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Contesting EU Legitimacy

The Prominence, Content and Justification of Euroscepticism during 2009 EP Election Campaigns

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Abstract

This paper analyses the prominence, content and justifications of Euroscepticism as a form of EU legitimacy contestation. Support of and opposition to European integration have so far been mainly measured through the positions of political parties or citizens' attitudes through public opinion polls. Against this reliance on static indicators, we focus on dynamic contestation, mediation and formation of public opinion in the public sphere. Our survey delivers original data on EU legitimacy contestation as unfolding on frequently visited political websites and blogs in 12 EU Member States and transnational websites during the European Parliament election campaign of 2009. The results are, first, that intensity of contestation varies across Member States unrelated to the amount of coverage of the elections. Secondly, the majority of contestation focuses on the current institutional set-up of the EU, rather than the principle or future project of European integration. A majority of evaluations made, particularly those by citizens, are negative in all countries included in our study. However, as these Eurosceptical contributions remain relatively underspecified, it is unclear what would alleviate citizens' discontent. Thirdly, we find that a primary concern in EU legitimacy contestation is democracy, especially for those evaluating EU legitimacy negatively.

Keywords

Democracy — European Elections — European Identity — European Parliament — Legitimacy — Media

Introduction

Political contestation has placed the problem of the legitimacy of the European Union (EU) in a new light. No longer a formal question of the procedures of EU governance and its performance, the unresolved legitimacy problem of the EU has profound impact on democratic politics at the member state level and beyond. Political conflicts concerning European integration have intensified and mobilised a wide range of actors including political parties, social movements, interest groups and citizens. How can we understand this new contested nature of the EU polity?

Research on political contestation of European integration has thus far primarily focused on structure and impact (De Wilde 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009). In terms of structures, it has been asked how European integration shapes political contestation. In terms of impact, the reverse question has been raised: how does political contestation shape European integration. The structuring of political contestation is measured through comparative analysis of public opinion concerning European integration, especially Eurobarometer (Reif and Inglehart 1991; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; 2007; Niedermayer 1995) and the positioning of political parties and dimensions of partisan conflict surrounding European integration (Taggart 1998; Ray 1999; 2007; Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008a; 2008b). Thanks to this extensive body of literature, we have broad knowledge on the location of political dimensions of contestation and their potential influence on partisan competition and voters' preference formation (Hix and Lord 1997; Marks and Wilson 2000; Marks et al. 2002; Hooghe et al. 2004; Marks et al. 2006).

With regard to the question of impact of political contestation, the insights in the new conflictive dynamics of European integration have been used to revise the 'nature of the beast' question in terms of both the theory and the politics of European integration (Börzel and Risse 2009). Following this track, a qualitative change in European integration has been postulated. Hooghe and Marks (2009) have prominently argued that the end of the permissive consensus has also posed a challenge to the dominant theoretical paradigm that sees European integration primarily as elite and interest driven. Politicisation empowers the citizens and mass publics rather than political elites and emphasises identities more than national or sectoral interests. In the process of the unfinished constitutionalisation of the EU, the debate on impact includes the normative dimension of how desirable popular contestation is and whether it should be promoted or avoided (Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Zürn 2006).

In all these variants, public opinions and attitudes on European integration are taken as independent variables that explain different degrees of politicisation. The analytical model thus accounts for the impact of ideas and identities against short term interests and economic calculation. What is generally disregarded is that politicisation is not only an effect of the structuring of public opinion but also fundamentally concerns its formation and transformation. The expression of support or opposition towards European integration does not simply correlate with the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of more or less stable and pre-given territorial identities. Contestation rather concerns the very process through which opinions are articulated, proliferated and made publically salient.

In a previous working paper we have set out the analytical framework of EU legitimacy contestation that accounts for the dynamic aspects of public opinion formation and mediation through public and media debates (Trenz and De Wilde 2009). Political contestation in the context of European Parliament (EP) election campaigns is taken as a prime indicator of the *formation* of public opinion concerning European integration. By monitoring EU legitimacy contestation on the most prominent sites of political news-making we can thus systematically reconstruct how opinions on European integration are made salient and accessible to a mass audience.

Research on contestation can in this sense be used as a supplement to overcome one of the major shortcomings of public opinion surveys that measure individual attitudes before they have been *publically* articulated and *collectively* made sense of. Public opinion polls such as Eurobarometer have been criticised for posing questions that are not related to the respondents' lifeworld perceptions and experiences (Eder 2010). Eurobarometer can be further criticised for providing only crude measurements of general perceptions of European integration, as the main relevant questions concern speed of integration, EU membership of one's own country, and considered (economic) benefits of integration (Reif and Inglehart 1991). Also the categorisation of political parties is based on such crude typologies relying on a limited set of aggregated stances (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008) or arriving at a scale from 'pro-European' to 'anti-European' (Ray 1999; Pellikaan and Brandsma 2005), Both public opinion and party position measurements may be considered insufficient, especially in light of sophisticated knowledge about possible lines of argumentation concerning the political project of European integration and the EU polity (Morgan 2005) as well as documentation of highly idiosyncratic national discourses (; Diez 1999; Larsen 1999; Diez Medrano 2003; Harmsen 2008;).

Preliminary enquiries into public opinion formation on European integration have targeted the causal connection between public opinion as measured through Eurobarometer and party positions (Hooghe and Marks 2005; Steenbergen et al. 2007). However, such studies neglect how opinions and arguments are *mediated* through the public sphere. As mass media is a key communication platform connecting citizens to political elites in today's 'mediatised' democracies, a focus on public opinion formation on European integration should take mass media and its operating logics into account (Kriesi et al. 2006; De Vreese 2007a; 2007b; Koopmans 2007;; Kriesi et al. 2007; De Vreese and Kandyla 2009).

By focusing on public opinion formation in online media this paper directs attention to the specific *target* of EU legitimacy contestation. The focus shifts from diffuse, non-articulated and isolated attitudes on European integration to targeted, publically articulated and frequently justified statements as elements of the ongoing discourse of public legitimation of the EU.

The question addressed here is therefore threefold. First, the question is to what extent the Internet is used as a platform for public opinion formation on European integration in the context of EP elections. In other words, the question is to what extent EU legitimacy contestation came to the fore in online news coverage of the EP election campaign. Secondly, the question is what the targets and content of online EU legitimacy evaluations are. That is, what aspects of the EU or European integration are addressed in EU legitimacy contestation? Thirdly, the question is to what extent such online EU legitimacy evaluations are justified, expressing concern

for public goods. Taken together, these three questions allow us to map the process of public opinion formation on EU legitimacy that is taking place in one of Europe's increasingly important communication channels.

To answer these questions, this paper draws on original content analysis of online news during the three weeks prior to the European Parliament elections of June 2009. Data has been sampled and coded from professional journalism websites and political blogs in 12 EU member states and from transnational European websites.[1]

The scope of debate

To measure the intensity of the debate and the scope of EU legitimacy contestation during European Parliament election campaign, we distinguish between a) existential, b) domestic, and c) substantial debates. In the first case, a debate can be labeled 'existential' when it concerns evaluations of the EU polity in fundamental terms. In such a situation, the EP elections would put on trial the EU as such and question its basic right of existence. A second type of debate concerns domestic politics and thus reflects the status of EP elections as second order elections (Reif and Inglehart 1991). Rather than contesting European integration in fundamental terms, these second order debates would be relatively oblivious to the EU as polity and debate would focus instead on domestic party politics and electoral horse races. Finally, a debate can be labeled 'substantial' if a significant focus was on EU policies at stake during the elections. That is, debate would centre on what policies candidates for the European Parliament oppose or champion. In this case, we would speak of the EP elections as approaching the type of first order elections in equal terms with national elections. In terms of our coding scheme, the quantity of evaluations of EU legitimacy, i.e. the amount of messages that evaluate the EU in terms of principle, polity and project, is the primary indicator for existential debates. Figure 1 shows the amount of messages made in each of our cases in relation to the amount of threads resulting from our sampling strategy.

