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Models of Democracy

Elite Attitudes and the Democratic Deficit in the European Union

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ABSTRACT

Most current debate about the democratic deficit equates democracy with party government and popular direction of policy (popular sovereignty). Alternative conceptions of democracy, pluralist or veto-group liberalism, are more consistent with European political and social circumstances and with EU institutions. After developing the difference between popular sovereignty and liberal models of democracy, the paper uses data from a survey of members of the European Parliament and members of the national parliaments in the EU to show that MP orientations with respect to these democratic values contribute significantly to explaining their evaluations of the quality of EU democracy and their preferences for EU institutional development.

KEY WORDS

- democratic deficit
- democratic theory
- European Parliament

Introduction

The European Union represents both the greatest hope and the greatest danger to democracy in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century. On the one hand, entry into the EU is widely regarded to be both the means and the guarantee of democratic stability and economic prosperity for central and eastern Europe. On the other hand, it is also widely recognized that the EU itself is not particularly democratic. As the range of activities subject to EU regulation has expanded, and as the symbolic presence of the EU impinges more deeply on the communal identities of citizens, the complex of problems summarized by the phrase 'democratic deficit' has become a growing concern.

The article is laid out in four sections. The first section describes the party government/popular sovereignty (hereafter identified as PG/PS) model which in the 'standard' view (Weiler et al., 1995) both defines, and provides the basis for prescriptions for mitigating, the democratic deficit. I briefly review some of the critiques of this view, to suggest that, while they may address the problem of legitimacy, they do so by ignoring or distorting the problem of democracy. I then put the PG/PS model in a broader scheme of democratic theories, suggesting that the PG/PS model excessively privileges only one of the values that must be compromised in viable democracies. Giving increased priority to other values leads to alternative conceptions of democracy, and hence to alternative standards against which the democracy of specific institutions and practices might be judged. This last point is elaborated with specific reference to the institutional design of the EU. I show that the institutional preferences and the evaluations of the current quality of EU democracy expressed by members of parliaments reflect their orientation with regard to fundamental questions of democratic theory. Finally, I draw the argument together to suggest that, although a more liberal model of democracy may be more appropriate to the EU at the beginning of the 21st century, a more gradual evolution toward PG/PS need not thereby be precluded.

The European model of democracy and the democratic deficit

There are many ways in which the EU might be called inadequate in democratic terms, including for example the inadequate protection of individual rights (Bradley and Sutton, 1994: 262). A canvass of the literature, however, suggests a far more specific meaning of 'democratic deficit', referring to the weakness of the European Parliament (EP) as the only directly elected EU

institution, and even more to the inability of the EP to hold the European executive accountable in a manner comparable to the way in which national governments are thought to be accountable to their own parliaments. An additional element of this critique focuses on decision-making by majority or qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers, coupled with the secrecy surrounding the deliberations of that body, making it difficult or impossible for the national parliaments to control the actions of 'their' representatives in that forum (e.g. Williams, 1990, 1991: 162; Lodge, 1991; Moravcsik, 1998: 77; Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999: 4). Van der Eijk and Franklin (1996: 7) address a different aspect of the same problem:

> the democratic deficit felt by Members of the European Parliament actually results from the fact that European elections are fought primarily on the basis of national political concerns, rather than on problems relevant to the European arena. It is true that the European Parliament lacks certain powers in comparison with modern-day national parliaments; but what it lacks most is not power but a mandate to use that power in any particular way.

The problem, in other words, is that the institutional arrangements and political practices of the EU fail to conform to a particular conception of democracy, which, as Coultrap (1999) observes, is an idealized rendering of parliamentary democracy at the national level.

This conception of democracy represents the conjunction of two ideas. The first is 'popular sovereignty' (PS) (Katz, 1997: ch. 3), the belief that the primary aim of democratic government is to put the will of the people into effect. Elections should result in the installation of a government that has both the mandate and the determination to implement the popular will, generally identified with the votes of a majority of citizens. In its simplest form, the PS model assumes competition between two cohesive, policy-oriented political parties, with the party winning a majority of the votes forming a government and putting its program into effect. In more complex situations, coalition governments may be formed and specific policies decided by negotiations in parliament – but with the relative bargaining power of the negotiators based on their electoral strength (reflecting the popularity of their policy proposals). In these circumstances, it is at least plausible to argue that the resulting policy qualifies as the popular will.

The second element of this conception of democracy is party government (PG) (see Ranney, 1962; Rose, 1974; Katz, 1986). This model consists of three central points. First, all major decisions are made by elected officials, or by those under their control and for whose decisions those elected officials take responsibility. Second, policy proposals are formulated and policy decisions are made within parties, which then act cohesively to enact them. Third,

elected officials are recruited and held collectively accountable through party. Voters choose parties, and parties govern as cohesive units.

In both elements of this conception of democracy, there is an implicit assumption that the relevant activity is taking place at the relevant level of government. That is, for the purpose of determining the popular will, the citizens, who either directly through their votes or indirectly through their representatives form the majority, must all have chosen from among the same alternatives. Similarly, the parties that define the alternatives and take responsibility for the functioning of government must have a presence throughout the system.

Given this conception of democracy, it is easy to identify the various specifics that cumulate to create the perception of a democratic deficit in the EU. The most important decisions are not made by elected officials or by those named by and accountable to them through party. Particularly in the absence of European parties, EP elections are rooted in national rather than European politics (second-order national elections; Reif and Schmitt, 1980). Even if the powers of the EP have increased dramatically since 1986, it still lacks the power, or the legitimacy that would flow from elections fought on European issues, to install and remove governments simply on the basis of political disagreement, as would be required for PG/PS based on the EP. The members of the Commission and the Council owe their positions to election only at several removes, and if policies to be pursued in Europe frequently are absent or minimized in European elections, they are even less significant in national elections. Moreover, the alternatives put to voters in national elections are not consistent throughout the EU. Thus, as with the EP, neither the electoral connection between Commissioners or Council members and national electorates, nor the aggregation of Commissioners into a single Commission or of individual Council members into a Council of Ministers, can be said to approximate the demands of the PG/PS model.

