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Euroscepticism, Party Politics, and Political Gain : a Comparative Analysis of the UK and France from Maastricht to Brexit

Bianca Polo del Vecchio

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UNIVERSITÉ SORBONNE NOUVELLE – PARIS 3

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE MONDES ANGLOPHONES, GERMANOPHONES,
IRANIENS, INDIENS ET ETUDES EUROPÉENNES (ED 625 MAGIIE)

ÉQUIPE D'ACCUEIL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON THE ENGLISH-
SPEAKING WORLD (EA 4399 CREW)

Thèse de doctorat en civilisation britannique

Bianca POLO DEL VECCHIO

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Thèse dirigée par
Madame Pauline SCHNAPPER
Professeure à l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3

Soutenue le 8 novembre 2021

Jury:

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Mme. Emmanuelle AVRIL, Professeure à l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3
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Abstract

This thesis studies the interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain. More specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which the potential for political gain has determined the positions of mainstream parties and individual politicians on European integration, and why European integration has been a cause of divisions within some mainstream political parties, yet not in others. As a starting point, this thesis uses key arguments in the literature, notably that political ideology is shaped by strategy, that a party's position on integration can affect its electoral fortunes, and that intra-party divisions on questions of integration present a great challenge for political elites. The study of the positions of parties and individual politicians begins with the establishment of the European Communities, however particular attention is paid to events between 1991 and 2016. The cases of the UK and France are studied and, more specifically, positions within the two main political parties of these states are compared. An interdisciplinary approach is taken, combining political science and civilisationist approaches, to study party debates on European integration through a wider lens. Key to this thesis is the use of original primary data, which provide new and detailed insights into the positioning of mainstream UK and French politicians. Original primary data was gathered through a quantitative questionnaire of members of the lower houses of the UK and French parliaments and qualitative interviews of the same. It is argued that, the positions of French politicians from the two main political parties have principally been motivated by ideology and perception of the national interest. Intra-party divisions over the Europe issue have been successfully managed and dissidents have rarely made political gains from their positions. In contrast, in the UK, integration was often a strategic issue for both main political parties. While ideology and perception of the national interest certainly played a role in determining the positions of parties and individual politicians, it is shown that strategic considerations, and, in particular, the desire to exploit the potential for personal political gain, influenced the positions of certain politicians. Rather than being managed, intra-party divisions impacted official party policy and dissidents frequently made political gains from their positions.

Keywords: Europeanization, EU policy, Euroscepticism, party politics, political competition, strategy.

Euroscepticisme, politique des partis et gain politique: Une analyse comparative du Royaume-Uni et de la France de Maastricht au Brexit

Résumé

Cette thèse étudie l'interaction entre l'euroscepticisme, la politique des partis et le gain politique. Plus précisément, elle cherche à déterminer dans quelle mesure le potentiel de gain politique a déterminé les positions des partis traditionnels et des politiciens individuels sur l'intégration européenne, et pourquoi l'intégration européenne a été une cause de division au sein de certains partis politiques traditionnels, mais pas dans d'autres. Comme point de départ, cette thèse utilise des arguments clés de la littérature, notamment que l'idéologie politique est façonnée par la stratégie, que la position d'un parti sur l'intégration peut affecter ses chances électorales, et que les divisions intra-partis sur les questions d'intégration représentent un grand défi pour les élites politiques. L'étude des positions des partis et des politiciens individuels commence avec la création des Communautés européennes, mais une attention particulière est accordée aux événements survenus entre 1991 et 2016. Les cas du Royaume-Uni et de la France sont étudiés et, plus particulièrement, les positions au sein des deux principaux partis politiques de ces États sont comparées. Une approche interdisciplinaire est adoptée, combinant les approches de la science politique et de la civilisation, pour étudier les débats des partis sur l'intégration européenne à travers une optique plus large. Un élément fondamental de cette thèse est l'utilisation de données primaires originales, qui fournissent un aperçu nouveau et détaillé du positionnement des politiciens des principaux partis politiques britanniques et français. Ces données primaires originales ont été recueillies par le biais d'un questionnaire quantitatif auprès des membres des chambres basses des parlements britannique et français et d'entretiens qualitatifs auprès des mêmes personnes. On avance que les positions des politiciens français des deux principaux partis politiques ont été principalement motivées par l'idéologie et la perception de l'intérêt national. Les divisions au sein des partis sur la question européenne ont été gérées avec succès et les dissidents ont rarement tiré des avantages politiques de leurs positions. En revanche, au Royaume-Uni, l'intégration a souvent été une question stratégique pour les deux principaux partis politiques. Si l'idéologie et la perception de l'intérêt national ont certainement joué un rôle dans l'élaboration des positions des partis et des politiciens individuels, il est démontré que des considérations stratégiques et, en particulier, le désir d'exploiter le potentiel de gain politique personnel, ont influencé les positions de certains politiciens. Plutôt que d'être gérées, les divisions au sein des partis ont eu un impact sur la

politique officielle des partis et les dissidents ont souvent tiré des avantages politiques de leurs positions.

Mots-clés: Européanisation, politique européenne, euroscepticisme, politique des partis, concurrence politique, stratégie.

To Emmanuel and Niall

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List of abbreviations

ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
BBC	Backbench Business Committee
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDS	Centre des démocrates sociaux
CERES	Centre d'études, de recherches et d'éducation socialiste
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CNIP	Centre national des indépendents et paysans
DLR	Débout la République
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EC	European Communities
EC6	European Communities 6 (the six founding member states of the European Communities)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EDM	Early Day Motion
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ERG	European Research Group
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENA	Ecole nationale d'administration
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European Peoples Party
ERG	European Research Group
ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FN	Front national
FNRI	Fédération nationale des républicains indépendents

FSG	Fresh Start Group
IGC	Intergovernmental conference
LR	Les Républicains
MDC	Mouvement des citoyens
MP	Member of Parliament
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MPF	Mouvement pour la France
MRP	Mouvement républicain populaire
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PASD	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
PCF	Parti communiste français
PS	Parti socialiste
PSU	Parti socialiste unifié
QMV	Qualified majority voting
RN	Rassemblement national
RPF	Rassemblement du peuple français
RPF	Rassemblement pour la France
RPFIE	Rassemblement pour la France et l'indépendance de l'Europe
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
RPR-UMP-LR	Rassemblement pour la République - Union pour le mouvement populaire - Les Républicains
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SEA	Single European Act
SFIO	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière
SGAE	Secrétariat Général des affaires européennes
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
WEU	Western European Union
UDC	Union du Centre
UDF	Union pour la démocratie française
UDR	Union des démocrates pour la République
UDSF	Union démocratique et socialiste de la Résistance

UMP	Union pour la majorité présidentielle / Union pour le mouvement populaire
UNR	Union pour la nouvelle République
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

Introduction

In the years following World War II, Europe's political elites took bold and ambitious steps to ensure long-lasting peace and economic prosperity in the war-torn continent. The process of European integration was driven by a consensus among the political elites of participating states, who considered the pooling and transferring of sovereignty to be in the national interest. This process also enjoyed the 'permissive consensus' of European publics.¹ However, the process and consequences of integration have evolved considerably since its beginnings, and especially since the establishment of the European Union (EU) by the Treaty on European Union (TEU) of 1992. Member states have chosen to pool or transfer their sovereignty in a growing number of domains, the EU's institutions have gained increasing powers, and membership has expanded greatly.

The impact of membership of the EU is ever greater for member states. 'Europeanization' – "an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making"² – has had, and will continue to have, far-reaching consequences for national institutions, policies, and politics. As the Europe issue – questions relating to the process and outcomes of European integration – has become increasingly salient in domestic political debate, political parties have been obliged to position themselves, and a pro-integration consensus among Europe's political elites is no longer a given. The term 'Euroscepticism' was first used in an article published in *The Times* newspaper in November 1985 to describe those who were neither strong supporters nor opponents of the process of integration and the European Communities (EC), but rather were sceptical of the EC and its policies. Use of the term became more common following United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech of September 1988. Since then, however, our understanding of the term 'Eurosceptic' has evolved and has necessitated greater precision. Since the early 1990s, a small number of parties have emerged for whom a key objective is to end their country's membership of the EU. While no such parties have entered government, public support for them has grown, as has their influence. This was particularly visible in the UK, where the UK Independence Party (UKIP) gained popular support and influence. More recently, however, parties critical of the EU have been elected to government. This is the case

¹ Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold, *Europe's Would-be Polity*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1970.

² Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010, p. 70.

in Hungary, with *Fidesz*, in Poland, with the Law and Justice Party, and in Italy, with the *Lega* and *Cinque Stelle* parties. In some other states, parties critical of the EU have gained the support of a substantial proportion of the electorate at national elections. This is the case for France's *Rassemblement national* and Germany's *Alternative für Deutschland*. Even within certain mainstream – major, centrist – parties, generally supportive of EU membership, criticism of integration has become more common. This criticism of certain aspects of the process of integration or its outcomes is what Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak refer to as 'soft' Euroscepticism.³ A key example of this phenomenon is the UK's mainstream right Conservative Party. Over the same period, since the early 1990s, the EU public has become more conscious, and less supportive, of EU integration.

The political elites and, more specifically, politicians of member states play a key role in determining the path of European integration. It is therefore concerning that the attitudes towards the EU of politicians – members of government, parliamentarians – seem more hostile than ever before. The most prominent example of this is that, at the 2016 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU, almost half of Conservative Party MPs supported a vote to leave the EU. A fuller understanding of the positions of national politicians on integration is, therefore, of great importance. For our purposes, position is taken to mean the publicly declared opinion of politicians. Could it be the case that, in positioning themselves on European integration, parties, and perhaps also individual politicians, have been conscious of the potential for political gain?

