in the current context, they are reading it. I somehow doubt it but there we go. Shall we move onto, oh one thing actually. You, particularly Simon, have really talked essentially, I think, about agenda-setting powers, that you really had the power in that time to set the agenda and decide on where things needed to go, and I'm sure that that was the product of a lot of conversation about what was the types of things that you were talking about in terms of external events. Do you feel that you have got agenda-setting power, Toni? Or you have a publisher obviously behind you now, and then there are things like the REF and all of these different structures. So, do you think that that constraints you a lot more as editors?
Toni:	Yes and no. To a certain extent, we are constrained actually by the sheer volume of what we are getting that is actually good work, right. So, one can set the agenda when you really believe that certain things are not being given the space that they should really be accorded, but we are getting a substantive volume of submissions. To an extent, as an editor, you don't want to play gatekeeper to what should be coming in and what shouldn't be coming in, especially if again, that work is good and it is relevant, but of course you still want to maintain quality.
	Where we do, I would say, editors have a bit of power or influence in shaping is with regards to the special issue submissions. So, while it's not often the case that now, we commission anything because there are so many people really to put together special issues on their own. We can determine that we've had something on monetary policy in the last 10 years. maybe that's not the direction that we really want to go, right.
	Have we really paid attention to what Economics is saying about Europe, European Union or European Union's international relations lately, where people really want to focus on that particular thing? In my experience so far, and I've only been through one round of it, the submissions for special issues are of extremely high quality, which is almost counter-intuitive to what one might hear about what special issues are.
	People often prefer to submit their article independently. Extremely high quality, and we've decided as an editorial team that we will, if it's in our power, try to give space to those voices that are not often heard, whether in disciplinary terms or in methodological or theoretical.
Facilitator:	So, that makes me think of three things. First of all, about competition, so how much competition did you have with other journals at the time. You were definitely working in a very very crowded environment. The volume of submissions is very very high for JCMS. So, I'm just wondering what that was

like and your stewardship. Then the third question, maybe a tricky one given this professionalisation agenda that we've got, and you were talking about gatekeeping, Toni, but I wonder as well about whether we have been constrained too much by a fear of accusations of cronyism, such that we don't commission pieces in the way that you did for quite different reasons.

But is that problematic in terms of the fact that there are things that need to be said about certain issues, and they're not being said. The only way that they've been published is if somebody is actually saying okay, we would really like you to write on this because we think it's really important and relevant, and I wonder if we've lost the space for that. So, perhaps I can go to you first, Simon?

Simon: Yes, I mean those are three really interesting points. We were conscious about competition at the time when we were trying to take the journal forward because Jeremy Richardson was just launching the Journal of European Public Policy and we had come off a period with our previous editor where it'd been Economics-focused and if we were going to have balanced disciplines, we had to be careful that the politics wasn't going on in the direction of JEPP. So, we were conscious about competition and that's one of the reasons why we were proactive in commissioning. Of course, those kind of ethical considerations at that time were not so stringent as they perhaps are now.

So, we were able to take some shortcuts which we thought were in the interest of the viability of the journal and of scholarship in general. It might be regarded differently, Toni will have something to say, I'm sure. I'm pretty sure I can't recall, from 20 years ago, the volume of submissions. They went up progressively during the course of our tenure as editors, but I mean two things. The European Studies community has grown significantly over the period and secondly, the amount of contributions from non-English language first speakers, if I can put it like that, particularly from the European continent, has increased as peer reviewed articles became the norm there as well. Whereas when we started off, that was still in its infancy. So, yes.

Toni: Well, I mean I think where we've not had any need to commission yet, and then I say this two months into the job, of course. We've not had any need to commission linked to the volume, right. So, JCMS, according to our last count gets just under 300 submissions per annum, sometimes it goes a bit over that, and for a variety, as I said, of disciplines. So, we've not, at least at this point, there's not been any need to commission. Now of course in the context of those volumes that we're getting, precisely because of the competition, there might be a sense that perhaps JCMS doesn't publish certain themes and that other journals, competitive journals, are perhaps more open to certain ideas. We think, at least the editorial, the new editorial team thinks that there is certainly something that we have to confront head-on, but this is where, as Simon said, we have to look at the volume of the scholars themselves, and this is where professional associations come in.

For the most part, precisely because JCMS is part-owned by UACES, our view of who the scholars are often are far more than the UACES community or UACES-type community. Increasingly, the UACES-type community is very much Political Science, International Relations. To an extent, some Law, we're getting sociologists now. We want to change this and that might actually mean, as

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editors, engaging with professional associations that might not actually be or might not have been on our radar, right.   It is about stepping outside of our comfort zone.