As Scharpf (1997) points out, the problem is not simply 'the democratic deficit of *the European Union*' but also a 'democratic deficit *in Europe*'. The shift of powers to the relatively undemocratic EU undermines the quality of democracy at the national level as well, because many areas of policy are no longer under direct national, and therefore national democratic, control. Part of the loss of national governmental power is the result of globalization rather than Europeanization per se (Scharpf, 1997), but the EU has made this loss of power more obvious by giving it an institutional focus. Moreover, even if Europeanization has increased the ability of national governments collectively to manage their economies (see Moravcsik, 1998), in doing so it has also tended to remove many of these questions from the realm even of symbolic contestation in national politics.

Transfer of power also has encouraged behaviors within the national political arena that are subversive of democratic party government. One is the tendency of national governments to blame undesirable outcomes on the policies of Brussels, while ignoring their own role as selectors of the Commission and members of the Council in making those policies. This tendency is abetted by the secrecy surrounding meetings of the Council. A second is for the politics surrounding EU decisions to be cast in institutional rather than partisan terms; that is, in contrast to 'normal' parliamentary politics couched in terms of competition between blocs of political parties, this issue is cast primarily in terms of institutional competition between the executive and the parliament (Norton, 1996; see also Lequesne, 1996; Andersen, 1996; Bindi, 1996).

It is quite clear what would be required for the EU to close the democratic deficit by conforming more closely to the norms of PG/PS. The European executive would have to be chosen by and dependent on the continuing confidence of the EP, the powers of which would have to be substantially increased.[1] The powers of the Council of Ministers might have to be reduced, and its proceedings would have to become public and partisan. European elections would have to be fought on the basis of European-level programs, with MEPs responsible primarily to their European rather than their national parties.

Each of these 'reforms' would involve substantial loss of power by the actors who currently hold it – the national governments and the national political parties. While such a loss might be accepted under severe outside threat or a severe crisis in an area for which continued non-responsible government had become intolerable (as one might imagine in the case of a prolonged recession for which Keynesian stimuli were ruled out by the European Central Bank), neither of these scenarios appears desirable or (fortunately) likely, which makes the prospects for amelioration of the democratic deficit through the institutionalization of party government/popular sovereignty at the European level appear quite remote.

Models of democracy

The diagnosis and prognosis regarding the democratic deficit just elaborated have come under attack in recent years, from several directions. One argues that legitimation can be based on the results an institution produces rather than on how it makes its decisions, and thus focuses on output legitimation, in essence claiming that the input legitimation of the PG/PS model is unnecessary. This argument (reflecting the ideas of neo-functionalism and the

permissive consensus) underlies the idea that EMU would be legitimated by its own success (Obradovic, 1996: 198–201; see Berman and McNamara, 1999, for a critique of this idea). While perhaps explaining deference to EU policies to date, the argument appears inadequate in two respects. On the one hand, it is based on the chimera of Pareto-optimal policies and presumes that EU policies always will be successful in achieving their aims. On the other hand, in essence it is an argument for the legitimacy of benevolent dictatorship. Such a regime might inspire support, but it has long been recognized (Bentham, 1962: 95) that there would be nothing democratic about it.

The second and overlapping line of attack argues that the PG/PS model is inappropriate, because its focus on the state is inappropriate. In one variant, the argument is that the EU is not sufficiently like a national state for the PG/PS model to be applied. Most prominent here would be Majone's (1992, 1993, 1994a) model of the regulatory state. Majone's model, in fact, is not restricted to the EU, and exemplifies a literature that looks to 'post-parliamentary governance' at the national level as well. In the extreme form, attention shifts entirely to interest groups, and civil society more generally, as in Coultrap's (1999) virtually stateless conception of pluralism. Whatever the descriptive accuracy of these models, however, they fail as answers to the problem of democratic legitimation. Whatever their disclaimers, these are arguments for government by technocracy (with regard to Majone, in particular, see Caporaso, 1996: 42, and Majone himself, 1994b: 41), albeit tempered by influence from civil society. And, in claiming this tempering influence, they tend to minimize the role played precisely by the institutions of the PG/PS model in the examples on which they draw. In virtually eliminating parties and elections from his conception of democracy, Coultrap really presents a caricature of American pluralism (for example, see the prominence given to parties and elections as democratic prerequisites by Dahl, 1971: 3). When writing about the EU, Majone tends to minimize the significance of the linkages between the institutions of the PG/PS model (precisely what are lacking at the EU level) and independent regulatory agencies at the national level, from which much of his model is derived.

The third line of attack accepts both the relevance of input legitimation and the appropriateness of state-based models of democracy, but argues that the 'standard' democratic deficit argument misapplies those models. Although arguing for Europe-wide referenda, which would stand outside party government (cf. Lehner and Homann, 1987), Hix (1998) appears fundamentally to accept the PG/PS model but argues that, in the absence of strong European parties, it would be better implemented through the direct election of the European chief executive. Even more, Gabel (1998; see also Dehousse, 1995; Katz, 1994) argues against the majoritarian bias of the PG/PS model, to

suggest that the consensus model of consociationalism (Lijphart, 1968) fits the realities of the EU far better.

The limitation of these last critiques is that they confound the empirical with the normative. When considering institutional choice, they tend to assume the concept of democracy to be unproblematic, with the only question being empirical implementation. When looking at the empirical fit between practice and model, they tend to forget that not just institutions, but values as well, are subjects of choice.