1. Euroscepticism, Party Politics, and Political Gain

The increasing prominence of the Europe issue in public discourse, obliging political parties to position themselves on European integration, has led to the Europe issue becoming a greater feature of party politics, and this in a context of declining public support for integration. In certain EU member states the issue has become a source of political competition. Where integration is a basis of inter- and/or intra-party competition, political parties and individual politicians could be expected to seek personal political gains through their position on the issue. This could be increased public support and electoral gains, and, in the case of individuals, increased influence and seniority within the political party. The interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain is the subject of this thesis. More specifically,

³ Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, "Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality", *SEI Working Paper No. 69*, 2003, p.6.

the objective of this thesis is to determine the extent to which the potential for political gain has determined the positions of mainstream parties and individual politicians on European integration. Further, this thesis seeks to understand why European integration has been a cause of divisions within some mainstream political parties, yet not in others, and how it is that some parties, once divided over the issue, have managed to re-establish unity, while others have not. It identifies notable individuals who have diverted from the official party position and traces how their careers have evolved subsequently. It examines how parties have responded to divisions on European integration, the measures implemented to bring rebels into line and foster party unity, and their success. As a result, conclusions can be drawn as to how the possibility of personal political gain might have influenced the positions of individual politicians on European integration. This is particularly interesting in a context of rising Euroscepticism among politicians who, based on their political ideology and strategy, we would expect to be supportive of European integration.

From 1991 to 2016, the role of the Europe issue in public and political debate evolved considerably with the ending of the permissive consensus and the emergence of integration as a basis of political competition. The period begins with the negotiation and ratification of the Treaty on European Union, encompasses the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, and ends with the decision of the UK public to leave the EU. The TEU had a profound impact on the process and outcomes of European integration, and served to bring the permissive consensus to an end. The Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties were a source of animated debate in a context of growing public Euroscepticism, which served to boost support for Eurosceptic political actors. Brexit constituted an unprecedented rejection of integration by a member state's public and a portion of its politicians. However, the study of positions begins with the establishment of the European Communities in the post-war era. This long timeframe allows for trends to be identified and traced over time, allowing for a more accurate explanation of the motives of parties and individual politicians in adopting positions on European integration.

This thesis takes a comparative approach. In his *Rules of Sociological Method*, Emile Durkheim claimed that comparison is an essential feature of research.⁴ Arend Lijphart describes the comparative approach as a method of political study that allows for “the establishing of general empirical propositions.”⁵ The comparative method deals with a small number of cases. It is this feature that Lijphart identifies as a limit of the approach, as there are inevitably a great

⁴ Emile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*, The Free Press, New York, 1964, p. 139.

⁵ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”, *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 65, no. 3, 1971, p. 682.

number of variables to be borne in mind. It is for this reason that the comparative analysis of the cases must be in-depth and not merely superficial. Lijphart also advises comparing cases that display a large number of similarities and that the number of variables should be reduced as much as possible. In fact, Sylke Nissen considers the in-depth study of a small number of cases to be the heart of comparative political science because it allows for detailed analysis that would not be possible with a higher number of cases.⁶ The cases of the UK and France are compared in this thesis. It is this comparative approach that allows the thesis to bring something new to the existing scholarship as, while much has been published on the UK's relationship with the EC/EU, such a comparative approach has not, as yet, been adopted. Comparing the UK with another state allows for a better understanding of the role of national context in shaping the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration. Studying just two cases allows for in-depth analysis to be carried out. The choice was made to compare the UK and France because these states display a number of similarities, making them well-suited to comparison, while nonetheless revealing important differences in terms of their experiences of EU membership and the reactions of their politicians thereto. More specifically, this thesis compares the positions within the two main political parties of the UK and France. In the UK the positions of the Conservative and Labour Parties are studied. In France, the positions of the successive Gaullist parties *Rassemblement pour la République*, *Union pour un mouvement populaire* and *Les Républicains* (abbreviated in this thesis to RPR-UMP-LR) and the *Parti socialiste* (PS) are studied. All four parties are established and of the political mainstream. Both the Conservative Party and the RPR-UMP-LR are on the centre-right, while the Labour Party and PS are on the centre-left.

1.1. Mainstream dissensus in the United Kingdom, mainstream consensus in France

There are certain, fundamental, similarities between the UK and France. Both are former colonial powers that underwent a process of decolonisation following World War II, both are old and established democracies with political systems that display majoritarian characteristics, both are historically strong economies and today rank among the largest economies in the world. Popular Euroscepticism is present in both the UK and France, although in the former opposition tended to be well above the EC/EU average, whereas in the latter levels have tended to sit at around the average. Yet, despite these similarities, there are very notable differences in the states' experiences of European integration, and the reactions of political parties thereto.

⁶ Sylke Nissen, "The Case of Case Studies: On the Methodological Discussion in Comparative Political Science", *Quality and Quantity*, vol. 32, 1998.

Despite all being disposed to supporting European integration due to their ideological and strategic characteristics, the positions of the main political parties of the UK and France frequently differed.

1.1.1. The United Kingdom

The UK joined the EC over 20 years after its founding, having initially decided that the benefits of European integration would not outweigh the perceived disadvantages of transfers of sovereignty and abandoning global aspirations. Thereafter, the UK's relationship with the EC/EU was often described as "awkward", reflecting the difficulties that the UK experienced in adapting to the obligations of membership, most notably the need to cede decision-making powers to the EC/EU's supranational institutions and reach consensus with other member states.⁷ It cannot be said that a firm consensus in support of European integration ever existed among mainstream parties. Although governments led by the centre-right Conservative Party and the centre-left Labour Party supported the UK's membership of the EC/EU, they rarely did so with enthusiasm. While the Conservative Party supported EC membership, the position of the deeply divided Labour Party was for a long time unstable. Once the position of the Labour Party was settled, the position of the Conservative Party shifted. Divisions between and within the two main parties meant that the Europe issue became the basis of political competition.

Public support for European integration peaked in the early 1990s. Thereafter support declined and the UK public was among those least supportive of, and most opposed to, their country's EU membership. As public support fell, political competition around the Europe issue grew. Euroscepticism, especially within the Conservative Party, increased and became more vocal, deepening internal divisions. Perhaps divisions among politicians drove public Euroscepticism. Or, perhaps the positions of political elites were shaped by the desire to make political gains from public Euroscepticism.

1.1.2. France

France has played a prominent role in European integration since its embryonic stage, with French political elites taking centre stage in the process. Although successive French governments have shown a preference for intergovernmental cooperation, France has tended to look to the EC/EU as the forum in which to address common problems. Although there have been differences of opinion between the main parties as to the direction and form of European

⁷ Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

integration, and deep divides within the parties have emerged periodically, a consensus has long existed among mainstream parties as to the benefits of EC/EU membership for France. As such, politicians from the centre-right RPR-UMP-LR and the centre-left PS have voiced strong support for a range of EC/EU policies.

Having peaked in the late 1980s, French public support for EC/EU membership has subsequently declined considerably. Nonetheless, politicians from the two main parties have, on the whole, remained openly supportive of integration. The Europe issue has rarely been the basis of on-going competition between mainstream parties, and intra-party divisions have tended to be resolved either using internal party mechanisms or through the externalisation of dissidents. It would seem that there is no political gain to be made by French parties and individual politicians from adopting Eurosceptic positions.

2. Politicians and ‘Euroscepticism’: a review of the literature

The attitudes of political elites are shaped, to a certain extent, in the same ways as the attitudes of the general public. David Easton’s theory of support for political institutions identifies two dimensions that can be used in order to explain attitudes towards European integration.⁸ The affective dimension reflects support based on an ideological association with the EU, while the utilitarian dimension reflects support based on a positive evaluation of the costs and benefits of membership. Matthew Gabel contends that utilitarianism is the most important factor in determining public support for European integration, with those most likely to benefit from integration being most in favour of the process.⁹ He shows there to be a correlation between higher levels of educational achievement, professional status, and financial capital and higher levels of support. Daniel Gaxie, however, stresses that this correlation cannot be interpreted as a causal link.¹⁰ In contrast, Juan Diez Medrano finds perceptions of culture and history to be the most important factors in explaining public opinion on the EU, more so than economic and geopolitical factors.¹¹ Culture and history influence the extent to which individuals identify with Europe and shape the calculation of what is considered to be in the individual and national

⁸ David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1965.

⁹ Matthew Gabel, “Public support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories”, *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 60, no. 2, 1998.

¹⁰ Daniel Gaxie, “What we Know and do not Know About Citizens’ Attitudes Towards Europe”, in Daniel Gaxie, Nicolas Hubé and Jay Rowell (eds.), *Perceptions of Europe. A Comparative Sociology of European Attitudes*, ECPR Press, Colchester, 2011, p. 9.