It might be about going to other regions, going to Latin Americans saying, who are the people studying regionalisms in Latin America, who are the scholars who've done comparative work about Europe and European politics in Latin America.   There might be anthropology for example, right, and related to the previous question around agenda setting, I think given the competition, the structural constraints relating to the relationship between the journal editors, professional associations and the publisher, this might be the way to set an agenda.

We do hope that at least in the five years that we've been contracted for, this would be our approach because we do think that the previous editors, Simon included, have done a fantastic job in terms of establishing JCMS within United Kingdom and to a large extent, continental Europe, but there's very much an Anglosphere bias, if you want to put it that way, even with the European context.

Facilitator: Yes, so that makes me think about two things. One, we've obviously got UACES at 50 and unfortunately, in the year, we're still trying to see our way out of the European Union and I'm sure that you two probably join me in hoping that we never see a way out of the European Union. That's a different matter, but you've mentioned Anglosphere, you've mentioned language and as a publishing panel, we had a very very interesting question posed to us about how book and journal editors felt about re-publishing work that was originally published in another language or otherwise, it is allowing the author to re-publish the work in their country.

I'm wondering what you think from your experiences as academics and editors, but in the context of Brexit particularly, are we going to have to respond to that much more? And do we see a time when actually, English as the publishing language, if you like? I think for our discipline, it's fair to say that that might shift.

Simon: Well, I am not convinced about that in the near-term. I think the quality of the English language journals on the European Union is quite different from those in German or French, if I think of those journals. So, I think that's likely to continue for a while and in so far as maybe continental academics are going to teach in English to perhaps attract some of our students or our overseas students. They're going to write in English, so we maybe on the margins as a [non-member], but I'm not sure we will be as an English language.

After all, a lot of the publishing of European Union studies is by publishers based in Britain. I'm talking about book publishers here rather than journal publishers, but that to a certain degree. So, I think that's going to continue, to be honest.

Toni: I mean I would say, I don't think, even not in the medium-term, I don't think that publication in English is going to stop in any way, shape or form. However, I think at least from our conversations with the publisher, there is a desire to keep growing the market, to put it in crass terms, and they are devising new

ways of how to grow the market. Some of that includes, for example, translating abstracts into other languages, right.

So, our publisher, for example, has some of the catalogue abstracts translated into Mandarin, into Spanish for example, and I think perhaps in the long-term, I can't promise then we would be doing our tenure at all because there's already so much to do. Something like the Journal of Common Market Studies, I don't think it would be amiss to have some abstracts, maybe not for every article, but for relevant articles in Portuguese, in Spanish, in Chinese.

Facilitator: Polish.

Toni: Polish, just thinking. The world is facing a demographic change and I think again, we do think in very European Studies too. What JCMS is, EU studies doesn't necessarily have a disciplinary ranking. So, JCMS for example, is ranked in International Relations, in Political Science, in Economics, which means we are also speaking to the broader disciplinary trends and broader disciplinary changes.

Then I think it can only be advantageous if we can reach more people, but I certainly have no desire for English to stop being the lingua franca because I'm biased that way, it's my language, but I think there are other ways of talking to others around the world.

Simon: I mean the point you made about translating articles, as a JCMS editor in the past, that would be something I'd be taking on with Blackwell's because everybody assigns their copyright and then it's in Blackwell's hands. So, you've almost got to have that conversation about how far that's possible with them on an ad-hoc basis or on a systematic basis. That's not really in the hands of the journal editors actually, but it's worth investigating.

Toni: Yes, I mean I just think that there is something about learning. Ultimately, we're academics because we want this exchange of knowledge and wisdom, and I wonder sometimes as well whether it's wholly ethical to really hold fast to a line where English is the language of publishing. When actually, that then means even the most fluent of speakers, they are much more fluent obviously in their native language, but also if part of what we're supposed to be doing is to reach out to wider society, then we can't assume that everybody is going to have the same level of language acquisition. So, that question was posed to us and it has had me thinking since then. So, I think it's maybe that we need to think a little bit, but I think you're probably right. This is much for the publishers, yes.

Simon: I mean those newer to the profession, if I can put it like that, I mean there was a journal that was bilingual, French and English. It's now the journal of European Integration which came out of Canada, and where the French language aspect fell by the wayside. I don't know whether that was part of its transition to a new publisher, quite how that happened.

Interviewer: Interesting question.

Simon: The direction of travel is the other way, I think, in some respects.