Clearly, this indicates that the degree to which the EU is evaluated in existential terms is independent of the overall salience of EU news during election campaigning. Thus, the intensity of campaigning during European Parliament elections as reflected in the overall news coverage, does not tell us much about the degrees of contestations of EU legitimacy as part of campaigning. The United Kingdom (UK) clearly stands out as the case where EP election campaigning was conducted in most existential terms. The overall salience of EP elections campaigning on the British news sites is average but the density of EU legitimacy contestation is high with on average 5. 18 messages per news thread. On the other extreme, we find that the EU is hardly contested as polity in Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Poland or Sweden. There was on average less than one message per thread in each of these five countries. The Greek debate is clearly an extreme case combining high salience of the EU elections (amount of clippings) with

[1] For a broader overview of the Online Euroscepticism project under Work Package 5 of the RECON project,
visit:<http://www.reconproject.eu/projectweb/portalproject/CountryReports_Euroscepticism.html>.
(last accessed 25 October 2010)

low salience of EU legitimacy (amount of messages).[2] Austrian, Dutch, French, German, and EU debates might be labeled as 'semi-existential', with between 2. 06 (EU) and 2. 40 (Austria and the Netherlands) messages per thread on average. Finland (1. 16) and the Czech Republic (1. 56) fall in between the two groups of no legitimacy contestation and semi-existential debates.

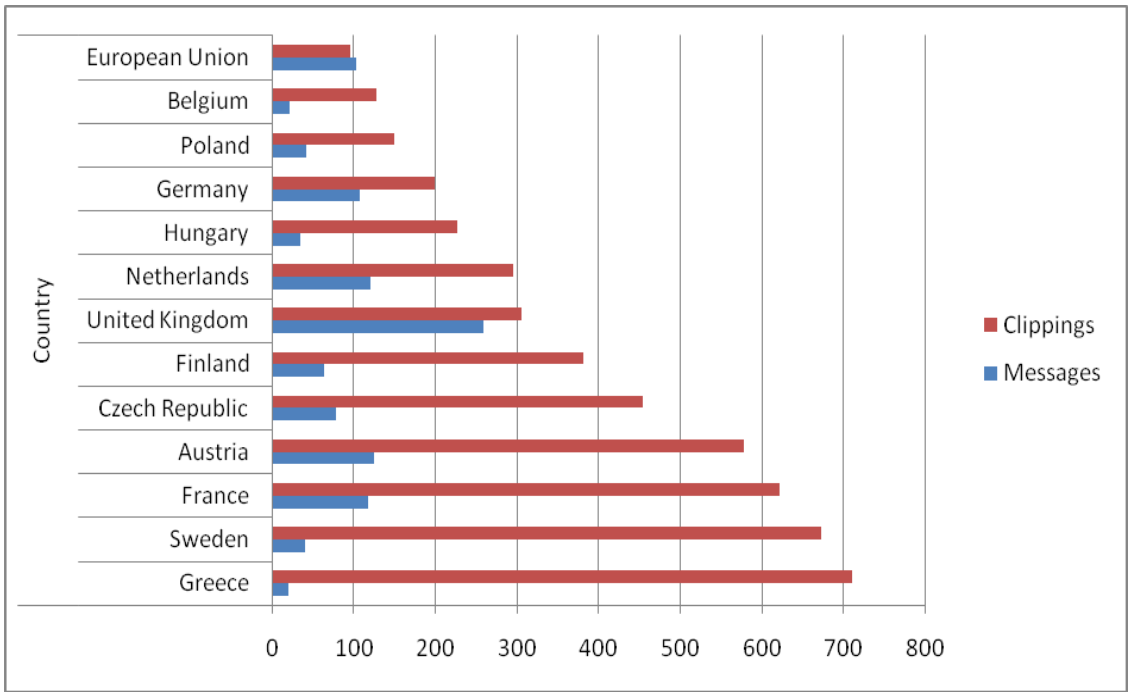

Figure 1: Comparing intensity of EU evaluative debates (number of evaluations coded per country) with overall coverage of EU elections per country.

Yet, an absence of evaluations of EU legitimacy in fundamental terms does not tell us whether we are faced with a domestic debate focusing on politics in the member states or a substantial debate contesting EU policies. For proceeding with our analysis, we therefore need to draw on a comparison of domestic campaigning in terms of salience of issues and debates in the countries analysed. The qualitative country reports that have been prepared for this survey indicate the eminence of domestic debates with domestic issues and actors at the core of campaigning (Crespy 2009; De Wilde 2009a; Gora et al. 2009; Michailidou 2009; Packham and Klepatz 2009). Topics of common concern to Europeans, like for instance the coordination of financial crisis or of environmental policies are debated to a much lesser extent than we would expect from their high salience on the policy agenda. Also EU politics in terms of candidate profiles or positioning of parties in the European Parliament are only discussed randomly as apparent in the low profile of European actors as participant in the debates.

We can thus conclude that the internet has developed into a central arena for enlarging the scope of EU debates. Yet, the internet does not provide one

[2] A 'clipping' refers to a unit of online text, often an article including readers' comments, in which the EP elections were mentioned. A 'message' refers to a unit of EU legitimacy contestation made by a single actor in a single time and space which may contain up to three evaluations; one on each of the three identified dimensions of legitimacy contestation. More detailed information is included in the codebook (De Wilde et al. 2009).

encompassing media space for contesting EU legitimacy but falls apart into different national media spheres, in which the scope of debates and degrees of contestation vary widely. This variance is insufficiently explained by the patterns of support and opposition expressed in Eurobarometer opinion polls. Only in the case of the UK, we find a clear correlation between high degrees of internet coverage and low degrees of public support to European integration. Hence, online attention for European Parliament elections has shown to be a poor indicator of the extent to which the internet performs the function of public opinion formation regarding EU legitimacy.

Evaluations of EU legitimacy

Euroscepticism can thus be approached as part of 'existential debates' contesting the EU or European integration in terms of polity. This stands in contrast to contesting specific policies or individual political actors. Our category scheme provides a tool for the qualitative assessment of such debates in terms of content in order to better understand the type of concerns that are at stake when contesting the legitimacy of the EU[3]. In order to proceed with this assessment and thus to approach the dimensions of Eurosceptic opposition, we assume that arguments seeking to contest the legitimacy of the EU not only need to be public and generally accessible, they also need to meet the requirement of sufficiency (Morgan 2005: 38ff). In order to comply with this discursive standard, we have argued in a previous working paper that EU legitimation discourse embraces evaluations in terms of principle, polity and project (Trenz and De Wilde 2009). The exchange of arguments and justifications must be organised in such a way, that it shows a) the principle of transnational integration to be defendable (i.e. there is a justifiable reason that we are better off in doing things together), b) the institutional arrangement fits (there is a justifiable product in terms of guaranteeing the general compliance with the principle), and c) the project is ideationally or materially supported (there are shared goals that drive the process of future integration). We now continue to discuss first evaluations of the principle of integration. That is, opinions about the idea or practice of cooperation among European nation-states in general. Secondly, we will discuss evaluations of the institutional set-up of the EU polity which may address either the division of power in the EU (level of integration), the extent of its competencies (scope of integration) or membership and influence of particular countries or other societal groups (inclusiveness of integration). Thirdly, we discuss evaluations of the integration project which address alteration in either the level, scope or inclusiveness of the integration project in future. Finally, we consider the extent to which evaluations on these three dimensions may be categorised into a typology of EU legitimacy contestation.

The principle of integration

Evaluations of the principle of integration comprise judgments on the value of cooperation among European nation-states in the most basic form. As such, they consist of categorical or principled statements on why European nation states need to collaborate together, or should not do so, regarding the extent to which they are better off together than alone. Slogans and branding like 'The EU is good for you' often

[3] For an elaborate overview of methodology and coding scheme, see De Wilde et al. (2009) and Michailidou and Trenz (2010).

contain categorical statements on EU legitimacy. Usually, these are combined with some form of justification by reference to a generalised principle or public good: 'European integration helps to promote peace and prosperity'.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the percentage of messages containing evaluations of the integration principle in the twelve member states and transnational websites under study. It becomes apparent that the majority of messages in all cases – ranging up to 100 per cent in the case of Belgium – do not concern evaluations of the principle of integration. Fundamental questions concerning the principle of integration were raised mostly in the transnational debates, followed by the Netherlands and Austria. It is further interesting to note that only in a few cases are there more negative evaluations of the principle of integration than positive ones. This is clearly the case in Austria, with Finland and Poland and the Czech Republic featuring an equal amount of positive and negative evaluations or a very slight majority of negative evaluations. Finally, we notice that several countries – Greece, Hungary, Sweden and the UK – do not feature any negative evaluations of the principle of integration.