¹¹ Juan Diez Medrano, *Framing Europe. Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2010.

interest. Likewise, Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks find that, while the public does consider economic consequences when determining support for integration, national identity plays a more important role in determining attitudes.¹² Hajo Boomgaarden et al note the importance of both utilitarian and emotional support for the EU, but build on Easton's two-dimensional model to emphasise the multidimensional nature of support for integration, identifying links between attitudes towards government, immigration, and national and EU identities.¹³ The findings of Boomgaarden et al are particularly interesting given the increased salience of immigration and security issues throughout EU member states since the 1970s, as shown by Hanspeter Kriesi.¹⁴ Marcel Lubbers and Peer Scheepers consider the link between political ideology and support for European integration.¹⁵ They distinguish between different types or bases of Euroscepticism – instrumental, cultural, and political – and reveal a correlation between political affiliation and the basis of negative attitudes. They find that instrumental Euroscepticism, stemming from the impression that EU membership is not beneficial, is more common among supporters of left-wing parties. Cultural Euroscepticism, rooted in a lack of identification with the EU, is more common among supporters of right-wing parties. Political Euroscepticism, arising from opposition to supranational decision-making, can be found among supporters of both far-left and far-right parties. Lubbers and Scheepers contend that too much attention has been paid to instrumental Euroscepticism and note an increase in both cultural and political Euroscepticism since the early 1990s.

While these findings are useful in understanding the positions of individual politicians on European integration, such individuals are not ordinary members of the public. Politicians tend to be educated and moulded in national institutions, and they thus establish an attachment to the national culture and institutions. Heinrich Best et al show that they might, due to the process of elite socialisation, feel a sense of belonging to a “common European space” and “sameness” with their European counterparts.¹⁶ Fundamentally, politicians are, for the most

¹² Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?”, *Political Science and Politics*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2004; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *European Union Politics*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2005.

¹³ Hajo G. Boomgaarden, Andreas R.T. Schuck, Matthijs Elenbaas and Claes H. de Vreese, “Mapping EU attitudes: Conceptual and empirical dimensions of Euroscepticism and EU support”, *European Union Politics*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2011.

¹⁴ Hanspeter Kriesi, “The Role of European Integration in National Election Campaigns”, *European Union Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2007.

¹⁵ Marcel Lubbers and Peer Scheepers, “Divergent trends of euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 49, 2010.

¹⁶ Heinrich Best, György Lengyel, and Luca Verzichelli, “European Integration as an Elite Project: An Introduction”, in Heinrich Best, György Lengyel, and Luca Verzichelli (eds), *The Europe of Elites. A Study into the Europeaness of Europe's Political and Economic Elites*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, pp. 5-7.

part, elected by, and are accountable to, constituents. Parliamentarians and members of government are also, in most cases, members of a political party, comprised of both a parliamentary party and party activists, which seeks to gain support, influence or, even, office. Politicians find themselves under pressure to satisfy both sections of the party, especially if they aspire to advance through the party ranks. As a result, the positions of politicians on European integration are not shaped in the same ways as those of the general public. Rather, a multitude of factors other than personal opinion – constituents’ and national interests, party interests, personal career interests – can shape the position of politicians on EU integration.

Best et al note that there has been a degree of Euroscepticism among politicians since European integration began.¹⁷ However, as supranational institutions have developed and sovereignty has been transferred to the EU level, the gap between the public and politicians has, in general, grown. The permissive consensus no longer exists, and both the salience of the Europe issue and popular Euroscepticism have increased. Best et al contend that this increasing popular hostility towards integration has caused Euroscepticism among politicians to grow as the latter seek to avoid being punished for their support of unpopular policies. Hooghe and Marks refer to a ‘constraining dissensus’, which has come about as the salience of the Europe issue has increased and elites are, therefore, more likely to be influenced by public opinion on integration.¹⁸

Paul Taggart was one of the first scholars to address and delimit the phenomenon of Euroscepticism among politicians. In his seminal 1998 article, he identified four types of Eurosceptic political parties, namely single-issue parties, protest-based parties with Euroscepticism, established parties – parties in or ‘of’ government – with Euroscepticism, and factions within non-Eurosceptic parties.¹⁹ It was later, with Aleks Szczerbiak, that Taggart distinguished between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ Euroscepticism. Whereas hard Eurosceptics seek their state’s withdrawal from the EC/EU, soft Eurosceptics are merely critical of certain aspects of the process of integration or its outcomes.²⁰ Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde take the categorisation of parties further by distinguishing between ‘diffuse’ support for the process of integration per se, and ‘specific’ support for the EU and the outcomes of integration. As such,

¹⁷ Heinrich Best, György Lengyel, and Luca Verzichelli, “European Integration as an Elite Project: An Introduction”, *op cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁸ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Containing Dissensus”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no.1, 2009.

¹⁹ Paul Taggart, “A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1998.

²⁰ Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, “Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality”, *op. cit.*, p.6.

they identify four types of position based on a party's positioning on the two spectrums. 'Euroenthusiasts' and 'Eurosceptics' both support the process of integration, but whereas the former support the outcomes, the latter are critical. 'Europragmatists' and 'Eurorejects' both oppose the process of integration, but whereas the former recognise the benefits of the outcomes of integration, the latter oppose both the process and its outcomes. Kopecky and Mudde contend that ideology shapes a party's position on the process of integration per se, while strategy determines its position on the EU and the outcomes of integration. They find that whereas a party's support for the EU might change, a change in its position on integration per se is unlikely.²¹

For the purposes of this thesis, the Eurosceptic positions of parties and individual politicians are described using Taggart and Szczerbiak's distinction between hard and soft Eurosceptics. Where useful, the categorisation proposed by Kopecky and Mudde is also used. However, while these categorisations of Eurosceptic parties are useful, they do not allow for an adequate understanding of the *reasons* for political Euroscepticism. It is clear that some parties, or individual politicians, are more disposed to Euroscepticism than others. The existing political science literature offers two broad explanations for this, namely party ideology (the focus of the North Carolina School) and strategy (the focus of the Sussex School). These explanations tend, however, to be presented as a dichotomy, with little attention paid to the possible interaction between political ideology and strategy, particularly in the study of Euroscepticism.²² Further, Cécile Leconte shows that, as variations exist between the EU positions of parties of similar ideologies and strategies in different member states, domestic context and concerns are also, clearly, of importance.²³ While the political science literature offers much to allow for a better understanding of how national context shapes the attitudes and positions of politicians on European integration, it seems necessary to take a wider approach and consider the question also from a civilisationist viewpoint. Civilisationist literature, however, tends to focus on the situation in just one state. Key findings of the existing political science and civilisationist literature concerning the role of party ideology, strategy, and national context in shaping party positions on European integration are discussed below.

²¹ Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2002.

²² Laure Neumayer, "Euroscepticism as a Political Label: the Use of European Union Issues in Political Competitions in the New Member States", *European Journal of Political Science*, vol. 47, issue 2, 2008 ; Stéphanie Deschezelles and Laure Neumayer, "Introduction: Is Populism a Side-Effect of European Integration? Radical Parties and the Europeanization of Political Competition", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, September 2010.

²³ Cécile Leconte, *Understanding Euroscepticism*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010.

2.1. Party ideology and positioning on European integration

A party's position on European integration is most readily accounted for by party family or ideology.²⁴ A number of relevant factors are identified in the political science literature. These factors are the party's position relative to the ideological centre, its position on the left-right spectrum, its position on the nationalist-internationalist spectrum, its position on 'new politics' issues, and its religious basis and degree of religiosity.²⁵

2.1.1. Position relative to centre and on the left-right spectrum

The EU is characterised by its consensual decision-making process, which results in centrist policy outputs. It stands to reason, therefore, that parties with a centrist ideology tend to be more supportive of European integration. Parties with an extremist ideology tend to be more Eurosceptic, and the further a party is from the ideological centre, the more likely it is to be Eurosceptic.²⁶ Also, extremist parties make greater use of the Europe issue in political competition than do mainstream, centrist parties.²⁷

A party's position on the left-right spectrum may also impact its attitudes towards European integration, although this is less clear than it once was. In the earlier decades of integration centre-right parties tended to be most supportive. However, since the introduction of policies aimed at counteracting the negative consequences of market liberalisation, centre-left parties have become more supportive of integration.²⁸ As a result, positioning on the left-right spectrum seems now to be of less importance. In fact, Hooghe et al argue that there is no clear correlation between left-right positioning and attitudes towards integration, and Szczerbiak and Taggart show that a party's position within the domestic party system is more influential than its position on the left-right political spectrum in determining its stance on integration.²⁹ Position on the left-right spectrum does, however, determine the basis of criticism of the EU. Leconte shows that Eurosceptic parties situated on the far-left of the spectrum tend to criticise the EU's economic policies that they consider to be overly liberal, whereas critics

²⁴ Gary Marks, Carole J. Wilson and Leonard Ray, "National Political Parties and European Integration", *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2002.

²⁵ Cécile Leconte, *Understanding Euroscepticism*, *op. cit.*

²⁶ Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks and Carole Wilson, "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 35, no. 8, 2002; Leonard Ray, "Mainstreaming Euroscepticism: Trend or Oxymoron?", *Acta politica*, vol 42, 2007.

²⁷ Stéphanie Deschezelles and Laure Neumayer, "Introduction: Is Populism a Side-Effect of European Integration? Radical Parties and the Europeanization of Political Competition", *op. cit.*, p. 230.

²⁸ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁹ Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks and Carole Wilson, "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?", *op. cit.*; Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, "Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality", *op. cit.*

on the far-right tend to cite concerns for national sovereignty and immigration.³⁰ These tendencies in the attitudes of far-left and far-right political parties towards integration are in keeping with the findings of Lubbers and Scheepers, outlined above, on the correlation of political affiliation and the basis of public opposition to integration.

Study of the current European political landscape tends to confirm these findings on position relative to the ideological centre. Centrist parties are certainly more supportive of European integration than those at the political extremes. However, within certain mainstream parties, criticism of specific aspects of integration has become more common since the early 1990s. In some centrist parties, factions critical of integration have grown in influence to an extent that they impact considerably the party's policy. It also appears that centre-right parties are no longer more likely to support integration than parties on the centre-left, and that commonalities can be observed in the bases of support for, or criticism of, integration among parties on the right and on the left. However, given the impact of globalisation on European societies, the categorisation of parties on a simple left-right spectrum is no longer apposite.