Facilitator: If we could just move on a little bit to social media. We have talked about the fact that you are spanning quite a long time between you as JCMS editors. I know that you blog Simon, but I don't think you're on Twitter or anything like that. I know that you're on Twitter. Why do you blog? Why are you on Twitter and how important do you think either or both of these are for scholars today?

Simon: I think the reason I blog is to try and give short and pithy interventions for a different kind of audience, than the one demanding the full 8,000 word rigor on particular issues and in the hope that it gets picked up amongst the wider audience, not just of academics but also of policy makers and I think that is going with the flow of academia impacts these kinds of things. That I do restrict myself to blogging. I have not got involved in Twitter as yet.

Toni: Simon, I think blogging can create a very nice interface between academic resort but also intervention into societal issues. So, beyond the abstract, yes, indeed. Anyone can read a 200-word abstract, but in terms of translating quite specific academic research to a policy intervention, blogging helps with that and is something that I think is very much accepted by the academic community these days.

From a more instrumental perspective, things like blogging and indeed the use of Facebook or Twitter to promote journal articles has been shown to increase the citation rates of journal articles. This is not anecdotal. We have chatted over the last three, five years on some of JCMS; the articles have done quite well, have been impacted by the authors having blogged and linked back to the article. Mainly because we have a proliferation of knowledge now, but we don't have enough time. But if you're reading an academics blog, you can then decide well, actually, this might be relevant to my research. I will click on the link that goes directly to that article and read the full article.

When we made the bid for JCMS, we are very clear that we would like to have a blog that linked authors articles to how they communicate to the general public, but also some of their own colleagues. Now, of course, we are not going to force anybody to blog is they don't want to. I think a lot of people still find it odd, is a polite way of putting it but we do intend to give people that opportunity and so many people are already doing it, that we think that it would definitely be a good idea. Clearly, with Twitter, the JCMS account sort of tweets new issues, we tweet out articles that we think might be relevant to something that is going on contemporarily.

We found it useful and hopefully we get more Twitter followers so that we can spread the word even more, but by being on Twitter, as well as my other editors, were able to gauge what kind of new research is being done. We can tell people well, we think that this interesting, have you thought perhaps submitting to JCMS? It will still have to go through the review process and it is not the direct, straight commissioning, but I think by being Twitter, you do have a lot more access to a lot more people.

Simon: That is a slightly different point on blogging. Another point about blogging is you can get comment out of there quickly. The lead time of getting into production. Something like Brexit of course, you want to have it quick, people are hungry to hear views and it is still early days for things coming in journals, so

it may be the first ideas that then go onto a journal article whereas you are talking about …

Toni: When it has already been done.

Simon: Yes, exactly.

Toni: I think it is both, really, because I think in the end … one of the things I also like about blogging, which can be daunting is this open source peer review here, especially with the kind that you are talking about. I have also written on Brexit and in a way, you're communicating with people who may or may not agree with you and they are putting out comments there and you're having to engage with them, but for me, it has actually been quite good because it has forced me to think so when I do translate that into the more academic piece; I have already engaged with different types of people than I would have otherwise engaged with.

I think you're absolutely right. On a topic like Brexit, it is almost denying any sort of methodological or theoretical… I guess it still retains its originality in that sense. I found that in the last 18 months, the best way to get out things is through academically linked blogs, but I think also you can start that way but also refer.

Facilitator: It's a circular process in some sense.

Toni: We have seen a lot of academics doing that actually, and it's always the positive, not that it doesn't have a negative, because it is again quite time consuming. It can be quite instrumental, the positive has always been sort of much high visibility for the work that colleagues are doing and I think for that, it is quite worth it.

Facilitator: UACES 50, I think that it is only right we should end by me asking you the easiest question which is are you positive? Are you negative about the future of European studies in the context of everything that is going on or are you thinking that in 50 years' time, someone will be celebrating UACES at 100?

Simon: Interesting question. I am reasonably confident that UACES will be continuing onto the long term. I don't know about 100. That is contingent on things beyond Brexit. There is a whole literature on disintegration; if that gained any traction, then of course we would be in a different place. Brexit is a little bit more limited.

Of course, for most of us in UACES, it is a matter of deep concern. I went to Loughborough in 1972, before we joined the EU to read European studies and I will be reaching normal retirement age in 2019. This is probably my academic career in a way, so of course, I regard that for a particular personal standpoint that you can imagine. But I think UACES and the study of European Unions is more durable, even than me.

Toni: I think the same way. I can't really say 100 years precisely because of what Simon has said. There are so many other things going on, to not be too pessimistic, there are issues around possibilities of a nuclear war that even us European studies experts.