The marginality of this form of principled evaluation points to a certain degree of familiarity with European integration as a kind of reality taken for granted within which many Europeans have been socialised. In other words, cooperation among European nation states is a kind of background knowledge that cannot easily be challenged. Positions that express principled support to European integration are therefore often deemed unnecessary and positions that challenge the dogma of post-war European integration are difficult to justify. We can thus assume that Euroscepticism in the media needs to find a more nuanced expression. Support or opposition of European integration in principle is usually expressed as part of a more complex argumentation and needs to be contextualised within the broader discursive field of EU legitimacy contestation. One correlation found is that positive evaluations of the principle of integration go regularly together with negative evaluations of the institutional set-up dimension.

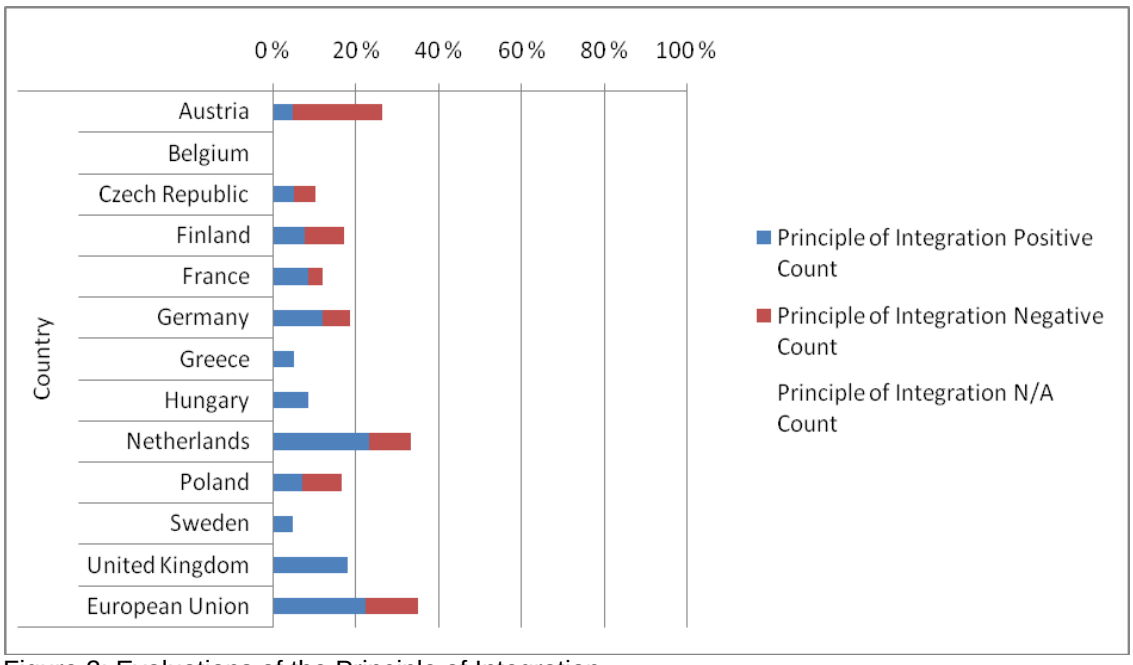

Figure 2: Evaluations of the Principle of Integration

That is, participants in the debates argue against some aspect of the current institutional or constitutional set-up of the EU but at the same time demonstrate their principled support of cooperation among European nation states. We will continue to discuss each of the other two dimensions of evaluation separately, before analysing their correlations as part of the justificatory practices of contesting EU legitimacy. Still, as demonstrated by the plurality of positive evaluations of the principle of integration over negative evaluations, the audience of EU online debates is likely to get a positive message about cooperation among European nation states.

The current institutional set-up of the EU

The second dimension of evaluation of EU legitimacy refers to the current constitutional and institutional set-up of the EU. Here, the target of evaluation is more specific, comprising an aspect of the legal infrastructure and institutional apparatus in place. More specifically, we can discern evaluations of the functioning of the EU polity in terms of level, scope or inclusiveness. Evaluations of each level are found to target the powers of the European Commission and the European Parliament in particular. Evaluations of integration levels range from references to 'the extent of EU powers' to precise arguments concerning the need for unanimity voting in the Council of Ministers.

Evaluations of scope are found to address policy competencies that have recently been more prominent, such as Justice and Home Affairs in the wake of the September 11 attacks and continuing threat of Islamic terrorism as well as concern for illegal immigration. Inclusiveness evaluations particularly concern the voting power of one's own member state in relation to that of others (generally evaluated negatively) or the broader control and voice 'ordinary' citizens have in relation to European political elites.

As already mentioned above, the current institutional framework of the EU is predominantly evaluated in negative terms. Participants in online media debates tend to support European integration in principle but are rather critical concerning the procedures for cooperation that are in place and the institutions that shall support and implement it. This dissaproval with the current institutional set-up of the EU became manifest in all member states that were scrutinised in this survey. Negative evaluations of EU legitimacy prevail over affirmative ones. Online debates thus tend to be predominantly critical with the achievements of the EU and its performance. Interestingly, this pattern does not confirm conventional knowledge of Euroscepticism, based on Eurobarometer data. Countries known for their pro-European stance, like Belgium, France and Germany, nevertheless generate highly critical debates. A less pronounced negative voice can be found in some of the more Eurosceptic countries, like the Czech Republic, Sweden and the UK. This confirms our initial proposition that conventional indicators to measure Euroscepticism in terms of partisan contestation or public opinion are insufficient. Citizens can be exposed to negative evaluations of EU legitimacy in the media, even when partisan mobilisation on fundamental issues concerning the principle, scope and future of integration remains limited.

Unpacking EU legitimacy evaluations in terms of level, scope and inclusiveness, we find that the balance of power between the EU and the member states as well as the inclusiveness of the institutional set-up of the EU in terms of membership and

participation are more often targeted than the scope of policies and competencies that are covered by the EU.

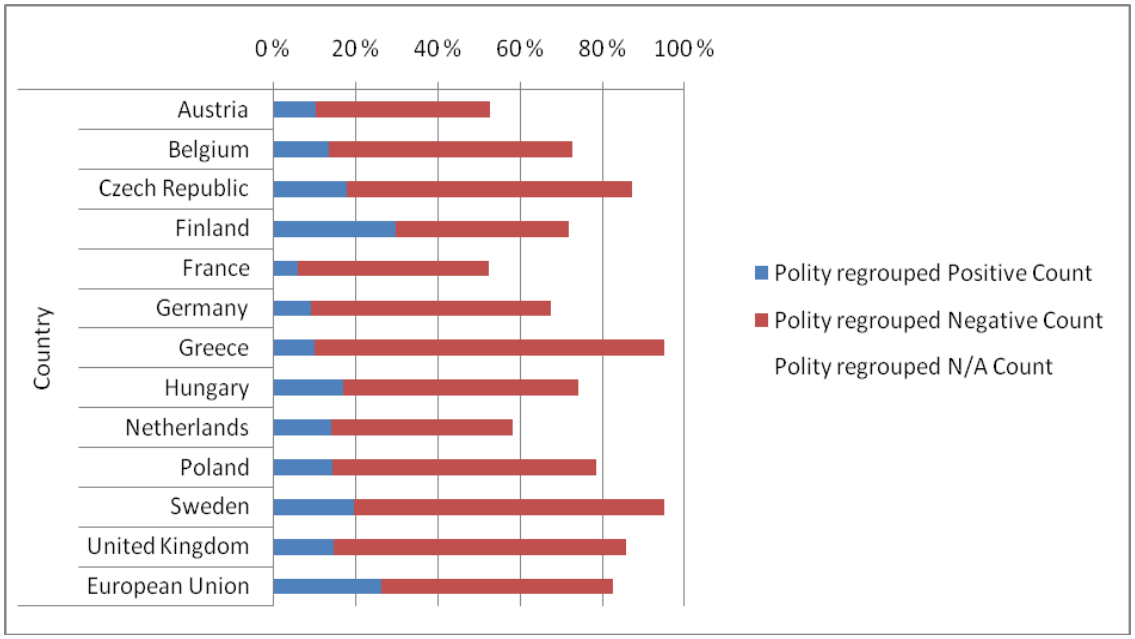

Figure 3: Evaluations of the current institutional set-up of the EU.