2.1.2. Nationalist-internationalist position

Taggart places parties along two dimensions. The first, community-individual spectrum, categorises parties based on their attitudes towards the place of the individual within society, which is close to the left-right spectrum. The second, global-national spectrum, categorises parties according to their attitudes towards the nation and internationalisation.³¹ This second dimension is essential in the projection of party positions on European integration. The nationalist parties present in member states today tend to be critical of the EU, advocating limits to integration and, in some instances, their state's withdrawal from the EU. As the presence and influence of nationalist parties in parliaments and governments has increased, so has Eurosceptic political discourse.

2.1.3. New politics cleavage

In addition to positioning themselves on the traditional left-right spectrum and the nationalist-internationalist spectrums, parties are increasingly called to position themselves on issues relatively new to the political agenda. Such issues include the environment, immigration and

³⁰ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

³¹ Paul Taggart, "A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems", *op. cit.*

inter-ethnic relations, civil liberties, gender equality, and the rights of sexual minorities.³² A correlation can be noted between a party's position on the 'new politics' cleavage and its position on European integration, with socially conservative parties being more inclined towards Euroscepticism than progressive parties.³³ This could be due to a perception among progressive parties, which tend to be left-leaning, that the EU can be a source of rights and protections. Throughout member states, Green parties, for example, are supportive of integration, considering the EU's legally enforceable targets essential in the fight against climate change.

2.1.4. Religion and degree of religiosity

Finally, religion and degree of religiosity appear to play a role in a party's position on European integration. Among Christian Democrat parties, Catholic parties tend to be supportive of integration, whereas Protestant parties, especially deeply religious ones, tend towards Euroscepticism.³⁴ This could be explained by the fact that, whereas Catholicism is a transnational religion with a 'supranational' religious leader, Protestantism has national churches and may, therefore, be less inclined to accept supranational governance.³⁵ However, many of the Eurosceptic parties currently in parliament and government in EU member states are Catholic Christian Democrats, such as Poland's Law and Justice Party and Austria's People's Party; have close ties to such parties, such as Hungary's *Fidesz*; or represent Catholic constituencies, such as Italy's *Lega*. Further, these parties all emphasise the threat posed by immigration from Muslim countries for Europe's Christian identity.

This summary of the existing literature suggests that party ideology remains the most important factor in determining a party's position on European integration, and it is the case that parties from centrist, internationalist, progressive political families are more supportive of integration and parties which are not are more predisposed to Euroscepticism. However, party family alone cannot predict or explain a party's position on integration. The impact of political ideology on party positions can vary considerably between member states, with parties from the same political family being supportive of further integration in one state yet unsupportive

³² Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

³³ Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks and Carole Wilson, "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?", *op. cit.*; Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Role of European Integration in National Election Campaigns", *op. cit.*

³⁴ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

³⁵ Simon Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005, pp. 163-165.

in another. Although parties tend not to abandon their ideology in the face of the relatively new issue of integration, it is clear that other factors must be considered in accounting for a party's position on integration.³⁶ Here, the interaction of political ideology and party strategy is of great importance. A party's ideology is never clearly defined and entirely accepted by all its members, and individuals and groups within a party compete for influence over the party's ideology. As such, Pierre Bourdieu contends ideology is shaped through competition within and between parties as political actors try to differentiate themselves from their competitors and gain political capital. He argues that, like ideology, party positions on European integration are shaped relative to their competitors with a view to political gain.³⁷ Likewise, Laure Neumayer contends that a party's position on integration can best be explained as an attempt to distinguish itself from its competitors, and that political cleavage theories have overlooked the evolutions in party positions on integration.³⁸ It can be supposed, therefore, that in positioning themselves on European integration, parties are influenced by strategy, which is in turn shaped by national context.

2.2. Strategy and positioning on European integration

The importance of ideology in determining a party's position on European integration is affected by the party's placement within the national party system and the strategy it adopts. Political science literature shows that whether a party is a 'party of government', and whether it is in government or in opposition impacts its position, as does the party's objectives vis-à-vis power.

2.2.1. Parties of government versus anti-establishment parties

Given the importance of the Europe issue, a party's position on European integration is essential in establishing its position within the party system. As such, integration can be the basis of inter-party competition.³⁹ The EU's supranational institutions are part of an accepted system of multilevel governance. Unsurprisingly, parties of government, which are usually established and politically mainstream, tend to support integration. Due to its association with democratic

³⁶ Gary Marks, Carole J. Wilson and Leonard Ray, "National Political Parties and European Integration", *op. cit.*; Paul Taggart, "A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems", *op. cit.*

³⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "La représentation politique", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1981.

³⁸ Laure Neumayer, "Euroscepticism as a Political Label: the Use of European Union Issues in Political Competitions in the New Member States", *op. cit.*

³⁹ Stéphanie Deschezelles and Laure Neumayer, "Introduction: Is Populism a Side-Effect of European Integration? Radical Parties and the Europeanization of Political Competition", *op. cit.*

and liberal values, integration can be mobilised by mainstream politicians so as to demonstrate their own legitimacy in contrast to their ‘illegitimate’, anti-establishment competitors.⁴⁰ Protest or anti-establishment parties, on the other hand, have a greater tendency for Euroscepticism.⁴¹ Such parties criticise the dominance of the EU by ‘cartel’ parties and use their Euroscepticism as a means to criticise the system and to differentiate themselves from the established parties of government.⁴² Higher levels of Euroscepticism among protest or anti-establishment parties can further be explained by the fact that parties that have not been, and are unlikely to be, in government are not confronted with the reality of EU membership and are thus free to criticise the institutions and actors with whom they will never need to cooperate. While it remains the case that parties of government tend to be supportive of integration, their support can no longer be taken for granted. This can be seen in the cases of Poland, Hungary, and Austria, noted above, where the established parties currently in government are not fully supportive of integration. Further, the example of the anti-establishment and Eurosceptic *Cinque Stelle* Movement, recently in government in Italy with the nationalist *Lega*, shows that not only are once-marginal parties entering government, but that they cannot be expected to moderate their Euroscepticism once in office.

2.2.2. *Incumbent versus opposition parties*

Kriesi finds that parties in government are more likely to be supportive of European integration than those in opposition, although he finds limited evidence that opposition parties are more critical.⁴³ Further, Leconte shows that parties that were strongly supportive of integration when in office are likely to become less Europhile when in opposition.⁴⁴ This could be explained by the fact that, out of office, a party is no longer faced with the immediate realities of EU-level negotiations and the need for compromise. Parties in opposition also seek opportunities to criticise the government. In a context of more Eurosceptic parties entering government, Taggart and Szczerbiak show that, although government participation can be seen to have a moderating effect on Eurosceptic parties’ positions, that impact is rarely of great consequence.⁴⁵ It also seems that whether a party is in government or in opposition can impact the internal

⁴⁰ Laure Neumayer, “Euroscepticism as a Political Label: the Use of European Union Issues in Political Competitions in the New Member States”, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁴² Paul Taggart, “A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems”, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, “Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality”, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-33.

cohesiveness of its position on the EU, however there is a lack of consensus as to what the consequences might be. Whereas Kriesi contends that opposition parties are more likely to have a unified EU policy, Ben Crum observes that the Europe issue is more likely to cause internal party divisions when a party is in opposition and particularly if the party's official position is the same as that of the party in government.⁴⁶ The ever-increasing level of Euroscepticism within the UK Conservative Party while in opposition 1997-2010 would tend to confirm Leconte's findings, and that the party became more unified in its criticism of the EU during this period lends weight to Kriesi's contention on party unity. On the contrary, growing divisions within the French *Parti socialiste* while out of government from 2002, and around the failed ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in particular, are in keeping with Crum's findings. That the Party's leadership supported a 'yes' vote at the 2005 referendum lends further support to Crum's argument.

2.2.3. *Office-seeking, vote-seeking, and policy-seeking parties*

Wolfgang Müller and Kaare Strøm distinguish between parties that seek to access government, gain voter support, and influence policy-making.⁴⁷ When forced to take a stance, which of these three objectives a party prioritises can impact its position on European integration.⁴⁸ Parties hoping to enter government, including smaller potential coalition partners, tend to moderate any Euroscepticism. On the other hand, parties whose key objective is to maintain or build electoral support might exploit popular concerns about integration in order to do so. And parties seeking principally to influence government policy have little cause to moderate Euroscepticism. The behaviour of certain Eurosceptic parties seeking to enter government at recent elections tends to confirm Leconte's findings. Having advanced to the second round of the French Presidential elections in 2017, the *Front national's* Marine Le Pen held back on her calls for French withdrawal from the Eurozone and the EU. In advance of the Italian legislative election in 2018, the *Lega's* Matteo Salvini moderated his anti-Eurozone discourse. The case of the UK is considerably different, where even mainstream office-seeking parties tend to play down their support for integration.

⁴⁶ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*; Ben Crum, "Party Stances in the Referendums on the EU Constitution. Causes and Consequences of Competition and Collusion", *European Union Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2007.

⁴⁷ Wolfgang C. Müller and Kaare Strøm, "Political Parties and Hard Choices", in Wolfgang C. Müller, Kaare Strøm, Robert H. Bates and Peter Lange (eds.), *Policy, offices or votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

⁴⁸ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

The above summary of the literature suggests that, while, seemingly, not as consequential as political ideology, party strategy does impact a party's position on European integration. Parties of government and, particularly, *in* government still tend to be more supportive of integration, as are parties that prioritise access to government. Euroscepticism is considered to be the politics of opposition. However, as with political ideology, the impact of party strategy is not consistent throughout member states. In fact, the current European political landscape, which sees openly Eurosceptic parties in government, requires us to call into question presumptions about the impact of party strategy and necessitates an even deeper understanding of the importance of the role of national context in shaping party positions on the EU.