Facilitator: Not to be too pessimistic.

Toni: We do have to consider it, but I think my view though is given the constitution of an institution like UACES, European union studies and Europe Union itself, what UACES is in the long term might be different from what it is now. I hope for the better, but it is not necessarily something we can tell, but I do think that UACES will last longer than Brexit even if Brexit happens and that UACES might actually be invigorated by Brexit contrary to what people might fear right now.

We, who are members of UACES, who are in the scholarly communities publishing in JCMS but also in other journals must be willing to put in the work to ensure that UACES has this longevity that we hope for.

Facilitator: It's good to hear that something is in our hands.

Simon: I first came to UACES conference in 1976 and I think the two things that count for its longevity one is at that stage, it was a very much an invitation only conference. It was in January. So, now it is much more participatory and second, it was very much a UK conference and now it is much more a European-wide membership and both those features I think are good for the vibrancy of UACES in the longer term.

Whereas if we had been in the model from 1976, that kind of period I think we would be facing much greater challenges with Brexit.

Facilitator: So, real credit to the various executive directors we have had over the years, as well as the European studies academic community. Thank you both so much for giving up your time. This has been really really fascinating, I am sure a lot of people will be calling upon for more memories. Thank you.

Simon: Yes, it was great.

In Conversation with: UACES Student Forum Chairs

SIMON USHERWOOD SPEAKS TO VIVIANE GRAVEY, ELIZABETH MONAGHAN, MIGUEL OTERO-IGLESIAS AND ANNA WAMBACH

[LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING](#)

Facilitator:	Welcome to this roundtable discussion about the Student Forum of UACES. With me, I've got a great group of people who are going to introduce themselves. My name is Simon Usherwood, I'm treasurer of UACES and I was the second ever Chair of the Student Forum way back in the very early 2000s. Viviane, do you want to say …
Viviane:	Right, so I'm Viviane Gravey, I'm at the Queen's University Belfast, and I was Chair of the Student Forum from 2014 to 2016.
Facilitator:	Okay.
Miguel:	Miguel Otero-Iglesias and I'm the senior analyst of the Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid and adjunct professor at the AU University as well in Madrid, and I was a Chair of the Student Forum from 2011 to 2013.
Anna:	I'm Anna Wambach based at Newcastle and I've been involved in the Student Forum since 2014, and I've been a Chair since last November.
Liz:	And I'm Liz Monaghan and I'm lecturer in Politics at the University of Hull, and I was involved in the Student Forum way back around 2004 as some member of the committee and as Chair for two years after that.
Facilitator:	Okay, so between us, we've got, well, lots of experience of the forum. We're going to talk about some different things. We'll talk first a little bit about why we set up the forum, how we've seen it changed and then I think talking more about being a PhD student in European Studies and how the forum has played a role in that. As the old hand, which is always a wonderful position to have on these kind discussions, it's maybe worth saying just a few things. So, I was the second Chair of the association and I was involved at the point of setting up in about 2000 because we found that there were a lot of graduate students coming to the conference, been involved in the association but there wasn't really a place for us to get to know each other.

We thought that there was a good group of people who seemed keen in putting something together, a lot of support from the offices and the committee to try and develop that further and structure it a bit more. Really, it was about recognising that graduate students have always been a really important part of what UACES does. Just to give an example, I was doing my PhD at LSE and I never met people at LSE doing PhDs on similar topics. I had to go to UACES conferences where I'd meet people who had an office down the corridor from |

me, but who never bothered to walk down the corridor, nor did I for that matter. So, recognising that this was a great way of building capacity, and I think particularly that European Studies often is quite atomised. We're spread out, that this was a way of creating a common space for people.

So, working with the committee, working with Charlie Burns who was the first Chair, we started to set up some activities. So, he was trying to think about what's useful. So, partly about providing a contact list. So, we were setting up the Euro Research mailing list, but also having some regional conferences. So, giving grad students an opportunity to present their work in a more friendly space. It's an already very friendly space here at UACES, but an even more benign environment giving them the experience to do that.

So, one of the first things that we were doing was organising regional conferences. I think we had a North conference and a South conference and yes, I think my earliest memory was an event at Essex, bringing together panels on a whole range of subjects. I think we had a really good turnout and again, meeting some new people who hadn't previously been involved, and I think that was one of the real things, was that by having a Student Forum, making it a more explicit welcome for PhD students, which I think was a really useful development.

I'm not going to go on about the past too much, but I'm interested in getting your views about how you see the Forum developing, changing, the big changes. One of the things that we talked about is or we might talk about is the way that we've gone from having annual Chairs to having bi, two-year Chairs and quite how that came about. So, Liz, it's probably a good reason to pass to you.