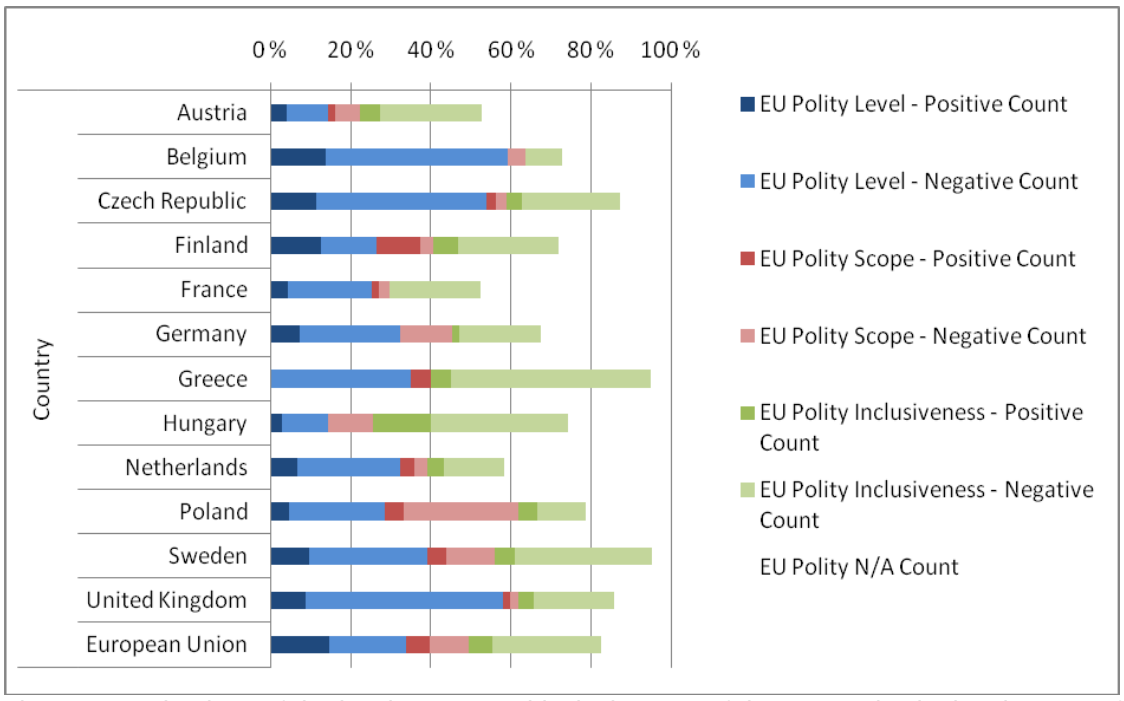

Figure 4: Evaluations of the level, scope and inclusiveness of the current institutional set-up of the EU.

This indicates a concern with the distribution of power and influence, a concern with democracy as well as a concern with belonging and identity, which are more pronounced than the concern with the problem solving capacities within particular policy fields. The allocation of political authority and the sharing of power within the EU are more contested than the efficiency and expansion of the scope of governance. This is also reflected in the evaluative dimensions, which is more balanced in

assessing the scope of governance[4] while predominantly negative when it comes to assessing the level and inclusiveness of the institutional set-up of the EU.

We can thus conclude that the current institutional and constitutional set-up is at the heart of EU legitimacy contestation in online debates during the campaigns for the European Parliament elections of June 2009. In all countries observed, the majority of these evaluations were negative. Furthermore, these evaluations particularly target the powers of supranational institutions, questions of membership and influence of certain countries, or complaints about the lack of influence of citizens in comparison to political elites.

Future prospects of integration

If online debates evaluate European integration predominantly positive in principle but are rather negative with the current institutional set-up and performance of the EU, how do participants in the debates evaluate future prospects for integration? Such future plans for integration are here understood to fall apart in the same set of targets as the evaluative dimension of the current institutional set-up of the EU.

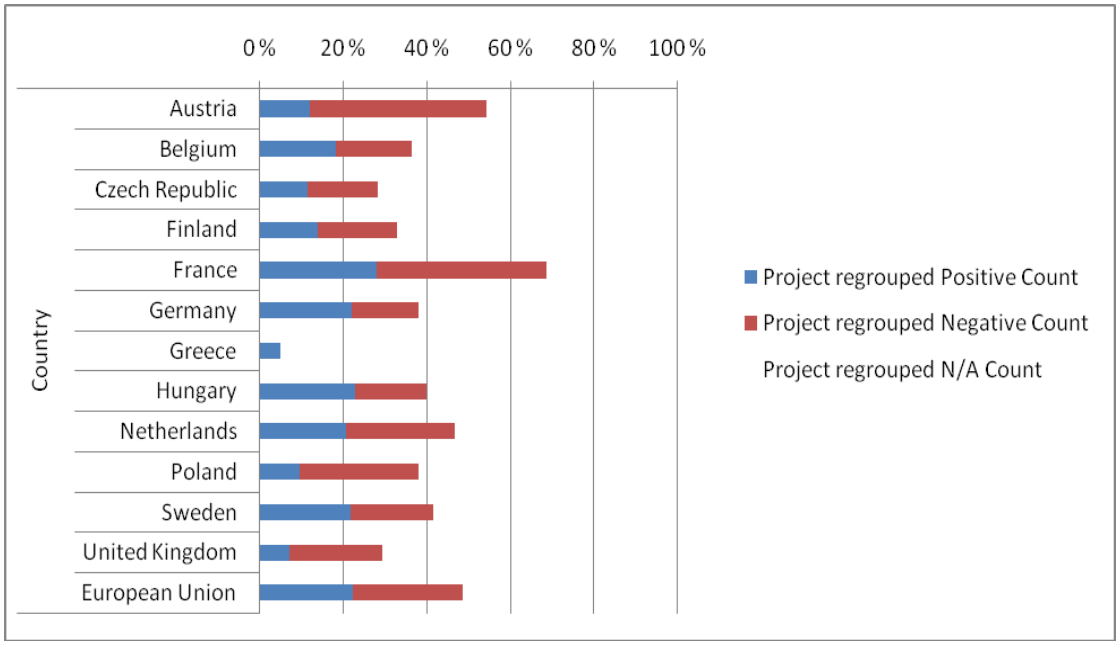

Figure 5: Evaluations of the project of European integration.

That is, messages may contain positive or negative evaluations on the level, scope or inclusiveness of the project of integration. Evaluations of level include, for example, arguments in favour or against increasing the powers of the European Parliament. Evaluations of scope can take the form of arguments in favour of increasing EU competencies in some fields or to limit them in other. Finally, evaluations of inclusiveness of the project of integration contain arguments for or against accession of applicant countries like Turkey or can discuss proposals to reduce the democratic deficit by bringing the EU closer to the citizens.

[4] We find a balance between positive and negative evaluations in the case of Belgium, Czech Republic, Netherlands and UK and a dominance of positive evaluations in the case of Finland and Greece.

The future prospects of integration raise concerns in the debates in all countries scrutinised, but are on average less contested than the current institutional set-up of the EU. There is also strong variation among the cases, not just in terms of the percentage of messages containing evaluations of the project of integration, but also in terms of the balance between positive and negative evaluations. Most cases – Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Poland, the UK and the transnational debates – feature more negative evaluations of the project of integration than positive ones, while Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Sweden feature more positive than negative evaluations or an equal number of both. Thus, there seems to be a divide in evaluating the project of integration among the countries scrutinised. The future of European integration is not only contested along ideological lines but also along lines of diverging national interests. As can be seen in figure 6, this divide can be further substantiated by unpacking the targets of legitimacy contestation in terms of level, scope and inclusiveness.