In the previous section, I referred to PG/PS as if it were a single model of democracy. In fact (Katz, 1997), it can be disaggregated into three models, depending on one's assumptions about the nature of the issues to be resolved.[2] 'Binary democracy' assumes, with Duverger (1959: 215), that all policy questions ultimately resolve into a choice between two types of solutions; the prescription then is for competition between two distinctive and cohesive parties, in effect giving the people a choice between the only two alternatives there can be. 'Downsian democracy' assumes, instead of two alternatives, a unidimensional array of possibilities, with the popular will defined as the Condorcet choice; in this case, competition between two cohesive, but opportunistic, parties should result in convergence on that outcome. If issues are defined by more than one dimension (or if there are more than two parties), there is neither a guarantee that one party will win a majority, nor a necessary incentive for parties to converge on the Condorcet choice even if there is one. For this case, the model of 'legislative democracy' assumes a system of many parties, each corresponding to a point in a multidimensional policy space, and each with parliamentary representation proportional to the popular support for the corresponding bundle of issue positions. While the package that ultimately emerges from the coalition formation process may not be the only package that could win majority approbation, at least it is legitimated by having the support of parties representing a majority of the voters. At most, it might be argued that the package that emerges will approximate the package that would have emerged had all of the citizens themselves been able to negotiate directly.

These models share three key characteristics: they are concerned with popular direction of policy; they rely on political party delegations in parliament to be the articulators and implementors of policy; they assume that the policy adopted will be a direct majoritarian reflection of the distribution of support for policies in the electorate. Popular sovereignty conceptions of democracy are about the people deciding what they will do, with government simply the means through which they choose to do it. To use contemporary jargon, the principal–agent problem in government is pushed to the background.

In the liberal conception of democracy, on the other hand, the principal–agent problem is paramount. The central concern of liberal democratic theory is to prevent the agent (government, or those who control it) from taking actions that threaten the vital interests of any significant group in society (the principals).[3] Just as there are several versions of popular sovereignty theory, so there are several versions of liberal theory. These may be divided into three classes according to whether they assume there to be no durable social divisions ('majoritarian liberalism'), cross-cutting cleavages ('pluralist liberalism'), or fundamentally segmenting divisions ('veto-group liberalism').[4] Within each class, one may distinguish between theories seeing the principal danger to come from the illiberal tendencies of ordinary citizens, or from the self-aggrandizing tendencies of the elite. In this paper, I will largely collapse the two theoretical types in each category, simply observing at the outset that theories of the first subgroup (generally developed in the 18th and early 19th centuries) place less stress on the role of parties, and are more cognizant of the possibility of conflict of interest between leaders and followers, than are those of the second subgroup.

For the pluralists, there are two potential threats. One is that a minority will gain control of the state and use that control to perpetuate their rule and to exploit the majority. The pluralist response to this danger is majority rule. But this raises the second potential threat – that a majority will take control and exploit the minority. This implies that the majority principle must be limited. Thus, unlike popular sovereignty, liberalism takes the support of a majority to be a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the approval of public policy. One limitation on the power of the majority might be constitutional restrictions in an entrenched bill or charter of rights. These are more appropriate for protecting the political rights necessary for the minority to be able to compete in subsequent elections than for protecting them from the pecuniary (or other) consequences of losing a free election. Part of the pluralist protection against this form of exploitation is devices such as qualified majority voting and separation of powers that increase the size or durability of the majority coalition required to be exploitative, plus a large and diverse citizenry that will make the formation of such a coalition more difficult (*Federalist*: 61).

Political parties being institutions particularly designed to aggregate interests – to solve spatial problems of communication and coordination, and to coordinate between the various branches of government – it follows that pluralist liberalism calls for weakly articulated parties. This is also supported by the underlying pluralist assumption/prescription of cross-cutting cleavages (e.g. Lipset, 1960: 77–8). Ideally, no party, or at least no majority coalition of parties, should be able completely to ignore the interests of any group

without some significant cost to itself. But this in turn requires weak party attachments (readiness of a group's members to withdraw their support) at the electoral level, and weak party discipline at the elite level.

The veto-group models of liberalism begin at the same point as the pluralist models – that the majority principle is adequate to prevent exploitation of the majority by a minority, but that exploitation of the minority by a majority remains a problem. The veto-group models, however, assume that society is characterized by a relatively small number of mutually exclusive groups, so that some majority alliance will form, and will be able to coordinate and maintain itself across time and institutional boundaries, notwithstanding the devices proposed by the pluralists. Thus the only guarantee against an exploitative majority is to allow a veto to every significant social segment.

The prototypical veto-group theorists, Calhoun (1943) and Lijphart (1968), deal with this problem in rather different ways, but in two respects their solutions are quite similar. The first is that they in effect erase the distinction between government and opposition; because the acceptance of every significant segment is required for government action, the representatives of every segment are at least indirectly responsible for every policy. The second is that elections at the system level are in effect marginalized, with the real locus of electoral choice being within each segment.[5]

Particularly in the case of veto-group theories, the primary role of representative institutions is to be reactive – to limit the range of policy and the exercise of power. Thus, whereas all three varieties of popular sovereignty theory appear to call for the fusion of legislative and executive powers in a parliamentary system, liberal theories call for their separation, with an independently chosen executive whose primary functions are to administer settled policy and to propose, but not enact, policy innovations.

Of course, neither the popular sovereignty model nor the liberal model is either realizable or desirable as an absolute. Pure popular sovereignty is a recipe for the tyranny of the majority, while pure liberalism is a recipe for deadlock. The balance between them depends on the level of community – which may be understood as a third value to be achieved by democracy (e.g. Barber, 1984), but which I take here as a societal description. Simply, the higher the perceived level of community, involving both commonality of interest and mutual solicitude, the lower the danger of majorities trampling on the rights or interests of others, and therefore the more appropriate both the values and institutions of popular sovereignty. Conversely, the lower the level of community, the more profoundly are interests likely to clash, and the greater the danger to the prospective losers, making the protections of liberalism more significant.[6] (For a quite similar argument in rather different terms, see Buchanan and Tullock, 1962: 115.)