Liz: Yes, well I was on the Student Forum Committee for a year, or was it two. Then became Chair when the previous Chair vacated. I think the election was uncontested, so it was more like a coronation really. It was initially for a year's term, but there was no stampede of others to take over. So, I stayed for another year, and in actual fact, the kind of continuity over two years worked quite well, and I think since then, there's been a two-year mandate for Chairs but I'm not sure about your committee members as well.

Miguel: As well, yes.

Liz: Yes, one of the things we also decided to do, it worked okay, was to try and separate out some functional roles for committee members. So, there'd be someone who's looking after the conference, someone who's looking after Euro Research mailing list and so on, and someone looking after or in charge of overseeing JCER as we called it in those days, which of course is JCER nowadays. That was an innovation that started when I was on the committee. So, we had a kind of co-Chair of the committee, Lars Hoffmann who was doing his DPhil at St. Antony's Oxford, and whilst I was chairing the Student Forum, he was the first editor, the founding editor of the journal. So, it made a lot of sense to try and split our work in that respect. So, it was becoming quite differentiated already at that stage.

Facilitator: One of the things is that the portfolio of activities has developed. We've gone through formulations of committee and roles and well, from this side of the

table, things that you introduced or that you brought about or that you saw happening, changing?

Miguel: I mean when I was a Chair actually, the Student Forum Committee was not really involved in JCER. So, the editors back then, they were really doing it themselves and then so we had to push a bit. There was a change of editors and that heads us back to co-edit or at least, find reviewers and I think overall, the Student Forum, I mean especially if you were one of the committee members, gave you a lot of opportunities to acquire skills, right.

I mean from going to the conferences to have just like peers at a new level so you are not as nervous, and it's not as daunting to be in a proper conference. It was more training for that but as well for the committee members, it was just amazing to see how you have to select places to do conferences, to organise a conference, to do the editing of the JCER etc.

So, I think it was a wonderful experience on my side and I think everyone really loved it and so, I mean we really strengthened the feeling of the Student Forum Committee should be much more involved in JCER.

Viviane: I think from my own experience, I completely agree in terms of skills training, but we try to make sure that if you had helped select the paper one year, perhaps then you were taking a lead on that and bringing new people in, showing them the ropes but also letting them learn on the job and then doing slightly different tasks year on year so that you could contribute to all the different elements of the committee. I guess a big change was also the rise of social media, the rise of the blog that we started. So, this is beyond JCER trying to decide what the Student Forum should be doing on Twitter, should be doing on Facebook, and I'm sure yes, it'd change again and we've been developing this thing.

Anna: Yes, we've been trying to become much more active on social media in the past year. Also, with a lot of help from the UACES office I have to say, just trying to get our events promoted and much more, just have it out because I think we were a bit quiet in the past year. It's only when we did have events going on, then we would tweet and then we would publish things, but now we really try in the run-up to the events and throughout the year to stay active.

We had the publisher panel here as well on Monday and that was one of the ways of getting the Student Forum out there and having another way to promote the Student Forum. Because unfortunately, we really struggled attracting people to come to the last conference, which is a shame because as we said, it's such a great opportunity to present your papers in a safe environment and a friendly environment with a really good round table at the beginning and at the end. So, we really tried and pushed it very hard on social media.

Facilitator: Yes, but thinking about getting people involved whether as participants or as committee members or as Chairs is a persistent theme, and we've tried different things. Certainly, I know those regional conferences we used to do, we had three years, four years where they worked really well, we got good really

recruitment, and then suddenly, it dried up and we went down to one regional conference and then we went into the more annual general conference.

I think that's one of the things that, for me, has always been quite striking about the Student Forum, is the way that it's been able to adapt to changing situations and finding new and interesting kind of activities. I think JCER was the classic example of that, an initiative that has taken on a life on its own. Maybe at some point, a bit too much of a life of its own, but then has come back and has that really deep, organic link with the work of the Student Forum.

Then just changing spaces, and maybe that's a useful question to you. When I was doing my PhD back in, I started in 1999 and I finished in 2003. Lots has changed that I can see and the way being a PhD student has changed, I think, also has reflected in the way that being the work of the Student Forum has changed as well. It's probably easier for me to reflect on that, but are there things that you've particularly noticed, changes that you've seen that have had that impact? How much is the Forum driving change, how much is it reflecting change?