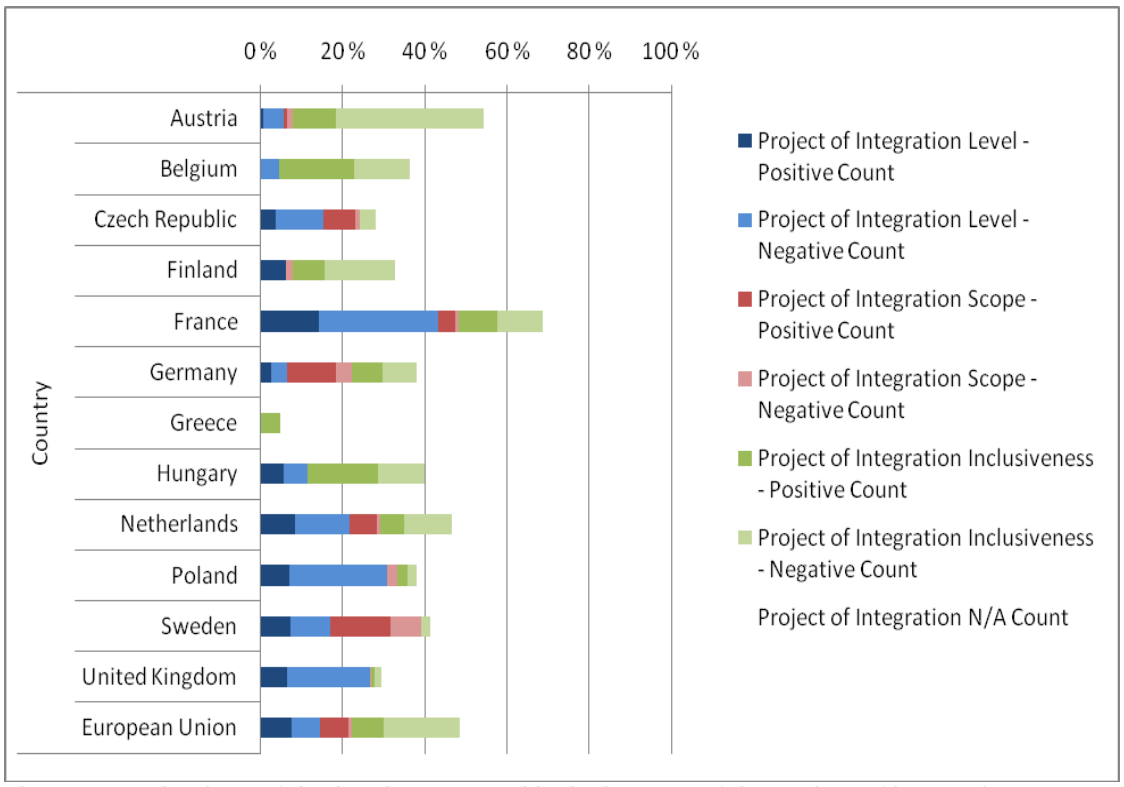

Figure 6: Evaluations of the level, scope and inclusiveness of the project of integration.

Figure 6 indicates the co-occurence of positive and negative evaluations with regard to each of these three targets. That is, if a debate in a country features many positive evaluations of the project of integration in terms of delegating or restricting supranational authority, the same target of contestation is also likely to raise many negative evaluations. This finding is important because it substantiates our discursive understanding of EU legitimacy contestation as a dynamic and responsive process. The promotion of EU legitimacy provokes resistances, and these resistances are likely to be countered again by positive evaluations. Media debates are thus balanced in making both pro- and anti-European arguments visible and facilitating discursive exchange between proponents and opponents of European integration. The targets of contestation vary, with the Austrian, Belgium, Finish, Hungarian and European debates dominated by evaluations of the inclusiveness of the project of integration;

the Czech, French, Polish and UK debates dominated by the level of integration and the German and Swedish debates dominated by the scope of integration.

Clearly, the third dimension of legitimacy contestation – the project of integration – is the one where most variance is found among the thirteen cases included in our study. Not only does the percentage of messages containing an evaluation on this dimension diverge, the balance between positive and negative evaluations and the balance between level, scope and inclusiveness as targets of evaluation vary as well. A preliminary conclusion from discussing the dimensions of EU legitimacy contestation may therefore be as follows. First, contributors only rarely address the principle of integration, but if they do, they do so predominantly in a positive way. Second, the current institutional set-up of the EU receives most attention with the majority of messages containing a negative evaluation of this dimension of legitimacy contestation. Finally, the future project of integration is evaluated in the most diverging way among our thirteen cases, in terms of amount, positive or negative balance and target. There is thus a rather unitary voice across all countries in affirming European integration in principle but opposing its current institutional set-up. Yet, there is wide dissent with regard to expressing preferences for future paths of integration and strategies of reform.

Towards a typology of EU legitimacy contestation

At this stage, we proceed by proposing a typology of practices of EU legitimacy contestation. By setting apart support and opposition in each of the three dimensions of contestation – principle of integration, institutional set-up of the EU and project of integration – we arrive at a table of eight possible combinations of arguments. Two of these combinations can be excluded by logical extrapolation: an argument against the principle of integration joined by an argument in favour of the project of integration would be considered inconsistent.[5] The resulting typology of six categories of EU legitimacy contestation is presented in Table 1. Four types of EU legitimacy contestation – pro-European, status quo, Eurocritical and Anti-European – rank ordinally from positive evaluations on all three dimensions to negative evaluations on all three dimensions. Alter-European and pragmatic arguments, the fifth and sixth type of legitimacy contestation, fall somewhat outside this scale.

In order to provide a sufficient justification of EU legitimacy from a normative point of view, messages need to address all three dimensions of evaluation, i.e. need to argue why European integration is good or bad in principle, why the present polity fits or does not fit and what future paths of integration should be taken. It is thus assumed that the legitimacy of the EU needs to be publically defended and that justifications of EU legitimacy follow some commonly accepted standards: 'The European public needs a normatively convincing defense of the integration project and that need grows more pressing as the project moves forward' (Offe in Morgan 2005: 17-18). In contrast to Morgan, we are not interested to proceed with the normative assessment along the dimensions of what he calls the three 'democratic

[5] What counts here is not the logical inconsistency of the argument but its incapacity to build coherent media stories. As a matter of fact, the 'inconsistent' argumentation of opposing European integration in principle but supporting its future trajectory could not be found in any empirically found evaluative statement.

standards of justification'.[6] We rather use the template of an adequate and coherent justification of EU legitimacy in terms of principle, institutional set-up and project as an analytical tool that helps us to categorise and to compare practices of legitimacy contestations found in 'real discourse' across our cases. This analytical scope of our analysis helps us to avoid entering into a debate on whether the arguments put forward in pro-European or anti-European discourse are effective or ineffective or empirically false or wrong. In the discursive reality of legitimacy contestation, it is expected that our normative template of a 'sufficient legitimacy justification' is rarely met, with the majority of messages addressing just one or two dimensions of legitimacy contestation. Media discourse operates through abbreviated justifications, in which single dimensions of what can be considered the full justificatory standard in an argumentative practice are left out and meaning is often more implicit than made explicit through arguments.

Table 1: A typology of EU legitimacy contestation.

		Principle of integration			
		Positive		**Negative**	
		EU institutional set-up			
		Positive	**Negative**	**Positive**	**Negative**
Project of integration	**Positive**	Pro-European	Alter-European	X	X
	Negative	Status Quo	Eurocritical	Pragmatic	Anti-European

Taking into consideration these 'white spots' in practical justification discourse, we are therefore not faced with a 2x2x2 table with each dimension containing either positive or negative values, but by a 3x3x3 table, taking into account that evaluations can be positive, negative or absent.[7] The resulting combinations of arguments can be classified along our typology of EU legitimacy contestations assuming that missing information in one dimension can to some extent be filled in by logical extrapolation. For instance, the statement 'European integration is undemocratic and the EU should therefore be abolished' contains a negative evaluation of the principle of integration and of the current institutional set-up of the EU. We can safely classify this statement as Anti-European despite missing information on the future project or trajectory of integration. Yet, apart from the six 'specified' types of EU legitimacy contestation identified above, our survey also points out a number of truncated justifications, which remain under specified.[8] Statements like 'the Common Market dismantles the

[6] Morgan (2005: 18) holds that any adequate justification of European integration must satisfy three requirements: a requirement of publicity, a requirement of accessibility and a requirement of sufficiency.

[7] In this table, only the cell reflecting the combination of three times 'absent' is invalid. Technically, we are therefore faced with 3x3x3-1 = 26 possible forms of polity contestation. A full overview of how all 26 possible forms of polity evaluation load onto our typology can be found in Annex I.

[8] In detail, this category of 'truncated' or 'unspecified' evaluations encompasses messages containing no evaluation of the principle of integration, no evaluation or a negative evaluation of the current

welfare state' or 'EU-enlargement is a threat to security' clearly express dissatisfaction in some form with EU legitimacy, yet do not specify the full extent of this dissatisfaction nor possible remedies. We are thus left with an important (and, in terms of numbers, also frequent) residual category of legitimacy evaluations that are placed outside the scheme of legitimacy contestations elaborated above. We label such contributions to discourse as Eurosceptic in diffuse terms. These evaluations are plainly negative, yet underspecified, and could potentially contribute to either Anti-European, Eurocritical, Alter-European or Status Quo types of legitimacy contestation.