2.3. *The impact of national context*

As we saw in the previous section, the national context helps shape the interaction between ideology and strategy. Best observes that the process of European integration is “deeply rooted in and conditional on the social and political settings in national contexts”.⁴⁹ Party-based Euroscepticism varies between member states and we can note differences in the presence and influence of Eurosceptic parties. Why, despite having similar ideologies and strategies in relation to access to government, do parties in some member states have a greater tendency to adopt Eurosceptic positions than in others? We can also note differences in intra-party divisions on the EU. Why is it that some parties have remained (mostly) unified on European integration, while the issue has been a cause of divisions in others? Leconte identifies three factors, specific to the national political context, that can account for these variations, namely national political culture, institutional incentives for Euroscepticism, and the degree of popular Euroscepticism.⁵⁰ However, Dorota Dakowska and Jay Rowell argue that national context does not necessarily have the same effect on all actors.⁵¹ It is in analysing the role of national context in shaping the positions of politicians on integration that the contribution of civilisationist literature is of great importance. By taking a wide range of factors (historical, political, cultural...) into

⁴⁹ Heinrich Best, “Elites of Europe and the Europe of elites: A Conclusion”, in Heinrich Best, György Lengyel and Luca Verzichelli (eds.), *The Europe of Elites. A Study into the Europeaness of Europe's Political and Economic Elites*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

⁵⁰ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁵¹ Dorota Dakowska and Jay Rowell, “Temporality and Historical Experience in Attitudes Towards Europe: Is There a Nationality Effect?”, in Daniel Gaxie, Nicolas Hubé and Jay Rowell (eds.), *Perceptions of Europe. A Comparative Sociology of European Attitudes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

consideration, civilisationists have helped to elucidate the positions adopted by political parties in response to European integration.⁵²

2.3.1. National political culture

A state's political history influences the attitudes of its political parties towards European integration.⁵³ The length of time for which a state's democratic system has been in place is of importance, with old democracies, boasting strong institutions tending to be more resistant to the change that integration entails.⁵⁴ Further, the perceived democratic deficit of the EU's institutions tends to have a greater impact on public opinion in such states.⁵⁵ The political culture of certain states is more historicist than others, with political positions shaped by interpretations of history.⁵⁶ Whether historicism has a negative impact on attitudes towards integration is likely to depend on the essential events and individuals, and their impact for European relations. The relative strength of political extremisms also influences political attitudes towards integration.⁵⁷ It has already been shown that parties with extremist ideologies, whether on the left or the right, are less likely to support integration. However, how such extremisms are viewed, whether they are accepted or rejected as a legitimate form of political expression, affects their ability to influence attitudes towards integration. Where political extremisms are accepted, and even legitimised, their views have more weight on political debate.

National identity is entrenched in political culture and plays an important role in shaping attitudes. Nation states are a "key socialization agency" and play a fundamental role in shaping world views.⁵⁸ The basis of an individual's support for, or opposition to, European integration corresponds with the cognitive frames of their nation state.⁵⁹ As noted above, Hooghe and Marks consider identity to be more important than perception of economic consequences in

⁵² Pauline Schnapper, whose work focuses on the UK, and Helen Drake, whose focus is France, are notable examples of civilisationists who study member states relations with the European Union.

⁵³ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁵⁴ Jeffrey J. Anderson, "Europeanization and the Transformation of the Democratic Polity, 1945-2000." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no.5, 2002, p. 814.

⁵⁵ Robert Rohrschneider, "The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-Wide Government", *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2002.

⁵⁶ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *Contemporary France. An Introduction to French Politics and Society*, Arnold, London, 2003.

⁵⁷ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁵⁸ Juan Diez Medrano, *Framing Europe. Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Juan Diez Medrano, *ibid.*, p. 67.

determining support for integration.⁶⁰ More specifically, they distinguish between inclusive national identity, where national identity is one of two or more identities, and exclusive national identity, where national identity is the sole identity. They show that an inclusive national identity is more compatible with a sense of European or EU identity, and thus support for integration. Exclusive national identity, they find, is the most powerful variable in determining attitudes towards the EU. Sean Carey, too, shows that stronger feelings of national identity are linked to lower levels of support for integration.⁶¹ Eurobarometer polls confirm this finding by showing that support for EU membership is highest in member states whose citizens tend also to identify as European, such as Luxembourg, and lowest in those states whose citizens are more likely to have solely a sense of national identity, such as the UK.

Hooghe and Marks suggest that national identity is ‘constructed’ to become inclusive or exclusive, and that national politicians play an important role in this construction process.⁶² Further, they find that where politicians are divided on European integration, national identity is more likely to result in Euroscepticism among the public. Antonia Ruiz Jiménez et al show that, in principle, even strong national identities are compatible with European identity.⁶³ This is because, whereas national identities tend to be defined in cultural terms, European or EU identity is usually based on instrumental, self-interested considerations. Nonetheless, there are certain EU member states whose citizens are less likely to feel a sense of dual identity. This, Ruiz Jiménez et al show, is due to the bases of national identity being incompatible with a concurrent European identity. Such incompatible bases include a strong sense of national pride and high levels of attachment to national sovereignty. Perceptions of nationalism are linked to national identity. Where nationalism has been discredited through its association with a past regime, mainstream parties are less likely to display Euroscepticism.⁶⁴ This is the case in Germany, for example, where nationalist sentiment has been suppressed and mainstream parties have rarely been critical of integration.

⁶⁰ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?”, *op. cit.*; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Sean Carey, “Undivided Loyalties. Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?”, *European Union Politics*, vol.3, no. 4, 2002.

⁶² Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

⁶³ Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez, Jaroslaw Józef Górnjak, Ankica Kosic, Paszkal Kiss and Maren Kandulla, “European and National Identities in EU’s Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components”, *European Integration On-line Papers*, vol. 8, no. 11, 2004.

⁶⁴ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

2.3.2. *Political system and institutional incentives for Euroscepticism*

A member state's political system and, in particular, the presence within that system of institutional incentives for Euroscepticism, impact the positions of parties on European integration. Leconte highlights the role of the national EU policy-making process, the electoral system, and the use of referenda in incentivising political Euroscepticism.⁶⁵ Political systems can be characterised as either majoritarian or consensual, and Arend Lijphart identifies the features of these systems along two dimensions, the horizontal executive-parties dimension and the vertical federal-unitary dimension.⁶⁶ Majoritarian systems tend to be underpinned by a constitution which can be amended with relative ease. The executive branch tends to be relatively powerful, with a large governing 'cabinet', and a unicameral legislature, or a legislature in which power rests heavily in one chamber, is more common. Power is likely to be concentrated in the hands of central, state level, actors as opposed to being distributed among actors at the subnational levels. A member state's political system determines the way in which EU policy is made, and Tapio Raunio finds that where participation in decision-making is more inclusive, parties are less likely to use Euroscepticism as an office-seeking strategy.⁶⁷

A further characteristic of majoritarian systems is a disproportionate electoral system in which the number of seats in parliament does not correspond with the level of popular support. Such disproportionate electoral systems tend to result in fewer parties gaining seats in parliament and the prevalence of single-party governments. In contrast, more proportionate electoral systems are likely to result in a wider variety of parties in parliament, including marginal parties, and more frequent coalition governments.⁶⁸ Kriesi shows that a member state's electoral system shapes inter-party competition on the EU as it impacts the influence of marginal, Eurosceptic parties on EU policy.⁶⁹ Where a proportionate electoral system is used, such marginal parties are more likely to win seats in parliament and thus influence the EU policy of the larger, mainstream parties. However, even where the highly disproportionate first-past-the-post system is used and marginal parties are effectively kept out of parliament, they can still succeed in influencing mainstream party positions on European integration where the former enjoy considerable popular support. The electoral system also shapes intra-party

⁶⁵ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁶⁶ Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1999.

⁶⁷ Tapio Raunio, "Softening but Persistent: Euroscepticism in the Nordic countries", *Acta politica*, vol. 42, 2007.

⁶⁸ Charles Lees, "The Political Opportunity Structure of Euroscepticism: Institutional Setting and Political Agency in European Politics" in Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (eds.), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism*, Volume 2, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, p. 38.

⁶⁹ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*

competition. Gifford shows that in majoritarian systems, where the number of parties is limited and single party governments are the norm, it is more difficult to silence dissidents.⁷⁰ Governments are, therefore, more prone to adopting a negative stance on the EU so as to quell internal divisions. In consensual systems, where coalitions, and thus compromise, are more commonplace, there is a tendency to adopt a more centrist approach towards integration and it is easier to silence dissent. This finding is confirmed by Leconte, who notes that majoritarian systems allow Eurosceptic factions within mainstream parties to gain inordinate influence, whereas, in proportional systems, such factions tend to be marginalised with the establishment of broad pro-European coalitions.⁷¹ A survey of EU governments would tend to confirm Gifford's and Leconte's findings regarding the potential power of Eurosceptic factions in mainstream parties, however such parties do not all manage Eurosceptic factions in the same way. While some parties do, as expected, adopt a more negative position on the EU, others successfully externalise Eurosceptic factions.