Viviane: So, my first experience during the Forum was a seminar, the seminar in November in London, learning about publishing, blogging, all that and realising ooh, I'm a year in my PhD, I don't have any publication in the pipeline, it's a problem, I need to get going. The whole, yes, needing to publish a lot even during a PhD in order to have any kind of shot on the job market might, I think, perhaps be one of these changes in which the Student Forum has really been there as well to help students navigate that new chain.

Liz: I mean that's the reason that JCER originated in the first place, because it was becoming apparent that doctoral students needing to publish was increasingly a thing, and there was a sense that whilst one would aspire towards established journals, it was much more likely that if there was something aimed more at PhD students and early career research and cutting-edge, ongoing developing research, then that would fill that gap. So, that was really a Euro response to an emerging trend that was occurring.

Anna: I think we also use the knowledge of how the PhD has changed to attract students to the Student Forum. We say look, you know you've got those pressures in a PhD and we help you develop your skills in that area, we've got those panels on publishing, we've got those panels on teaching, we've got training on all sorts of things. For the next seminar, we were thinking about training on what to do at a conference just for people to learn how to present themselves at a conference.

Miguel: How to network, right.

Anna: Yes, as well, yes.

Miguel: That's important.

Liz: To take or not to take pictures of conference food.

Facilitator: For example, well I don't know whether I should be attending or presenting, and one of the things we were talking about just before we started filming was, Viviane, you were asking me if I had done a PhD because you seem to have this memory of apocryphal time where people could get jobs in universities without PhDs, and certainly when I was studying, I think I was at the very tail end of that. I did know of some people who had got jobs without PhDs. They had some professional experience or they had just, well, apparently just turned up and the university had employed them, and yes I found that unusual but certainly at the point that I was graduating, finishing the PhD, you needed the PhD to stand a chance.

Articles was coming through but it was very rare, and I think one of the things I notice now, not least when we are advertising for jobs, is that the requirements for entry into the job market, certainly for a permanent position have become so much more demanding, that the quality of applicants that we have is so much higher.

Again, partly that's about professionalisation of PhDs, which I think is a really important part and really reflects on the work of the Student Forum, but again, if we're looking at an entry-level job, if you don't have a PhD, if you don't have some publications, if you haven't got some funding, if you haven't done some teaching, it's possible just to scrape those people out and say well, we've got dozens of people who can do that. So, again, that shifting balance is a really important part.

Miguel: In my experience, well it might be now difficult to attract students for the Student Forum conference because I think now, it's all accelerated, right. I mean people have to publish very quickly. I mean there are even PhDs only on three pieces published because people really need to get three pieces published when they finish their PhD. So, I guess there's this eagerness to go to the senior conference as quick as possible, to publish as quick as possible, to network, to get a job, and I think the field has shrunk. There are not so many positions out there. I mean European Studies generally has been shrinking, and that makes it tougher for everyone, I think.

Facilitator: And that's interesting. We've been talking about PhDs but we've also got added career researchers which have become a much bigger part of what we had, and I see a lot of colleagues. They have their PhD but then it's a session of one-year posts and they're travelling around the continent and very much a more insecure position. How do you see the Forum doing things for them?

Anna: Well, we've only recently decided that we do invite early career researchers along as well because we thought that might be beneficial for both the PhD students attending, and for the early career researchers to still be involved in the Student Forum, still get a bit of extra training if they think they would like that. Also, a bit opportunistic, we needed more people to attend, but I think PhD students can take quite a lot out of actually having early career researchers there as well, have extra support, make the Student Forum more attractive for PhD students that'll say well, we've got people, they've got their doctorate that can give you really good advice that you can talk to.

Liz: But I think it goes beyond the opportunistic in that it's good for perhaps first-year PhD students to come to the Student Forum conference and they'd just present a paper. At second year, perhaps they organise a panel, in the third year, they can also still come back and be discussant. It's all of these different skills about conference, it's not just about presenting. So, I think even, the early career researcher can, again, bring something else in terms of professional development or just building networks because perhaps, they have to start writing grants and they need other collaborators. So, we can do more in these conferences for different stages.

Facilitator: It's interesting because one of the things I've always found about UACES is that the main association is always very welcoming and engaged with PhD students, with early career researchers, and certainly at the time that I was doing my PhD, I was more peripherally involved with other associations. There, it was very much the PhD students shouldn't sully the purity of the main activities, and requirements about having limits on the number of PhD students at a panel, at the main conference.   You see that less but do you see that as an advantage for the Student Forum, that the main association was already very open and supportive? Or how has that played out for you?