The results are displayed in a typology of six specified forms of legitimacy contestation and one under specified residual category. Table 2 displays the unweighted frequencies of all seven types of legitimacy contestation. Positive evaluations of EU legitimacy in one or several dimensions – the legitimacy contestation types Pro-European, Status Quo, Alter-European, Eurocritical and Pragmatic – are only found in 36 per cent of all messages. Yet, also the openly Anti-European contributions to discourse – those categorically opposing the principle of integration and possibly the current institutional set-up and/or project – remain rather marginal (6.7 per cent of all evaluations). Clearly, the argumentative incomplete category of under specified 'Eurosceptic' evaluations is most numerous reflecting 57.3 per cent of all messages. This reflects the strongly negative tone in the debates.

Table 2: Typology of EU legitimacy contestations.

Legitimacy contestation		**Percentage**
Specified	Pro European	15.5
	Status Quo	10.4
	Alter European	4.6
	Eurocritical	5.4
	Pragmatic	0.1
	Anti European	6.7
Under specified	Diffuse Eurosceptic	57.3
	Total	100.0
	N	1134

Aside from their unmistakably negative connotation, it is hard to establish in what sense and direction EU legitimacy is challenged by specified Eurosceptic evaluations. That is, the missing information resulting from only one or two dimensions of integration being addressed makes it impossible to determine in which of the six categories in our typology the evaluation would fall. There is thus an inbuilt ambivalence in the negative evaluations of EU legitimacy. Such diffuse Euroscepticism could load onto either Status Quo ('no further steps'), Alter-European ('a different Europe') or Eurocritical ('not this Europe') type of arguments. This would assume some form of support for cooperation among European nation states despite the criticism voiced. Alternatively, Eurosceptic contributions could reflect Anti-European ('no Europe at all') arguments, opposing any form of cooperation.

institutional set-up of the EU and no evaluation or a negative evaluation of the project of integration. See Annex I fur further details.

The conclusion is that only a minority of contributions in the public sphere come close to the normative template of a 'sufficient' justification in terms of principle, institutional design and project. The majority of contributions voice diffuse discontent falling short of clarifying the context conditions for the validity of their arguments nor pointing at possible solutions. In other words, EU legitimacy contestation dominantly spreads an under specified negativism about the EU and European integration. We are witnessing relatively unfocused expressions of discontent, rather than precisely formulated and substantiated evaluations of the EU polity and we get only little information on the kind of European polity that would be supported or that is opposed by the contestants in the media.

A gap between citizens and elites?

A main observation of public opinion research on European integration has been a gap between citizens and political elites, with the latter being found generally more pro-European than the first (Wessels 1995; Franklin and Wlezien 1997; Binnema and Crum 2007; Steenbergen et al. 2007; Ross 2008). The question is to what extent this citizen-elite divide is reflected in online media discourse. On the one hand, we would expect elite voice to become dominant on professional news sites as governments and mainstream political parties retain a strong position as main communicators on Europe. Citizens, on the other hand, could be expected to dismiss the elite consensus on European integration or to fall prey to populist mobilisation against Europe. The predominantly pro-European voice of elites amplified by the media could create Eurosceptic counter-reactions (Trenz and De Wilde 2009). Euroscepticism could thus spread independently of the mobilisation by political parties as a negative response of the audience to the predominance of pro-European elite discourse. The internet is the ideal place to explore the relationship between elite propositions of EU legitimacy and citizens' reactions. We are therefore interested in establishing whether political elites evaluate European integration differently in online European Parliament election campaigns than citizens do.

Table 3: Legitimacy contestations by party actors and citizens.

		Actor	
		Party actor	**Citizens**
Legitimacy contestation	Pro European	27.3 %	8.5 %
	Status Quo	7.8 %	10.6 %
	Alter European	5.5 %	4.1 %
	Eurocritical	5.5 %	5.5 %
	Pragmatic	0.0 %	0.1 %
	Anti European	6.5 %	7.3 %
	Eurosceptic	47.4 %	63.9 %
	Total	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N	308	714

Our aggregated media data of mainstream professional news sites and political blogs confirms the existence of a citizen-elite divide in media discourse on Europe. Political party actors clearly are more prone to make pro-European arguments than citizens are and contribute fewer Eurosceptic arguments, as shown in Table 3.

Not surprisingly, there is a clear association between the actor and the type of contestation advanced (χ^2 (6, N = 1022) = 66.530, p < .000, Cramer's V = 0.255). Still, it could be argued that these discursive differences during the 2009 European Parliament elections campaign are less pronounced than those reported between national parliamentarians and voters during many of the referendums on Treaty change. There is thus partial evidence that expressions of Euroscepticism are reactions to pro-European elites. It is not necessarily made visible through the inputs of Eurosceptic parties but nevertheless strong in citizens' comments.

Justifying EU legitimacy evaluation

Finally, we may be interested to further discuss the citizens-elite divide which shapes Eurosceptic counter-reactions in relation to the type of justifications that are brought forward by different actors to contest EU legitimacy. On the basis of what general principle is EU legitimacy publically contested? We thus approach the question of the 'orders of worth' that underlie legitimacy contestation of the EU (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). In order to operationalise this question of polity worth, our interpretative scheme relies on the distinction between five types of justificatory order that can be used to defend or to challenge the legitimacy of the EU (Trenz and De Wilde 2009). A legitimacy claim can be based on the value of citizens' rights and self-determination (democracy), on the value of shared history and tradition (culture), on the value of complying with functional needs or criteria of technical efficiency (necessity), on the value of providing material well-being (economic prosperity) and on the value of safeguarding personal or collective integrity (safety). We thus assume that the register of justifications of European integration on which situated actors can draw is limited and that critical practices follow particular scripts and guidelines, which are de-contextualised and generalised as part of the cultural repertoire of modern societies (Wagner 2008). Following this matrix, justifications were coded as the explicit *reasons* given by the actor of the message for his or her evaluation. By including the category 'other' it was further acknowledged that particular justifications could fall out of this matrix. In the following, we cross-tabulate both the legitimacy evaluations and the main actors with these five justifications of worth.

Table 4: Justifications by actor type.

		Actor	
		Party actor	**Citizens**
Justification of worth	Democracy	20.1 %	43.4 %
	Culture	9.7 %	4.8 %
	Necessity	6.5 %	12.4 %
	Economic Prosperity	6.8 %	8.1 %
	Safety	7.8 %	4.5 %
	Other	1.0 %	0.4 %
	N/A	48.1 %	26.4 %
	Total	100.0 %	100.0 %
	N	308	715

We find a substantial association between actors and justifications (χ^2(6, N = 1023) = 84.111, p < .000, Cramer's V = 0.287). Surprisingly, party actors less often justify their legitimacy evaluations than citizens do. Citizens are also much more likely to evaluate the EU or European integration based on a concern with democracy than party actors

are. This may, however, be a function of the type of evaluations made. We therefore also investigate to what extent different kinds of justification are invoked to support different legitimacy evaluations.

Table 5 shows first how certain justifications – particularly those concerning democracy and necessity – are more often invoked than others, irrespective of the type of argument made. Yet, democracy as a justification is more often invoked by those critical of the EU than by those supportive. Or, in other words, actors measuring the legitimacy of the EU with standards of democracy tend to be critical. On the other hand, actors making supportive evaluations of EU legitimacy tend to justify those arguments more based in necessity or safety than actors negatively evaluating EU legitimacy. Again, in other words, actors contesting EU legitimacy on the basis of standards of necessity or safety, tend to be more positive. Two other justifications of worth – culture and economic prosperity – are invoked by both those positively and negatively evaluating EU legitimacy.

Table 5: Legitimacy contestation and justifications of worth.