Referenda on Europe issues are held periodically in some member states, either due to a constitutional obligation or for political reasons. A government might choose to hold a referendum where no legal obligation exists so as to legitimise a decision, particularly in the face of inter- or intra-party divisions. The holding of referenda increases the salience of the Europe issue. By presenting an opportunity for Eurosceptic actors to bring their arguments to the fore, referenda can increase levels of Euroscepticism among politicians, particularly as opponents tend to make their voices heard more than supporters.⁷² In some instances, intra-party divisions around referendum campaigns have resulted in individuals or factions leaving their political party so as to establish a Eurosceptic movement or party.⁷³ However, this is not always the case, as can be seen in the case of Ireland, where referenda on Treaty reform are held regularly yet political and popular Euroscepticism are relatively low.

Closely tied to the political and electoral systems of a state is the party system. Giovanni Sartori's widely used classification of party systems distinguishes between systems based on the number of relevant political parties and the distance between their ideologies.⁷⁴ He also highlights the importance of the interaction between these two criteria, the 'mechanics' of the party system, and shows that as the number of parties in a system increases so can the distance

⁷⁰ Chris Gifford, "The rise of post-imperial populism: The case of right-wing Euroscepticism in Britain", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 45, no.5, 2006.

⁷¹ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁷² Simon Usherwood and Nick Startin, "Euroscepticism as a Persistent Phenomenon", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 51, issue 1, 2013.

⁷³ Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁷⁴ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and party systems. A framework for analysis*, ECPR Press, Colchester, 2016.

between parties' ideologies. Sartori identifies four main party system types, namely predominant party systems, two-party systems, systems with moderate pluralism, and systems with polarised pluralism. The system in place determines the strategies used by parties to gain influence and electoral support. As such, the party system can impact the positions of parties on European integration and can incentivise Euroscepticism.

2.3.3. *Europeanization of national institutions, policies, and politics*

Membership of the EU has a far greater impact on member states than does membership of any other international organisation. Due to the extent of European integration, EU membership affects all aspects of the national polity – its institutions, policies, and politics.⁷⁵ Europeanization is brought about through a number of mechanisms, including institutional adaptation, resource dependency, regulatory competition, and socialisation of political actors, and the outcomes of this change range from inertia to transformation.⁷⁶ The scope and extent of Europeanization vary between member states. Variations in impact are due in part to the 'goodness of fit' of the domestic political system with that of the EU: the greater the 'misfit' the greater the pressure for domestic adaptation.⁷⁷ However, a close 'fit' does not necessarily mean there are no adaptational difficulties. Variations can also be ascribed to the ways in which politicians and publics react to the consequences of EU membership.⁷⁸

In terms of institutions, central governments, national parliaments, and national courts are most directly affected by a state's membership of the EU. While EU membership creates means for governments to address matters that they cannot address alone, it requires them to transfer sovereignty to the EU's institutions and share decision-making powers with other member states. Nonetheless, member state governments remain the most important domestic actors at the European level, serving as the 'gate-keeper' in their state's relations with the EU.⁷⁹ As such, their powers relative to those of other domestic institutions have been strengthened.

⁷⁵ Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France", *The Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1994; Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Christoph Knill and Dirk Lehmkuhl, "How Europe Matters. Different Mechanisms of Europeanization", *European Integration on-line Papers*, vol. 3, no. 7, 1999; Tanja A. Börzel, "Pace-Setting, Foot-Dragging, and Fence-Sitting. Member State Responses to Europeanization", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no.2, 2002.

⁷⁷ Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, *Transforming Europe. Europeanization and Domestic Change*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2001.

⁷⁸ Tanja A. Börzel, "Pace-Setting, Foot-Dragging, and Fence-Sitting. Member State Responses to Europeanization", *op. cit.*; Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, *Transforming Europe. Europeanization and Domestic Change*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ Hussein Kassim, "The Europeanization of Member State Institutions", in Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (eds.), *The Member States of the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

National parliaments have seen their powers reduced as a consequence of European integration. On the one hand, the legislative powers of national parliaments have been transferred to the European Parliament, especially since the introduction of the Single Market. On the other hand, national parliaments have lost powers relative to their national executives, with their role tending to be limited to the final stages of the EU policy process. Despite this reduction in their powers, parliaments have generally seen their workloads increase, given the complexity and increasing volume of EU legislation to be scrutinised.⁸⁰ EU membership establishes a new legal order for a member state. The principles of direct effect and supremacy ensure that all legal persons within the EU are concerned by this legal order and where there is a conflict between EU and national laws the former must prevail. Also, a new tier has been added to the national judicial hierarchy, yet national courts have, on the whole, been accepting of this, perhaps as it serves to strengthen their powers relative to the executive by directly involving the judiciary in the implementation of EU law.⁸¹

As noted, pressure for the adaptation of domestic institutions depends on the degree of misfit between the national and EU systems. Lijphart considers the EU political system to be consensual, meaning the executives and legislatures of member states with majoritarian political systems are likely to experience greater pressure for adaptation.⁸² This greater pressure could result in difficulties adapting to membership. The extent to which the executive is strengthened and the legislature is weakened as a result of membership also depends on the balance of power between these two branches, which is, again, contingent on whether the domestic political system is majoritarian or consensual. In majoritarian political systems, where the role of the legislature tends to be strong, national parliaments have experienced most pressure for adaptation. The EU has a civil law system, as do the vast majority of its member states. It could therefore be expected that those states who have a common law, or mixed, system might have greater difficulty in adapting to this new legal order.

Domestic policy is also heavily impacted by a state's membership of the EU. The EU affects almost all areas of policy, although not uniformly and there are few areas which are fully Europeanized. The balance of power between member states and EU institutions, which depends on the policy in question and thus the mode of governance used, is very important as it determines the general ability of member states to 'upload' their domestic practices to the EU

⁸⁰ Hussein Kassim, "The Europeanization of Member State Institutions", *op. cit.*; Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

⁸¹ Hussein Kassim, *ibid.*, pp. 307-309.

⁸² Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, *op. cit.*

level thereby lessening the impact of Europeanization.⁸³ However, the study of the impact of the EU membership on domestic policy is complicated by the concurrent effects of globalisation, and not all domestic change can be attributed to Europeanization.⁸⁴ In fact, some changes are due purely to national considerations.⁸⁵

The greater the difference between the supranational policy and the domestic policy, the greater the impact of Europeanization, and a member state's economic system is key in determining the extent to which national policies are Europeanized. Member states with economic systems that differ greatly from a predominant European model experience the most pressure for adaptation and the benefits of EU membership might be less apparent. Features of the system to be taken into account include key economic sectors, the importance of trade and trade partners, the role of the state in the economy, rate of public spending and redistribution of wealth, and attitudes towards regulation. The economic situation, both short-term and long-term, is also of relevance. It could be expected that a state with a small agricultural sector, that trades to a considerable extent with non-EU states, that does not prioritise the redistribution of wealth, and that takes a 'light-touch' approach towards regulation experience relatively strong pressures for adaptation.

It is only relatively recently that the literature has begun to focus on political parties and the EU, and it is even more recently that attention has been paid to the Europeanization of political parties.⁸⁶ It can be presumed that, as European integration has had an impact on national institutions and policies, national politicians have sought to adapt to the changed context in which they operate. Ladrech and Peter Mair highlight a number of domestic political changes that can be directly linked to integration.⁸⁷ As the salience of the Europe issue has increased, political parties have had to position themselves on integration. A new dimension in inter-party competition has emerged, and, with this, Eurosceptic or anti-EU parties. Linked to this is the rise of Eurosceptic sentiment within established parties and intra-party competition on the Europe issue. Naturally, greater reference is made to Europe in party programmes and more attention is paid to public opinion on the issue, with the results of European Parliament (EP) elections being watched closely. In addition to identifying direct effects of

⁸³ Simon Bulmer and Claudio M. Radaelli, "The Europeanization of National Policy", in Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (eds.), *The Member States of the European Union*, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-343.

⁸⁴ Markus Jachtenfuchs, "The Governance Approach to European Integration", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 39, no.2, 2001, pp. 250-251.

⁸⁵ Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France", *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁸⁷ Robert Ladrech, *ibid.*; Peter Mair, "Political Parties and Party Systems", in Paolo Graziano and Maarten P. Vink (eds.), *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2008.

Europeanization for political parties, Mair emphasises indirect effects. Integration has reduced the political space for inter-party competition. Public apathy, and even anger, have risen as people increasingly consider decision-makers to be unrepresentative, unaccountable, and ill-equipped to address their problems. Catherine E. de Vries shows that the Europe issue has an increasing impact on which party a voter supports at national elections.⁸⁸ It can therefore be expected that a party's position on integration will have consequences for its electoral success.

The Europeanization of political parties and politics, like national institutions and policies, varies between member states. Schnapper shows that UK politics resisted Europeanization, even though domestic institutions were successfully Europeanized.⁸⁹ In contrast, Drake shows that the Europe issue has become part of French political life and that French politicians tend to emphasise their Europeanness and seek a leadership role in European integration.⁹⁰ Politicians witness first-hand the effects of their state's membership of the EU for the national polity. It could therefore be expected that the politicians of member states with greater institutional and policy 'misfit' have more difficulty adapting to membership. Writing in 2010, Ladrech contended that the interests of individual politicians and party groups had not been affected by Europeanization. He did, however, predict that, if public opinion on EU integration were to become more negative, we could expect a responsive change in party positions.⁹¹ Some ten years later, this prediction has become a reality in certain member states.