Miguel: Oh no, I think it was a natural process at the end of the day because I mean, for PhDs, the most difficult thing is to get into an organised panel, right. I mean at the beginning when you do your PhD, you just send your abstract and you think well, someone will maybe pick me, without knowing that in most conferences, conference organisers, they just take panels that have been already organised so it's much easier. So, I think that process makes it difficult for PhD students to go to the senior conference and therefore, I think the Student Forum would be but maybe, as I said, now everything is accelerated.

                So, perhaps even first-year PhD students, they know already that they need to go with other people in a panel to submit and that's why they prefer to go to the senior conference, but it should be a natural process, right. I mean it should be harder for PhDs to get in, the senior one. That's why the student one is there, right.

Viviane: But I think something we haven't mentioned yet is resources, because the Student Forum is special in that there's financial support for students to attend.

Miguel: That's true.

Viviane: And not everyone has a very big amount of money while doing their PhD, and actually having that financial support helps bring perhaps people in and then really prepare them for that when they go to one expensive conference, they get more out of it.

Facilitator: And talking about the financial support, we've also got some other streams of money for doing some study trips, but that wasn't from us setting up. So, where did that come from?

Liz: I think the scholarships for conducting field work abroad were in existence when I was in the Student Forum as a member, and I think I benefitted from receiving

them, quite apart from the financial support to actually go and conduct field work in Brussels. One of the things that struck me was that it encourages PhD students to get into the habit of bidding, of competing for funding, which has become even more important at the sense rather than expecting it to be pounded out essentially. The whole process of making a case field research, making a case for why this needs funding has just got more and more important. So, that practice, a kind of training of broader academic skills, and it's not just academic skills either.

One thing that we didn't talk about yet was transitioning from a PhD to a job outside academia, and that was a theme when I was doing my PhD. I think it's taken on a different life now in my work at the university of how I lead on post-graduate research and it's something that I talk about to PhD students as well. I don't know, does everyone else feel as though the PhD was training for and only for an academic job, or is there a sense that there are other careers possible?

Facilitator: You're shocked at the concept people might not want to be an academic.

Viviane: No, I think unless I remember it, so when we organised a session at one of the seminars on how to get a job after a PhD, and that was one of the key inputs. We needed someone who had done a PhD in Political Science and European Studies and then gone onto a terrific job outside of academia, because more and more of us leave academia after a PhD. It's not that many jobs in academia, and also there's lots of great jobs outside. So, having a positive discussion about this, it's not just because you can't find a job in academia, it's also because you might want to do something else. There's lots of great other things to do. So, that was something that I was hearing in the Student Forum, but not necessarily hearing in my university. So, I think the Student Forum lead the way as well in terms of having this open discussion about the fact that you can do something else with a PhD.

Miguel: Yes, I mean coming back to the question of whether PhDs training, the process leads to or really, people get trained properly for outside academia jobs. I don't think that's the case. I mean right now, still I think PhDs are taught in a way that will lead you to academia, instead of really giving perhaps your other skills for other sectors. That's my impression.

So, there I think, because it's true, I mean I see it at more and more fields, you need to have now a PhD. In banking, in finance, I think a lot of areas, you need to. Before, the Masters, now it's a PhD, right. I mean you even have like DBA's, right, Doctors of Business Administration. So, I think that's a trend but I think within universities, people still are trained to be an academic.

Liz: Yes, I think that's where we are responding rather than driving things, and in academia, the research councils in the UK, they're all over this notion that a PhD might lead to other careers, economically significant or socially significant careers as well as careers inside academia. So, I don't know and the way doctorial training is organised and funded by research councils in the UK has changed massively since I was doing my PhD and since I was in the Student Forum. Whereas we were organising events on elements of research training ourselves then. I think this is now increasingly really concentrated in Doctoral Training Centres, the ESRC Doctoral Training Centres in our discipline.