To return to the problem of the democratic deficit, this suggests that understanding of why such a deficit might be perceived must begin with a balance between popular sovereignty (positive direction) and liberalism (negative restraint). While this is largely a matter of taste (i.e. there is no 'correct' balance), it is a preference that will be strongly colored by beliefs about the degree of substantial community, the nature and number of politically relevant cleavages, and the nature of the issues that will have to be resolved. Value preferences and substantive beliefs *together* shape institutional requirements, which in turn become the basis for an empirically grounded evaluation.

Democratic theory, democratic deficit and the EU elite

The contrast between popular sovereignty models and liberal models of democracy (especially veto-group liberalism) has direct implications for questions about the development of EU institutions. These are not questions that have 'correct' answers. Rather, they are matters of preference concerning compromises between competing values, conditioned but not completely determined by perceptions concerning the nature of politics and the nature of society. Thus, the views of political elites, who have the authority to translate their own preferred answers into effective reform, are of special significance.

In this research, the European elites are represented by the members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and members of national parliaments (MNPs) questioned in 1996 as part of the 1994 European Election Study (EES-94).[7] In interpreting the data that follow, two caveats should be kept in mind. First, the respondents were all members of parliament, at either the national or the European levels; if 'where you stand depends on where you sit' (whether because of institutional influence or self-selection), the responses of these MPs should reflect a systematic (but unmeasurable) bias in favor of parliamentary influence in comparison to the views that might be expressed by other (unsurveyed) elites. Second, the same reasoning suggests a similar bias in favor of greater influence for institutions at the same level (national or European) as the respondent. Previous analysis (Katz, 1999) has shown differences of the latter type to exist, for which reason results for MNPs and MEPs are presented separately. In both these cases, however, the relative differences *within each category* of respondents should be valid indicators of relative opinions.

The ideal research strategy would be to interrogate respondents concerning their preferred balance between the two primary democratic ideals (popular sovereignty versus liberalism) and about their perceptions of the

status of the conditioning variables (the level of community within the EU and the structure of European society). These results would then be used to explain respondents' preferences for the institutional development of the EU and, together with the differences between those preferences and the perceived realities of the EU at the time of the interviews, to explain their level of (dis)satisfaction with democracy in the EU (the democratic deficit).

However, respondents were not asked directly about their orientations toward particular models of democracy, and indeed it probably would not be possible meaningfully to do so in the context of structured personal interviews (MEPs), let alone with a self-administered paper and pencil instrument (MNPs). As a result, part of this strategy has to be reversed. Rather than testing hypotheses about the impact of democratic values orientations on institutional preferences, key institutional preferences will be used to construct an indicator of democratic values orientation.

Five indicators of orientation as between popular sovereignty and liberal conceptions of democracy can be extracted from the data available. Particularly since the most plausible version of liberal democracy in the EU is some form of concurrent majorities,[8] in which the national governments, if not the national parliaments per se, would be the main locus of legitimation, the most direct indicator is the response to a question asking whether the democratic legitimation of the Union should be based on the European Parliament, or alternatively whether the legitimacy of the Union is already based on the national parliaments. Three further indicators come from support or opposition regarding 'a range of proposals being discussed to deal with the "democratic deficit" in the European Union'. A popular sovereignty orientation should be indicated by: support for having the Commission 'chosen by the European Parliament rather than by the national governments'; 'European parties should choose the candidates for the European Parliament rather than leaving it to the national parties'; and using the same electoral system in European elections in all member states. The final indicator is constructed from a series of questions asking respondents 'how much influence the following institutions and organs ought to have concerning decision-making in the European Union'. A popular sovereignty orientation should be indicated by a desire for parliamentary institutions to have significantly greater influence than executive or judicial institutions, while a liberal orientation (at least of the pluralist or veto-group varieties) should be indicated by a preference for a more balanced distribution of influence. The actual measure is the difference between desired influence of the EP and the average desired influence for the Commission, the Council and the European Court (all measured on an 11-point scale ranging from 'very little influence' to 'very much influence').

The first question is whether these indicators reflect a single underlying

orientation. This question was addressed through a factor analysis. The expectation was that for each set of data there would be a single factor, and this was confirmed by the analysis. For the MEPs, this factor accounts for 52.4% of the overall variance, while for the MNPs the corresponding factor accounts for 45.5% of the variance.[9] Commonalities and factor loadings are shown in Table 1. Factor scores were then computed, and added to the dataset as a summary indicator of democratic values orientation (DVO).

It is impossible to tell from the data available whether respondents see European society as being homogeneous, characterized by cross-cutting cleavages, or segmented. In considering the institutional development of the EU, however, the important question is more specific: do respondents see a fundamental segmentation by nationality? For this, our data offer two relatively direct indicators – agreement or disagreement with the propositions 'The differences between European countries are far less than the similarities' and 'European unity threatens my country's cultural identity'. An additional indicator is the confidence expressed 'that decisions made by the European

Table 1 Factor analysis of democratic values orientations (DVO)

	MEPs		*MNPs*	
	Commonality	*Component loading*	*Commonality*	*Component loading*
'The democratic legitimation of the Union should be based on the European Parliament / the national parliaments'	.721	.849	.588	.673
'The Commission should be chosen by the European Parliament rather than by the national governments'	.629	.793	.648	.805
'European parties should choose the candidates for the European Parliament rather than leaving it to the national parties'	.330	.575	.382	.618
'The same electoral system should be used in European elections in all member states'	.373	.611	.208	.456
Predominance of Parliament	.568	.754	.454	.673

Union will be in the interest of your country'. (Presumably some respondents, especially from the larger or more 'central' countries, might perceive there to be fundamental conflicts of interest between countries but expect that their country generally will be on the winning side. And indeed there is a significant correlation between the size of country and expressed confidence that EU decisions will be in the interests of the respondent's country.) The correlations among these three indicators are shown in Table 2. As with the indicators of democratic values orientation, scores on a summary factor of perceived homogeneity of national interests (PH) accounting for 62.5% of the variance for the MEP sample and 51.8% of the variance for the MNP sample were added to the dataset. Factor loadings are shown in the last row and column of Table 2.