2.3.4. *Popular Euroscepticism*

It has already been observed that the once permissive consensus of the public in support of European integration has been replaced by a constraining dissensus.⁹² The European Communities enjoyed the tacit, if not pronounced, support of the European public for the first four decades of their existence. This support peaked in 1991, with 72 per cent of Europeans believing their state's membership of the Communities to be a 'good thing'.⁹³ Subsequently, criticism of integration became more common and widespread. Susan Milner noted not only an

⁸⁸ Catherine E. de Vries, "EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties Electoral Fortunes", *European Union Politics*, vol. 11, issue 1, February 2010.

⁸⁹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, La documentation Française, Paris, 2014.

⁹⁰ Helen Drake, "Perspectives on French relations with the European Union: an introduction", in Helen Drake (eds.), *French Relations with the European Union*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London, 2005, p. 5 ; Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2013.

⁹¹ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 139.

⁹² Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Containing Dissensus", *op. cit.*

⁹³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 35*, June 1991.

increase in criticism of, or opposition to, the EU, but also a ‘structuring’ or ‘crystallisation’ of public opinion on questions of integration.⁹⁴ This is evidence of the EU having become a ‘normal’ political issue.

We might expect to see a correlation between public opinion and the positions of politicians on European integration. In the past this was not the case, with politicians being more supportive of integration than the public.⁹⁵ Recently, however, political Euroscepticism has increased alongside growing public discontent with the EU. A survey of Euroscepticism among political parties and the public in member states suggests there is now something of a correlation between the two, although there are of course exceptions. The French President, Emmanuel Macron, and his government are among the most supportive of integration, yet just one-third (33 per cent) of the French public has a positive image of the EU. In Poland, however, where the government is critical of the EU and is currently subject to an infringement procedure by the European Commission, 55 per cent of the public has a positive image of the EU.⁹⁶

Linkages exist between politicians and the public, allowing both for politicians to influence public opinion on European integration and for public opinion to shape the positions of politicians. This two-way linkage is especially strong between elected politicians and the public. As the EU is, in general, poorly understood, Christopher Anderson expected the public to take ‘cues’ from the politicians in forming their views on the EU.⁹⁷ Leonard Ray showed the ‘top-down’ influence of parties on the opinions of their supporters to be greater where there is a high level of voter attachment to the party, the Europe issue is salient for the party, the party is united in its position, and where there is a variety of positions on the issue in the party system.⁹⁸ However, Ray noted that parties’ influence over public opinion on European integration seems to have peaked in 1992 when a number of ‘influencing’ factors coincided. As the Europe issue has become more salient in political debate and the public has become more conscious, and less supportive, of integration, the bottom-up influence of public opinion on the positions of politicians has grown. In fact, Marco Steenbergen et al show that while influence flows in both directions, the bottom-up influence of supporters on political parties is generally

⁹⁴ Susan Milner, “For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty”, in Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (eds.), *Euroscepticism. Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2004.

⁹⁵ Paul Taggart, “A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems”, *op. cit.*

⁹⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 93*, October 2020.

⁹⁷ Christopher J. Anderson, “When in Doubt, Use Proxies: Attitudes toward Domestic Politics and Support for European Integration”, *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 31, no.5, 1998.

⁹⁸ Leonard Ray, “When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration”, *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 65, no.4, 2003.

greater than vice versa.⁹⁹ They show that the ‘bottom-up’ influence of supporters is greater where referenda on the Europe issue are held. It is also stronger where a political party has a high number of ‘opinion leaders’: individuals who cue the party’s supporters. Fundamentally, divisions within parties weaken the ability of parties to influence their supporters and increase the influence of public opinion as factions seek to justify a change in party policy. Hooghe and Marks show that divisions among politicians on the Europe issue is a key factor in driving public opposition to integration.¹⁰⁰ The member states in which politicians are the most divided on the EU are also those in which the levels of popular Euroscepticism are highest.¹⁰¹

This summary of the literature indicates that the role of ideology and strategy in determining the positions of politicians on European integration is determined to a great extent by factors specific to the national context, and it is through study of the national context that we can account for variations in positions despite similar ideologies and strategies. A long history of democratic stability and the prevalence of an exclusive national identity increase the likelihood of resistance to integration. Majoritarian political systems, with centralised powers and disproportionate electoral systems resulting in a small number of ‘broad-church’ parties, might have greater difficulty in adapting to membership as they differ most from the EU’s system of governance. Likewise, member states with economic systems that differ from a predominant European model feel greater pressures for adaptation. Frustrations at the limitations on the powers of national executives and legislatures, particularly in a context of popular Euroscepticism, could lead politicians to be more critical of integration. Given the importance of national context in shaping the positions of politicians, further exploration is essential.

There is a tendency in the literature on political Euroscepticism to focus on either ideology or strategy in accounting for a party’s position on European integration. Considering *both* ideology and strategy within the national context of a member state allows for a better understanding of the interaction of these variables and the extent to which they shape the positions of politicians on integration. Study of the national context also helps to explain variations in the positions of parties in different member states where ideology and strategy are similar. It is clear that certain characteristics of national contexts make political Euroscepticism

⁹⁹ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *European Union Politics*, vol. 8, no.1, 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

¹⁰¹ Leonard Ray, “Mainstreaming Euroscepticism: Trend or Oxymoron?”, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

more likely. Further, certain characteristics seem to encourage political competition on the Europe issue, and even incentivise Euroscepticism. And there is increasing evidence that a party's position on integration has consequences for its electoral success.

Another tendency of the existing literature on Euroscepticism, and in particular that on political competition, is to focus on competition for political gain *between* parties, and less on competition *within* parties. In light of the increase in discourse critical of the EU among established, mainstream politicians and the presence of divisions within certain established, mainstream parties on the Europe issue, it is necessary to deepen our understanding of the role of intra-party competition in determining the positions of mainstream politicians on European integration. This is especially important given that “intra-party divisions may be the most difficult challenge that mainstream political elites have to face as a consequence of European integration.”¹⁰²

3. Thesis, methodology and content

3.1. Thesis

Bearing in mind ideological and strategic factors, we would expect the two main political parties of the UK and France to have been supportive of European integration and for a mainstream consensus to have emerged in both states. While such a consensus emerged in France, this was not the case in the UK. It seems clear, therefore, that national context plays a key role in determining the positions of political parties and individual politicians on integration. In order to better understand how national context and, in particular, the potential for political gain, have shaped positions on integration, this thesis uses as a starting point three of the arguments presented in the literature review: Bourdieu's claim that political ideology is shaped by strategy; de Vries' finding that a party's position on integration can affect its electoral fortunes; Leconte's contention that intra-party divisions on questions of integration may be the greatest test faced by political elites as a result of their state's EU membership. These theories are applied in analysing the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians on European integration over time. This thesis argues that the positions on integration of French politicians from the two main political parties have principally been motivated by ideology and perception of the national interest. Intra-party divisions over the Europe issue have been successfully managed and dissidents have rarely made political gains

¹⁰² Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

from their positions. In contrast, in the UK, integration was often a strategic issue for both main political parties. While ideology and perception of the national interest certainly played a role in determining the positions of parties and individual politicians, it is shown that strategic considerations, and, in particular, the desire to exploit the potential for personal political gain, influenced the positions of certain politicians. Rather than being managed, intra-party divisions impacted official party policy and dissidents frequently made political gains from their positions.

3.2. Methodology

The time frame and comparative approach of this thesis were presented above. This thesis also takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining political science and civilisationist approaches. It moves beyond a strict focus on the political system to study party debates on European integration through a wider lens. As such, a range of factors – historical, political, economic and cultural – are considered so as to enable a fuller understanding of the national context and its role in determining positions on integration.

The analysis of the existing literature is supplemented by the use of primary data. Key to this thesis is the use of original primary data, which provide new and detailed insights into the positioning of mainstream UK and French politicians on European integration. Quantitative data was gathered through an electronic questionnaire of members of the lower houses of the UK and French parliaments, carried out between June 2015 and June 2016. The same questions were put to UK and French politicians, with an additional one or two questions specific to each state (see Annexes 1 and 2). In total, 62 of 650 UK MPs responded to the questionnaire. In total, 97 of 577 French *députés* responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the questionnaires were returned by Conservative and Labour Party MPs in the UK, and *Les Républicains* and *Parti socialiste députés* in France. Not all questionnaires were fully completed and some politicians did not state their name, just their party. The number of fully-completed questionnaires, especially by UK MPs, is therefore somewhat limited. Nonetheless, the data gathered allows for conclusions to be drawn about the positions of mainstream politicians in the UK and France, and for comparisons to be made. The quantitative data is supplemented by qualitative data gathered through interviews with MPs and *députés*, most of whom had previously completed the questionnaire. These interviews were held between January and November 2016. Again, a common body of questions was put to UK and French politicians, with some additional questions specific to each state and political party (see Annexes 3 and 4). In total, 24 UK MPs and 16 French *députés* were interviewed. The majority of those interviewed

are, or were at the time, members of one of the two main parties in the UK or France. While, again, it would have been preferable to interview a greater number of politicians, the interviews held were, for the most-part, lengthy and detailed. The information gathered therefore provides considerable insights into the positions of UK and French politicians, lending weight to the findings of this thesis. Notably, a number of UK MPs surveyed or interviewed had held their seats in Parliament for a great many years, allowing for them to share their direct experience of events up to 40 years ago. Due to the functioning of the French political system it is rarer for politicians to hold their seats for decades. As a consequence, the *députés* surveyed or interviewed tended not to have been in office for as long as their UK counterparts. As a result, little data was collected from the questionnaires and interviews of French *députés* concerning the pre-Maastricht period. The fieldwork was mostly carried out before the 2016 referendum. This allows for a more like-for-like comparison of the positions of UK and French politicians, as well as providing for a better understanding of the voting choices of UK MPs at the referendum. However, the lapse of time before the thesis was completed means that the situation reflected in the original primary data has somewhat evolved since.