Facilitator:	And that has totally changed from my time. When I was doing a PhD study, it was just me. I had turned up for LSE and said would somebody supervise me, and somebody supervised me and largely, I was left to get on with it and at the end, we hoped that there would be a PhD. So, it is a very different kind of situation. I guess that prompts the question of a different kind, which is how do you see the discipline changing? European Studies is a broad area.
	So, how much is it about specific disciplines, how much is about the cross-cutting thing? Because one of the things I found really useful of the Student Forum of UACES was that opportunity to meet people from outside of whatever discipline I might be doing and get that across a fertilisation of ideas. So, I obviously see you nodding heads.
Liz:	I think one of the things we've been struggling with was the definition of European Studies, is that on paper, it is incredibly developed but if you look at who's coming to conferences, it tends to Political Science, International Relations and there's a few lawyers who really still try to come and make it more diverse. I think the diversity of European Studies has been decreasing because of lack of perhaps language skills in students, and so it's been less and less specific European Studies programmes that were really looking at different disciplines. Though that just might be coming up again now. I'm not exactly sure where it's going, there's Brexit and the fact that Europe is in the news again a lot. We might actually see a new wave of European Studies multidisciplinary programmes, but I think we need to be careful that this multidisciplinarity of European Studies is something we need to fight for, we need to really encourage our colleagues in History, in Law to consider UACES, to come and contribute and so that we're not just political scientists talking to each other.
Anna:	I had conversations with people trying to convince them to submit an abstract for a Student Forum conference, and then well, I'm not European Union Studies. You look at what you're doing and look at what I'm doing, I'm not just strictly European Union Studies in that sense.
	So, you can actually submit, ones… oh right, it's that broad, I didn't know that. So, maybe it's a matter of getting the word out there as well, that you are invited and we are a broader field than it might look like from the outside.
Miguel:	Well, I think European Studies generally, I think now it's inserted a little bit more global. I mean as I see more Masters and broader post-graduate courses are really more about IR. I think students, I don't know, maybe the UK with Brexit and that might change, but I think at least Madrid, my university, people really want because now it's a very international university. You have people from all around the world and then there are a lot of these people, Japanese, Chinese, from the Arab world. They are not really interested in European affairs that much, and I see the trend that European affairs is just one aspect of a broader IR Studies.
Facilitator:	Which prompts the question what about the future? And we've been looking back a bit over the past, nearly 20 years of the Student Forum. Where do we

go, what do we see as the challenges that we need to think about, the things that you think are going to be important? Anna.

Anna: I guess in the UK context, at a UK university, what if there's no funding for EU-related PhDs anymore, which would be quite tricky for the UACES Student Forum because a lot of the people that come to us are British students. How are we going to work around that, which is a bit of a worry, which I don't think will happen straight away because I think there'll be a lot of research now, Brexit, it's going to be dominating in the next few conferences. After that, if the money dries up, not everybody is as smart as me and does a PhD without funding. So, if there's no money for it, we might maybe run out of PhD students.

Facilitator: Okay, that's true, let's find someone with who's more cheery or optimistic or sees potential.

Liz: I'm optimistic for the future. I think the driving forces behind the UACES Student Forum that we've talked about back in the early 2000s, I think a lot of them are still there, maybe in a slightly amended fashion. It's the need to be able to interact with other networks. It's a dreadful term but I think research is increasingly becoming collaborative rather than the lone scholar with their books shut away.

So, being able to connect with people from different institutions, from different countries, from different disciplines, that's something that I think the Student Forum has a real valuable role to play in. I think, because it tends to be populated by youngsters on the whole, that they are able to think more radically and to be responsive to the things that the members want.

Viviane: And I guess UACES is quite international. I think there's about half of the association based in non-UK universities. So, I think if we keep on pushing as well for that international aspect in the Student Forum, even if there's a slight dip or even a flurry of Brexit-specific PhDs, but we'll still have the non-UK based scholars to balance it out and make sure we keep on talking about a variety of topics in great places.

Facilitator: It is one of those paradoxes of the subject that often, the things that bring people to the subject is problems. In that perspective, you might argue that this is a great time for European Studies because it's had a lot of problems, whether that's Eurozone, micro crisis, neighbourhood relations, Brexit very obviously. Again, it is that question about the subject changes and I think one of the things that we see is that people are interested at the moment in the particular things, but also that [unintelligible 00:08:30] supported thing. One of the things for me about the Forum was you got to meet people who are doing different things, and make you think about the broader context that was coming through.

Anyone got any closing thoughts? I think we all agree that the Forum has been good for us and I know that if I hadn't been involved in the Student Forum at the beginning, I wouldn't be doing something else like I'm doing now as one of the officers of the association.

Viviane: I think you started talking about how isolated you felt during your PhD and that was at a Political Science institution. I did my PhD at an Environmental Science institution, and there were not that many doing Social Science and the number of people doing Politics or European Studies were even smaller. So, I think for lots of PhD students now, there's perhaps one or two people in your whole university that do things on Europe. So, the Student Forum is even more needed now, I think, than it was then.

Facilitator: Okay, anyone else?

Viviane: And it's also really fun.

Facilitator: Okay, thank you to all of you for your thoughts, your reminisces and your contributions, and yes, I think we see what the next years will bring. Lots of opportunities and doubtless, the occasional hurried meeting with people to work out what on Earth we should do about the local disaster that's occurred, which I think has been a theme for everybody at various points. So, thank you once again and thank you for watching.