If democratic values orientations reflect perceptions about the nature of the society to be governed, there should be a significant relationship between DVO and PH, and indeed there is. For the MEP sample, the correlation is .649, while for the MNP sample it is .334, both significant beyond $p < .001$.

The next question is whether placement on the democratic values

Table 2 Correlations among indicators of EU homogeneity for MEPs (above the diagonal) and MNPs (below the diagonal)

	Confidence EU decisions in national interest	*EU countries more similar than different*	*EU threatens cultural identity*	*Homogeneity of interest factor (PH)*
'How much confidence do you have that the decisions made by the European Union will be in the interest of your country?'		.373	–.557	.839
'The differences between European countries are far less than the similarities'	.226		–.355	.694
'European unity threatens my country's cultural identity'	–.379	–.219		–.829
Homogeneity of interest factor (PH)	.765	.625	–.760	

All correlations are significant $p < .001$; $N = 293–8$ (MEPs), 745–54 (MNPs)

orientation dimension helps to explain attitudes that are more immediately related to the evolution of the EU.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about the potential broadening and/or deepening of the EU, including whether they favor or oppose: giving the EP power to pass laws that would apply directly to all member countries; increasing the range of responsibilities of the EU; the inclusion of new member states within the next 10 years. Agreement with the first two would indicate support for deepening the Union, while agreement with the last would indicate support for broadening. It is natural to suppose that those who see a heterogeneous Europe would be less likely to favor deepening. It is less obvious what the impact of perceived heterogeneity on beliefs regarding broadening would be, although it seems plausible that respondents might believe there to be a level of heterogeneity of interest beyond which the EU could not safely go, with those who already perceive greater heterogeneity more concerned that this threshold might be crossed with the inclusion of the likely candidate members. In each case, and for both MEP and MNP samples, the signs of the correlations between these responses and PH support these expectations.

The main concern here, however, is the correlations between these responses and DVO, controlling for PH. Now the expectation is that those who favor liberalism over popular sovereignty will oppose deepening (positive correlation) but support broadening (negative correlation), if only as a means to limit deepening. These hypotheses were tested by regressing the relevant variables on DVO and PH, with the results shown in Table 3. In each case, the item of particular interest is the regression coefficient for DVO. The expectations regarding deepening are strongly supported by the data; that for broadening is not. This last hypothesis is somewhat tenuous, however, as it depends on the idea that broadening and deepening are contradictory objectives. Not all respondents saw there to be a contradiction, and of course the actual history of EU expansion has been to combine admission of new members with increasing the Union's powers/responsibilities. (As might be expected, those who perceived more heterogeneity of national interests were more likely to see these as conflicting objectives.) Regardless of their views on this matter, however, respondents were asked to which they would give priority. As also shown in Table 3, those who have a more liberal democratic values orientation are more likely to favor broadening over deepening, although the relationship is statistically significant only for the MEPs.

Bringing these somewhat abstract questions closer to earth, respondents also were asked their opinions on three specific policy questions: approval of a common European currency; Jacques Delors' proposal for a massive program to fight unemployment; continued removal of national border

Table 3 Standardized regression coefficients explaining attitudes concerning broadening and deepening of the EU on the basis of democratic values orientation and perceived homogeneity of national interests

	MEPs			*MNPs*		
	DVO	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*	*DVO*	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*
'Regardless of the current legal situation, to what extent do you favour or are you against a situation in which the European Parliament would have the power to pass laws that would apply directly to all member states of the European Union?'	.576	.303	.650	.444	.196	.292
'Do you favour or are you against increasing the range of responsibilities of the EU?'	.534	.268	.540	.292	.288	.222
'Do you favour or are you against the inclusion of new member states within the next ten years?'	–.091**	.150**	.006**	.079*	.206	.057
'Which would you say should have priority, broadening or deepening the European Union?'	–.341	–.086**	.155	–.079**	.045	.003**
'Should <country> keep its <national currency> and make it more independent from the other European currencies, or should the aim be a new common European currency?'	–.385	–.381	.479	–.099*	–.361	.162
'The former president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, has proposed to raise funds for a massive programme to fight unemployment. Others argue that the completion of the Single European Market alone will be the best remedy for unemployment. Please indicate . . .'	.263	–.247	.044	.181	–.135	.032
'Should the EU continue to remove national border controls or should tighter border controls be reintroduced to fight crime effectively?'	.317	.454	.490	.216	.282	.165

Except as noted, all coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ or beyond. * $p < .05$; ** ns

controls. In the first case, a negative coefficient indicates the coincidence of a popular sovereignty value orientation and a pro-deepening policy position, while for the other two issues a positive correlation indicates such a coincidence. Again, these expectations all are confirmed by the data, with the correlations markedly stronger in the case of the MEPs. Tellingly, the coefficients are lowest with regard to the Delors proposal, the issue with the most obvious connection to traditional left–right distinctions.