		Dimensions of Evaluation						
		Pro-European	**Status Quo**	**Alter-European**	**Euro-critical**	**Pragmatic**	**Anti-European**	**Euro-sceptic**
Justification of worth	**Democracy**	18.8 %	31.4 %	38.5 %	47.5 %	0.0 %	43.4 %	41.7 %
	Culture	8.0 %	3.4 %	7.7 %	4.9 %	0.0 %	3.9 %	6.6 %
	Necessity	17.0 %	19.5 %	21.2 %	14.8 %	100.0 %	6.6 %	6.9 %
	Economic Prosperity	9.1 %	14.4 %	5.8 %	8.2 %	0.0 %	7.9 %	6.2 %
	Safety	8.5 %	10.2 %	13.5 %	3.3 %	0.0 %	2.6 %	3.4 %
	Other	1.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.5 %
	N/A	36.9 %	21.2 %	13.5 %	21.3 %	0.0 %	35.5 %	34.8 %
	Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Discussion

How can we evaluate these findings in terms of possible advances of democratic reform and the status of European parliamentary elections as an element of EU representative democracy? At the heart of the emerging multi-level parliamentarian field, the powers of the European Parliament have increased steadily over the last twenty years but its modes of implementing the principles of representative democracy remain ambivalent (Crum and Fossum 2009). The European Parliament is the only directly elected legislative body of the EU and therefore plays a decisive role in the authorisation and accountability of EU governance (Rittberger 2005). Yet, any answer to the question whether the empowerment of the European Parliament would contribute to the solution of the EU democratic deficit is dependent on the type of electoral connections between citizens and the EU policy-making process (Hix et al. 2007). Arguably, European Parliament elections can best fulfill the democratic functions of authorisation and accountability by debating EU policies and partisan

positioning in substantial terms. That is, the policies at stake during the legislative period should also be subject to campaigns and media debates, thus bringing exposure to different candidate positions, contributing to collective opinion formation on these issues, and providing voters with a meaningful choice (Mair 2001; Føllesdal and Hix 2006; De Wilde 2009b). Neither existential nor domestic debates meet these requirements. Yet, having European Parliament elections function as a vehicle for public opinion formation on European integration may be considered a second best solution (De Wilde 2009b). Existential debates about the rationale of European integration, the institutional and constitutional set-up of the EU and its future trajectory should ideally be held in the context of national election campaigns, since it remains the prerogative of national governments, national parliaments and national electorates (e.g. through referenda) to decide upon these issues. However, since European integration rarely features in national election campaigns (Mair 2001), the fact that it becomes a salient issue in European elections indicates that there is a critical demand to discuss the EU in fundamental terms. This is supported especially by oppositional parties which mobilise the electorate (Franklin and Wlezien 1997; Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2009). It is here that Euroscepticism is likely to become salient.

Domestic campaigning is in this sense to be considered the least adequate to fulfill its democratic functions in terms of authorisation and accountability. Existential debates instead are preferable in normative terms, since they hold national governments and national political parties accountable for their landmark decisions on European integration. However, such existential debates that involve citizens remain nevertheless disconnected from the EU policy process since they touch only marginally upon the agenda that is open for electoral authorisation and raise issues that are out of reach of the limited competences of the European Parliament. Finally, only substantial debates can be said to delegate to MEPs in democratic terms and to hold MEPs accountable for their performance. Our findings indicate that this latter democratic function of European Parliamentary elections is only met to a very limited extent. Instead, online campaigning reinforces the electoral disconnect between EU citizens and the EU policy process by focusing either on domestic campaigns or on existential issues concerning the legitimacy of the EU and the possibilities to authorise it democratically within the existing framework of representation.

Our findings thus point to the high visibility of online EU legitimacy contestation as an element of EP election campaigning that is partly detached from partisan contestation. This confirms our initial understanding of Euroscepticism as a form of opposition that relies on media infrastructures for salience and amplification. Our discussion of legitimacy contestation in the context of 2009 European Parliament election campaigns further supports our argument that Euroscepticism needs to be discussed in relation to the unfinished character of the EU and the salience of its so-called democratic deficits (Trenz and De Wilde 2009). Our discourse approach to EU legitimacy contestation has proven highly valuable in demonstrating how positive and negative evaluations of EU legitimacy are mutually reinforcing. Efforts to establish EU legitimacy in terms of principle, institutional set-up and project evoke counter arguments and vice versa.

We find that EU legitimacy contestations during the 2009 EP election campaigns predominantly concern the current institutional set-up of the EU. There are fewer evaluations concerning the future project of integration and even less evaluations of

the principle of integration. The lack of contestation on the principle of integration points to general acceptance among European political elites and citizens that some form of collaboration among European nation states is warranted, given interdepencies and historically grown relations. Furthermore, after the anticipated completion of the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, grand scale future plans for further integration may have (temporarily) disappeared from the public agenda. The strong criticism of the current institutional set-up of the EU in combination with a lack of contestation on the project of integration implies a stalemate, in which polity opposition frequently remains detached from a discussion on possible reform. Whereas the principle of integration is largely evaluated positively, the current set-up of the EU is largely evaluated negatively. Evaluations on the project differ and views on future integration diverge among countries.

The citizens-elite divide is clearly shown to be present by our data and thus is to be considered as one of the central vectors structuring public legitimation discourse on European integration. Citizens are clearly more critical of the EU than party actors are, with party actors particularly making more Pro-European arguments and citizens making more Eurosceptic arguments. We also find a clear difference in how party actors and citizens justify their evaluations, with citizens applying standards of democracy more often while partisan actors less often justify their arguments. However, justification seems to be correlated to the type of legitimacy evaluation made, with negative evaluations more often justified with concerns for democracy, positive evaluations more often made with concerns for necessity and safety, and justifications of culture and economic prosperity applied to both positive and negative evaluations. The finding that citizens justify their arguments more with concerns for democracy than party actors do could thus be a function of them making more Eurosceptic arguments.

Interestingly, the content of evaluations does not vary substantially among the countries involved in our study. Rather, what differs is the density of debate on EU legitimacy as measured in the absolute amount of legitimacy evaluations. In the UK, Austria or the Netherlands where European integration is more salient and public opinion is more critical, we find a higher amount of legitimacy evaluations. In contrast, Greece and Belgium where European integration is relatively uncontroversial feature few evaluations. This may draw our attention to legitimacy contestation as polity opposition (Mair 2005; 2007). Media debates on EU legitimacy are predominantly driven by those critical or dissatisfied with the political status quo (Gamson 1968: 48). In other words, there is a bias in online media that favours opposition over affirmative voice. Reasons for this might be manifold: Negative news is often found to have a higher news value and journalists as the gatekeepers of media discourse tend to selectively amplify discontent with European integration. In addition, actors supportive of European integration and content with the status quo may have fewer incentives to voice their opinions online than disgruntled actors do. Especially citizens, who mainly account for the high salience of EU critical evaluations in the media, display a strong bias towards expressions of dissatisfaction with the EU and European integration. In this sense, we can conclude that online media tend to selectively amplify Euroscepticism while pro-European arguments are less likely to become salient in the internet.

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Annex I: Categorising EU Legitimacy Contestation

We present a novel typology of EU legitimacy contestation based on three distinct dimensions and the possibility to discursively present a positive or a negative evaluation of each of these dimensions (De Wilde et al. 2009). Building on previous attempts at classifying different forms or degrees of Euroscepticism (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003), we argue there is more to EU legitimacy contestation than simply being 'in favour' or 'against'. Rather, we follow Morgan in distinguishing between three distinct dimensions of justification (Morgan 2005). These three dimensions are the principle of integration, the institutional set-up of the currently existing EU polity and the project of integration. Based on this, we developed a 2x2x2 table of possible forms of combinations of EU legitimacy contestation. Of the eight theoretical possibilities, we ruled out two which we considered illogical arguments. The remaining six arguments are labelled Pro-European, Status Quo, Alter-European, Eurocritical, Pragmatic and Anti-European. The typology is reproduced in Table 6.

Table 6: Typology of EU legitimacy contestation.

		Principle of integration			
		Positive	**Negative**		
		EU institutional set-up			
		Positive	**Negative**	**Positive**	**Negative**
Project of integration	**Positive**	Pro-European	Alter-European	X	X
	Negative	Status quo	Eurocritical	Pragmatic	Anti-European

However, in practice, performances of EU legitimacy contestation in the public sphere rarely address all three dimensions of evaluation. Rather, the majority of performances in the form of messages we coded addressed only one or two dimensions. Reality, therefore loads onto a 3x3x3 table where performances can exclude one or two dimensions of contestation. Note that one combination – that of no evaluation on all three dimensions – is excluded, since this does not count as a contribution to EU legitimacy contestation. We thus face 3x3x3-1=26 possible forms of EU legitimacy contestation performances. The question then arises whether such real existing performances load onto our idealtypical typology, and if so, how.

We now argue that all 26 forms of performances can be loaded onto our typology of EU legitimacy contestation, with the exception of three combinations for which we need a seventh category. Whereas the original six represent lines of argumentation meeting our normative template for a 'sufficient' justification of EU legitimacy, the seventh category does not. That is, it consists of arguments which lack enough information to be placed in any of the six idealtypical types of contestation. Our categorisation rests first on the assumption that the three dimensions of legitimacy contestation are generally not perceived to be independent from each other by either those making the evaluations and the general audience. Secondly, we assume that evaluations are more likely to be negative than positive. That is, actors are generally more inclined to express disagreement than to express agreement in politics (Gamson 1968). This means that, once people make the effort to

contribute a positive evaluation, this is more meaningful than when they contribute a negative evaluation as the threshold to do so is higher.