As referenced above, respondents also were asked about a variety of proposals for dealing with the democratic deficit (positive correlation indicating a tendency for those with a popular sovereignty orientation to agree) and also about their preferences concerning the appropriate level of influence for a variety of institutions in the making of EU decisions (negative correlation indicating that those with a popular sovereignty orientation prefer greater influence). These are listed in Table 4, again along with the standardized regression coefficients from equations explaining these variables on the basis of the DVO and PH. Several of the dependent variables in these equations (flagged with a † in the table) went into the construction of DVO, and so there is an element of circularity in using that measure to 'explain' the original variables. They are listed in the table in the interest of completeness, but this problem obviously must limit the power of any conclusions based on those coefficients. Rather than discussing each line individually, I simply highlight the major points.

The coefficients for EP influence, a common electoral system, the method of choosing the Commission, and EP candidate selection all are highly significant and consistent with what one would expect given their role in the definition of DVO. Respondents with a more liberal democratic orientation tend to favor a strong role for the national governments, and also for national ministers as members of the Council, again as would be expected given the construction of DVO. On the other hand, the coefficients for preferred influence of the Commission and of the European Court of Justice are the opposite of those that would have been expected from the mathematics of DVO; the most reasonable explanation is that strong powers for these organs (at least in absolute terms, as opposed to the relative terms indicated by DVO) were understood by respondents to reflect greater centralization of power in the EU at the expense of national autonomy rather than separation of powers within the EU level.

Those with DVO scores closer to the popular sovereignty end of the scale tend to favor compulsory voting in EP elections, perhaps hoping to increase the significance of these elections by increasing turnout above its often derisory current level. On the other hand, those with more liberal DVO scores are very much more likely to favor unanimity as the Council decision rule.

Table 4 Standardized regression coefficients explaining attitudes toward EU institutions on the basis of democratic values orientation and perceived homogeneity of national interests

	MEPs			*MNPs*		
	DVO	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*	*DVO*	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*
National parliaments should have a joint committee of MEPs and MPs to debate Community proposals (low value indicates agreement)	.155*	–.272	.037*	.082*	–.063	.004**
There should be regular joint meetings between committees of the EP and national parliaments (low value indicates agreement)	.086**	–.129**	.002**	.014**	.007**	–.003**
National governments should have a Cabinet Minister responsible for European affairs (low value indicates agreement)	.348	–.114**	.077	.046**	–.122*	.010*
Debates about legislative proposals in the Council of Ministers should be a matter of public record (low value indicates agreement)	.211*	.117**	.091	.232	–.090*	.045
Ministers attending the Council should follow the instructions of their national parliaments (low value indicates agreement)	–.005**	–.289	.079	–.004**	–.211	.042
There should be more MEPs who are also MPs (low value indicates agreement)	–.121**	–.165*	.061	–.041**	–.076**	.007*
There should be stronger links between European Commissioners and their staff and MPs (low value indicates agreement)	–.038**	–.172*	.032*	.044**	–.074**	.002**
†The same electoral system should be used in European elections in ALL member states (low value indicates agreement)	.706	–.145	.382	.437	–.086*	.171
There should be compulsory voting in European parliamentary elections (low value indicates agreement)	.350	–.083**	.085	.085*	–.134	.015*
†The Commission should be chosen by the European Parliament rather than by the national governments (low value indicates agreement)	.831	–.053**	.634	.791	.038**	.646

Continued

Table 4 *Continued*

	MEPs			*MNPs*		
	DVO	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*	*DVO*	*PH*	*Adjusted R^2*
†European parties should choose the candidates for the European Parliament rather than leaving it to the national parties (low value indicates agreement)	.576	.000**	.327	.594	.045**	.371
Preferred Council decision rule (coded 1 for unanimity, .5 for 70% qualified majority, 0 for all versions of simple majority)	.529	.355	.677	na	na	na
†Preferred influence of the European Parliament	–.725	–.083*	.607	–.564	.005**	.315
†Preferred influence of the European Commission	–.303	–.330	.325	–.011**	–.198	.038
†Preferred influence of the Council of Ministers	.337	–.146**	.064	.332	–.141	.096
†Preferred influence of the European Court of Justice	–.328	–.087**	.146	–.123*	–.035**	.016
Preferred influence of Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)	.016**	–.074**	–.003**	.038**	–.127*	.011*
Preferred influence of Economic and Social Committee	–.370	.153*	.080	–.183	–.055**	.040
Preferred influence of national governments	.373	.106**	.196	.343	.034**	.125
Preferred influence of national parliaments	.172*	.268	.155	.117*	.089*	.026

Except as noted, all coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ or beyond. * $p < .05$; ** ns

(This question was asked only of MEPs). Finally, those with more liberal DVO scores are more likely to favor having more MPs with dual mandates, to oppose making Council debates public, and to oppose joint committees of MEPs and MNPs. Indeed, with the exception of relative support for dual mandates, which would be a move in the direction of the pre-1979 situation, one might suggest that respondents with a more liberal democratic orientation simply oppose reducing the democratic deficit – at least as defined by the PG/PS model – in the first place.

This leads to the last question: whether differences in democratic values orientation can help explain differences in evaluations of democracy in the EU. Here one could imagine two hypotheses. On the one hand, given that the EU has been, and to a significant extent continues to be, structured in ways more consonant with the liberal view of democracy than with the PG/PS model, one might expect those at the popular sovereignty end of the DVO scale to be particularly negative in their evaluations. On the other hand, given that the liberal features of the EU system have been progressively undermined, one might expect liberals to be particularly negative. In fact, taking responses to the agree/disagree stimulus 'The European Union has strengthened democracy' and the question 'On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the European Union?' as indicators, the data show both hypotheses to be true. In particular, the relationships between DVO and the democratic evaluation indicators are non-linear. This is illustrated in Figure 1, which was constructed by dividing the DVO scale into 16 categories and plotting the mean response to the question of whether 'the European Union has strengthened democracy' against it. (Similar results were obtained for the 'satisfaction with the way democracy works' question.) The same result can be seen more systematically in Table 5, which reports the results of regression analyses explaining the two democratic evaluation variables as quadratic functions of DVO. The key point is that the coefficient for the quadratic term is highly significant in all four regressions. Moreover, the quadratic term remains highly significant even after the addition of a variable indicating general disposition toward European integration ('Do you favour or are you against increasing the range of responsibilities of the EU?'). In effect, for those near the popular sovereignty end of DVO, the EU has not gone far enough toward PG/PS, whereas for those at the liberal end it has already gone too far – a conclusion that has particular resonance among the MNPs.

Presumably, dissatisfaction with democracy in the EU reflects the belief that things are not as they should be. In addition to being asked how much influence they believed a variety of institutions should have in the making of EU decisions, respondents also were asked how much influence they believed

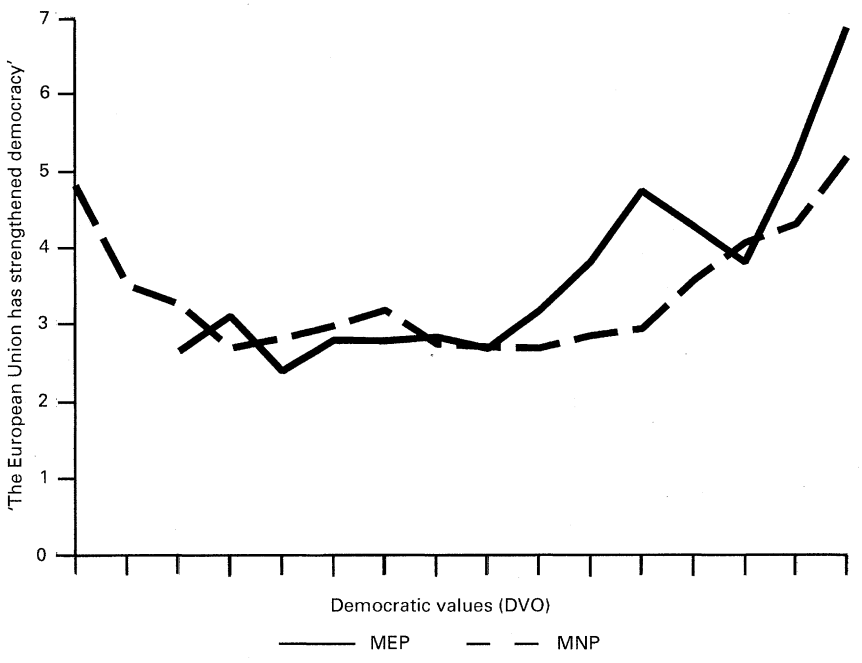

Figure 1 'The European Union has strengthened democracy' by DVO.

Table 5 Evaluation of democracy in the EU as quadratic functions of democratic values orientation (standardized regression coefficients)

	MEPs			*MNPs*		
	DVO	*DVO squared*	*Adjusted R^2*	*DVO*	*DVO squared*	*Adjusted R^2*
'The European Union has strengthened democracy' (high score indicates disagreement)	.296	.264	.251	.020**	.150	.024
'On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the European Union?' (high score indicates dissatisfaction)	.023**	.240	.058	–.182	.149	.043

Except as noted, all coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ or beyond. * $p < .05$; ** ns

those institutions actually had. The differences between the two should significantly contribute to the explanation of dissatisfaction with democracy in the EU, and in fact they do. But does DVO contribute to explaining those differences? If it does, then those with more liberal DVO scores should believe that the 'European' institutions (the EP, the Commission and the ECJ) have too much influence and the 'national' institutions (Council of Ministers, national governments, and national parliaments) have too little, even after controlling for general attitudes about the powers of the EU. Table 6 shows the relevant bivariate and partial correlations, in each case with a positive correlation indicating that those with more liberal DVO scores see a more positive (larger) difference between current and desired influence. All but one of the correlations (the MNP partial for the influence of the Commission) has the expected sign and, with the exception of that coefficient and the two partial correlations regarding the influence of the national parliaments, all are statistically significant. Moreover, while correlations speak only to relative magnitudes, comparison of the actual differences at the ends of the distribution of DVO reveal several absolute differences of sign as well. Simply, the most 'liberal' MEPs on average appear to think that the ECJ and the EP have more influence than they should (positive differences) and the Council of Ministers and national governments have less influence than they should (negative differences), whereas MEPs at the 'popular sovereignty' end of DVO report differences for these institutions of the opposite sign. (Among the MNPs, this pattern is repeated for the ECJ and the national governments.)

Table 6 Bivariate correlations between democratic values orientation and the difference between perceived and desired influence of institutions and partial correlations controlling for attitude toward increased responsibilities for the EU

	MEPs		*MNPs*	
	Bivariate	*Partial*	*Bivariate*	*Partial*
The European Parliament	.578	.392	.526	.491
The European Commission	.454	.263	.113*	−.017**
The Council of Ministers	−.257	−.170*	−.248	−.314
The European Court of Justice	.448	.264	.244	.168
The national governments	−.500	−.323	−.370	−.314
The national parliaments	−.271	−.100**	−.124*	−.043**

Except as noted, all coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ or beyond. * $p < .05$; ** ns

Conclusion

These last results point to one of the reasons the democratic deficit has proven so difficult to cure. With many political issues, there is agreement regarding the nature of the problem to be solved, even though there may be disagreement concerning the appropriate means or the priority the problem should be accorded. Essentially everyone agrees that high unemployment is bad and that public health is good – and moreover they basically agree about what unemployment and public health are. In the case of EU democracy, however, there appears to be disagreement over the proper meaning of democracy, and therefore not simply over what reforms would most improve democracy but indeed over whether particular reforms would make the Union more or less appropriately democratic. This problem is made all the more difficult because the 'buzz words' of democracy have been pre-empted by the popular sovereignty side of the issue, so that those who prefer a more liberal model of democracy are liable to be labeled 'anti-democratic' instead.