Table 7: Possible EU legitimacy contestation combinations, categories applied and frequencies.

Principle	Institutional Set-up	Project	Legitimacy evaluation	Frequency
Positive	Positive	Positive	Pro-European	8
Positive	Positive	Negative	Status Quo	2
Positive	Positive	N/A	Pro-European	23
Positive	Negative	Positive	Alter-European	15
Positive	Negative	Negative	Eurocritical	26
Positive	Negative	N/A	Eurocritical	35
Positive	N/A	Positive	Pro-European	10
Positive	N/A	Negative	Status Quo	4
Positive	N/A	N/A	Pro-European	22
Negative	Positive	Positive	-	0
Negative	Positive	Negative	Pragmatic	0
Negative	Positive	N/A	Pragmatic	1
Negative	Negative	Positive	-	0
Negative	Negative	Negative	Anti-European	16
Negative	Negative	N/A	Anti-European	26
Negative	N/A	Positive	-	0
Negative	N/A	Negative	Anti-European	5
Negative	N/A	N/A	Anti-European	29
N/A	Positive	Positive	Pro-European	25
N/A	Positive	Negative	Status Quo	5
N/A	Positive	N/A	Status Quo	104
N/A	Negative	Positive	Alter-European	36
N/A	Negative	Negative	Eurosceptic	80
N/A	Negative	N/A	Eurosceptic	414
N/A	N/A	Positive	Pro-European	89
N/A	N/A	Negative	Eurosceptic	150
N/A	N/A	N/A	-	1

The main reason why most performances addressing one or two dimensions of contestation can be loaded onto our typology is that the three dimensions are not considered independent from each other (Vasilopoulou 2008). We assume that actors evaluating EU legitimacy as well as the general audience of such evaluations consider the three dimensions generally as ranked. That is, we assume that a positive evaluation of the third dimension of contestation – project of integration – builds on a positive evaluation of the first and second dimension unless explicitly stated otherwise. In other words, an argument in favour of further steps in integration in the future carries with it implicit acceptance of the principle of integration and the current institutional set-up. Similarly, we assume that a positive evaluation of the current institutional set-up of the EU carries implicit support for the principle of integration.

Secondly, we assume that people are generally more inclined to actively voice criticism than to voice support in politics. This is so, first, because 'voice' is often to be considered a form of action in response to an undesired situation (Hirschman 1970). It has consequently been specified that citizens with a combination of discontent about a political situation and the belief to be able to change this are most likely to engage in politics (Gamson 1968: 48). This means that a negative evaluation of a particular dimension of contestation does not directly contribute to negative discourse on the other dimensions. After all, underlying opinion may be positive about the other dimension and just refrain from expressing it. In contrast, a

claimant making a positive evaluation overcomes a greater hurdle to engaging in the public sphere, since it is easier or more natural to express criticism than it is to express support. Positive expressions of support in one dimension are thus understood to be supported by implicit positive evaluations of subordinate dimensions of legitimacy contestation, unless specifically evaluated as negative. In other words, if someone takes the effort to state his or her opinion on the EU or European integration online, and this opinion includes a positive evaluation on the project of integration or the institutional set-up of the EU, we assume evaluations on underlying dimensions are positive as well and can thus be categorised as such unless explicitly argued otherwise.

Thirdly, we make a distinction in our three dimensions with regard to whether they address the EU as polity or European integration as political process (Morgan 2005). The second dimension is considered to address the EU as political entity or polity. The first and third dimension, in contrast, carry with it a historical dynamism of addressing the ongoing political project of European integration. Some of our categories (Pro-European, Anti-European, Alter-European) rest in particular on their evaluation of the process of integration, whereas others (Status Quo, Pragmatic, Eurocritical) are more shaped more by their opinion on the current institutional set-up of the EU, than by a particular vision on the process of integration. To mark this distinction, we pay particular attention to whether one or both types of dimensions are addressed in the evaluation. To give an example, a positive evaluation of the institutional set-up of the EU without evaluations on the other two dimensions, could, according to Table 1 be either a Pro-European, a Pragmatic or a Status Quo evaluation. We categorise it here as Status Quo since a) no dynamic dimension of legitimacy contestation is addressed (ruling out Pro-European) and b) a positive evaluation of the institutional set-up is understood to rest on a positive evaluation of the principle of integration, unless explicitly stated otherwise (ruling out Pragmatic).

Based on these three assumptions, we can provide a renewed short description of the basic characteristics of each of the six ideal types of legitimacy contestation:

1. A Pro-European argument consists primarily of a positive evaluation of the dynamicism of the process of European integration. This means a positive evaluation of the principle of integration and/or a positive evaluation of the project of integration without any accompanying negative evaluations. Possible combinations can thus be POS, n/a, n/a; POS, n/a, POS; n/a, n/a POS; n/a, POS, POS and POS, POS, POS.
2. A Status Quo evaluation is characterised primarily by a positive evaluation of the EU institutional set-up. It differs from a Pro-European argument in that there is no positive evaluation of either principle or project of integration, accept a combination of positive on principle and negative on project. It further differs from Pragmatic arguments in that there is no negative evaluation of principle of integration. Status Quo combinations therefore are: POS, POS, NEG; n/a, POS, NEG; n/a, POS, n/a.
3. An Alter-European evaluation is primarily characterised by a negative evaluation of the institutional set-up in combination with a positive evaluation of the project of integration. If the combination of this is present, the principle dimension does not affect the nature of the evaluation anymore. Combinations are therefore: POS, NEG, POS; and n/a, NEG, POS.
4. Eurocritical evaluations are characterised by positive evaluations of the principle of integration in combination with negative evaluations of the institutional set-up, excluding a positive evaluation of the project as this would be considered an Alter-European argument. Possible combinations are therefore: POS, NEG, NEG; POS, NEG, n/a.

5. A Pragmatic evaluation is composed of a negative evaluation of the principle of integration in combination with a positive evaluation of the institutional set-up. Furthermore, we consider a combination of a negative evaluation on principle and a positive evaluation on project to be illogical and therefore exclude this from our typology. We also did not find this combination in practice. Possible combinations for pragmatic evaluations are therefore: NEG, POS, NEG and NEG, POS, n/a.
6. An Anti-European evaluation targets the dynamicism of European integration rather than the currently existing EU polity and is in that extent close to the opposite of a Pro-European evaluation. However, a negative evaluation of the project of integration without any other evaluations present does not tell us as much as a positive evaluation of the project. We can thus only count negative evaluations of the principle of integration without accompanying positive evaluations on other dimensions to load onto Anti-European evaluations. This includes the following combinations: NEG, NEG, NEG; NEG, n/a, NEG; NEG, NEG, n/a and NEG, n/a, n/a.

Of 26 possible combinations of evaluations, 19 have thus been defined as fitting one of our six categories of legitimacy contestation. Of the remaining seven combinations, three are ruled out as illogical as they combine a negative evaluation of the principle of integration with a positive evaluation of the project: NEG, POS, POS; NEG, NEG, POS and NEG, n/a, POS. One more combination (POS, n/a, NEG) does not directly fit the definition of a Status Quo evaluation, but comes close and will be understood as a form of Status Quo argument. Understanding our three dimensions as ranked (first assumption) it remains an open question whether such an evaluation carries an unspoken positive or negative evaluation of the institutional set-up. In other words, in terms of definition, it could fit either the Status Quo or Eurocritical categories of evaluation. However, since we assume people are inclined to make negative evaluations and not making them thus rather implies a positive attitude, we understand this combination as Status Quo, rather than as Eurocritical.

This leaves us with three so far unclassified possible combinations of legitimacy contestation: n/a, NEG, NEG; n/a, n/a, NEG and n/a, NEG, n/a. They are clearly negative in tone, yet could all fit the definition of either Anti-European or Eurocritical evaluations. In addition, the second and third combination could fit the Status Quo and Alter-European categories respectively. Since we lack sufficient information to place these three types of legitimacy contestation in our typology, we add a seventh category of 'underspecified negative evaluation' to our typology. This category will be labeled 'Euroscepticism' to capture on the one hand the clear negativity enclosed, yet also indicate the relative underspecification. To be precise, the underspecification particularly concerns what would alleviate the discontent. In other words, the actor states a clear discontent with some aspects of the European Union and/or European integration without clarifying what could possibly be done to remedy this unease. This message is, in our opinion, neatly captured by the term 'Euroscepticism'.

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