As suggested above, the focus in much of the literature on the PG/PS model as the only way to resolve the democratic deficit is ill advised normatively (in its simple equation of democracy and majority rule), theoretically (in terms of the correspondence between assumptions and reality) and politically (in terms of levels of support among those who benefit from the current arrangements). On the other hand, it is clear that the intergovernmental or 'consociational' models of legitimation proposed by some as a more 'realistic' alternative to PG/PS have their own problems. As do all basically liberal approaches to government, they privilege the status quo. While this may prevent any group from having costs unjustly imposed upon it, it may also prevent groups from having their unjustly, or ill-advisedly, gotten benefits taken away. Without commenting on the justice or wisdom of the policies themselves, the cases of the common agricultural policy and economic and monetary union illustrate the way in which the liberal approach can lock in a particular set of winners and losers. The first conclusion, then, is that a similarly whole-hearted acceptance of the liberal or consociational alternative would be equally ill advised. As the intermediate positions on the DVO scale of most respondents to the EES-94 elite surveys, as well as considerations of democratic theory, suggest, viable democracy, and viable democratic legitimation, require an intermediate position regarding both practice and expectations.

The second conclusion is that this requires a revision of the vocabulary used to discuss EU legitimation, although not necessarily a vocabulary specific to the EU as suggested by Schmitter (1996). Beyond the problem of defining democracy, it is one of the ironies of the language surrounding the

debate on European integration that such terms as 'federalist' have come to connote the most integrationist position. Rather, one might observe that, for example in comparison with the United States, the regulatory reach of the EU in many areas has already extended beyond the federal, a point that is made even more clear if comparison is made with the United States in the 19th century rather than the 21st. Indeed federalism, by formally delimiting the powers of the central government, may actually imply far less centralization of power than the current European emphasis simply on 'completing the single market' coupled with a half-hearted bow to an ill-defined idea like 'subsidiarity'. But federalism is essentially a liberal institution, while 'subsidiarity', it might be suggested, is an attempt to reconcile the incompatible objectives of sub-European independence and popular sovereignty at the European level.

The third conclusion (or speculation) derives as well from the experience of the United States, and is that, over time, integration may result in a reorientation in terms of democratic institutions, practices and values. Over the course of the past 211 years, the American political system has seen significant transfer of powers from the states to the federal government. Much of this was based on the so-called 'commerce clause' of the Constitution but, although that clause had been in the Constitution since 1789, the real increase of federal power came only in the 20th century. Moreover, although the dominant American political orientation is far more liberal than one would find in Europe, it has shifted quite significantly in the direction of popular sovereignty. One possible suggestion, thus, is that it may be more productive of popular sovereignty, or at least relatively strong integration, to begin by accepting a largely liberal orientation than by trying to construct a popular sovereignty version of democracy directly.

Notes

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1 While direct election of the European executive (suggested e.g. by Hix, 1998: 52–3) would be an alternative mode of democratization, the division of the popular mandate between two loci would tend to weaken the direct translation of popular preferences expressed as votes into policy and the transparency of the responsibility of particular parties for particular actions (see Katz, 1997). These results might be desirable on other grounds, see below.

2 Actually, I would argue that there are six 'flavors' of party government/popular sovereignty but, for the purposes of this paper, I collapse what I called Tory popular sovereignty and Socialist popular sovereignty into the category of binary democracy, and ignore as unrealistic the variety identified as Ostrogorskian democracy.

3 This sentence elides a number of important but thorny issues. Taking them in the order in which they appear in the sentence: What does it mean to 'prevent' the government from taking action? What are 'vital interests', and can they be distinguished from intensely felt (or simply vocally articulated) preferences? What segments of society are 'significant'? For discussion of these problems, see Katz (1997).

4 Although the majoritarian versions of liberal democracy are important in theoretical terms, their assumptions are sufficiently implausible at the European level (where nationality, if nothing else, appears to represent a substantial cleavage) that I will not develop their implications here.

5 I say this in the case of Lijphart notwithstanding the importance of proportional representation as an indicator of group strength for the allocation of divisible resources (including cabinet posts), because the ultimate decision rule remains negotiated unanimity among the segments. In this sense, each group is equal regardless (within broad limits) of its electoral results.

6 The problem of community is closely related, but not identical, to the question of a single European demos. For a discussion of the demos in democratic theory, see Dahl (1989); for a discussion with specific reference to the EU, see Weiler (1995).

7 Personal interviews were conducted with 314 MEPs and postal surveys were obtained from 1266 members of the national parliaments of Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden (response rates between 15% and 90%). The data were weighted to reflect the distribution of party (and nationality) within each chamber, with the MNP data additionally weighted so that each country's MNPs are given weight proportional to that country's representation in the EP. See Schmitt and Thomassen (1999: 269–75) for further details concerning the sampling and data collection procedures. In addition, see Katz and Wessels (1999) for further analyses of these data.

8 Concurrent majorities and consociational democracy are, respectively, the most prominent 19th- and 20th-century renditions of veto-group liberalism. Although 'consociationalism' is the more commonly used term in the literature concerning the EU, in fact it is generally used to denote institutions and practices that are far closer to Calhoun's concurrent majorities than to Lijphart's consociational democracy.

9 The tendency for all correlations to be lower for the MNPs than for the MEPs appears to reflect the lower salience of European questions for the MNPs, as well possibly as the difference between face-to-face and postal interview techniques. Both would increase the random component in their recorded answers.

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