In addition to the original primary data gathered through the fieldwork, further primary sources are used to supplement the existing literature. Party manifestos are studied for information on parties' positions on European integration, as well as to determine the importance attributed to the issue in the context of electoral campaigns. Speeches and autobiographies of key politicians are also used. Data on public opinion is gathered from Eurobarometer. This source is used because the same questions are posed across member states, allowing for comparison of public opinion in different states. Further, the same, or similar, questions have been posed every six months since 1973, allowing for comparison over time and for the identification of trends. However, the closed-end nature of the questions used by Eurobarometer constitutes a limit of this source that must be borne in mind. As Gaxie and Rowell show, the methodology of Eurobarometer surveys supposes interviewees would be capable of responding to questions and expressing opinions if answers were not provided.¹⁰³

3.3. *Contents*

Having noted the importance of political elites in shaping the future of European integration, this Introduction has presented and reviewed the key findings of the existing literature on political Euroscepticism. It has been shown that the role of party ideology and strategy should

¹⁰³ Daniel Gaxie and Jay Rowell, "Methodology of the Project", in Daniel Gaxie, Nicolas Hubé and Jay Rowell (eds.), *Perceptions of Europe. A Comparative Sociology of European Attitudes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

be considered in the national context to provide a fuller understanding of the positions of politicians on integration. It has also been shown that, in studying the role of political competition in determining the positions of politicians on integration, there is a need to move beyond inter-party competition to focus on intra-party competition. The core of the thesis is divided into two parts, each with two chapters. In Part One, Chapter 1 studies the national contexts of the UK and France to allow for a better understanding of how political competition is influenced by national context. In addition to considering the role of the political culture and system, Europeanization, and popular Euroscepticism in shaping political competition, the chapter pays particular attention to the organisation of political parties – their candidate and leadership selection, party hierarchy, decision-making – that foster or limit intra-party competition in general, and around the Europe issue in particular. It is in this chapter that much of the findings from the questionnaires, as well as the interviews, are presented and analysed. Chapter 2 charts the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and individual politicians on European integration from the post-war period to the launching, in December 1990, of the intergovernmental conferences on political and economic union. This chapter thus provides for the historical contextualisation of events to follow.

Part Two of the thesis provides a more detailed study of the positions of parties and individual politicians during the period from Maastricht to Brexit, that is to say from the opening of negotiations of the Treaty on European Union to the referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU in June 2016, identifying key junctures and analysing their impact on the positions of politicians on European integration. The study of positions over this period provides for a better understanding of the status quo, as at 2016, revealed through the fieldwork. Chapter 3 focuses on the negotiation and ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, and the resulting political debate and positioning in both the UK and France. Chapter 4 focuses on the negotiation and (non-) ratification of Constitutional Treaty and the Treaty of Lisbon. This chapter, in particular, offers an explanation as to why European integration has been a cause of divisions within some mainstream political parties, yet not in others, and how it is that some parties, once divided over questions of integration, have managed to reintroduce discipline, while others have not.

The Conclusion summarises the key finding of the thesis and reflects upon the contrasts in the reactions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians to European integration. Finally, it suggests possible perspectives for the future of European integration in light of increasing political Euroscepticism.

PART 1

Chapter 1

National Context and Political Competition in the United Kingdom and France

Introduction

Factors specific to the national context of a member state determine the role of ideology and strategy in shaping the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration and account for variations in positions across member states. Such factors include political culture, the political and party systems, Europeanization of institutions, policies, and politics, and public opinion on integration. National contextualising factors impact political competition, both between and within political parties, and it can be expected that competition for political gain influences the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration.

Weber believed ordinary people to be incapable of making political choices and decisions, and thus saw democratic politics as a competition, among professionals, for the support of the ordinary people.¹⁰⁴ Pierre Bourdieu pursued this notion, viewing political competition as a game played with the aim of getting a part of a party's membership into positions of power. For Bourdieu, the political game is played in a 'field', which is characterised by the power contests between its constituent units. Each unit within the field has its own identity and seeks to assert its dominance, with the balance of power within a field determining its functioning. Politics should be viewed as a series of interactions and not as a series of events, and these interactions take place within an institutional order. An individual's position within the institutional order can change over time and, with this, their influence. As such, we can expect to see competition not only between units or political parties, but also between individual politicians within the same unit or party.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Richard Bellamy, "Development in Pluralist and Elite Approaches", in Kate Nash and Alan Scott (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2004, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "La représentation politique", *op. cit.*

Competition, within and between political parties, is therefore at the core of politics and is essential for political actors to differentiate themselves from their competitors and gain political capital. In defining their position on European integration, parties and individual politicians are influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, by the desire for political gain. Individuals and groups within parties seek to maximise their influence and have their views shape and determine party policy. It would also appear that certain features of political cultures and political systems, and the organisation of certain political parties might incentivise competition between and within parties around the Europe issue.

The impact of national context on the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration was discussed briefly in the Introduction. This chapter develops the discussion with a focus on the specific national contexts of the United Kingdom and France. This allows for a clearer understanding of the role of national context in shaping political competition around the Europe issue. The first sub-chapter presents the key characteristics of the political culture, political system, and party system of the UK and France. In particular, it studies how these characteristics serve as bases of inter- and intra-party competition, and highlights the similarities and differences in the characteristics of the UK and France. The second sub-chapter considers how the institutions, policies and, most importantly, politics of the UK and France have been impacted by EC/EU membership, and considers public opinion on European integration. More specifically, it examines the consequences of this Europeanization for inter- and intra-party competition, and again highlights how the experiences of the UK and France have coincided and differed. Substantial use is made in this chapter of information gathered through the questionnaire and interviews to better understand the impact of membership on national politics. The chapter shows that, despite a number of similarities in the political cultures, political systems, and party systems of the UK and France, EU membership has impacted these states differently. This is most notable where the Europeanization of politics is concerned. Having identified features of the national political context that might create political incentives for Euroscepticism, preliminary conclusions are drawn as to the impact of political competition on the positions of UK and French parties and individual politicians on European integration. These preliminary conclusions are tested in later chapters in which the positions of parties and individual politicians during specific time periods are studied.

1. Political culture and system, and political competition

Societal conflicts are at the root of inter-party competition. In analysing these conflicts and their impact on party programmes, Herbert Kitschelt distinguishes between ‘divides’, ‘cleavages’, and ‘competitive dimensions’. Divides are differences among groups based on their core characteristics, and where such divides are durable they are known as cleavages. A political cleavage becomes a competitive dimension where politicians take positions in the hope of attracting popular support. However, few cleavages become competitive dimensions, as to make an issue the basis of political action is costly and, where the issue salience is low, there is limited potential for political gain.¹⁰⁶ Budge and Farlie’s salience theory purports that, in competing with one another, parties seek to push up the agenda the issues on which they have greatest credibility to increase the possibility of political gain.¹⁰⁷ The actions of parties are constrained by the institutional context in which their interactions take place. Charles Lees shows that constraints can be either ‘polis-constraining’ or ‘polis-shaping’ and thus determine the strategies adopted by politicians. Respectively, these strategies seek to promote either a sustained agenda, which is consistent over time, or a heresthetic agenda, which is pursued in an attempt to gain political power.¹⁰⁸ The institutional context can, therefore, determine the likelihood of the Europe issue being a feature of a heresthetic strategy to make political gains.

Inter-party competition is at the core of political competition. However, political parties cannot be considered fully unified entities that speak with a single voice on all issues, and political competition takes place within political parties as well as between them. Differences over societal conflicts can be a source of intra-party competition, especially within larger parties which incorporate a wide range of viewpoints. However, intra-party competition can also be strategic, driven by the desire of an individual, or a group of individuals, to gain influence and climb the party hierarchy. According to Michels’ ‘iron law of oligarchy’, modern-day political parties need to be highly organised, which tends to result in decision-making power being concentrated in the hands of small group of party leaders.¹⁰⁹ These party leaders develop interests different to lower-level party members because, whereas the latter tend to be driven by ideology, the former are driven also by a desire to hold or retain power and might thus be

¹⁰⁶ Herbert Kitschelt, “Parties and Political Intermediation”, in Kate Nash and Alan Scott (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹⁰⁷ Ian Budge and Dennis J. Farlie, *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*, Unwin Hyman, 1983.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Lees, “‘Dark Matter’: Institutional Constraints and the Failure of Party-Based Euroscepticism in Germany”, *Political Studies*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2002, pp. 7-9.

¹⁰⁹ Roberto Michels, *Political Parties*, Free Press, New York, 1962.

willing to sacrifice ideology for electoral gain.¹¹⁰ According to Ostrogorski, politicians *get* themselves elected and candidates must persuade the electorate to vote for them.¹¹¹ It stands to reason that politics, as contended by Fretel, is more a competition between individuals than between social groups or political parties.¹¹² The study of intra-party competition is particularly important to this thesis as it seeks to explain why some parties have remained unified on European integration, while the issue has been a cause of divisions in others.

The following sections present and analyse the key characteristics of the political culture, political system, and party system of the UK and France and seek to determine how these features influence the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration, impact political competition, and foster competition around the Europe issue. Similarities and differences between the characteristics of the UK and French systems are highlighted.

1.1. Political culture and system, and political competition in the UK

In terms of political culture, political system, and party system, the UK displays a number of characteristics that appear to influence attitudes of politicians towards European integration, which could be expected to impact political competition. Further, it appears that these characteristics fostered competition around the Europe issue.

1.1.1. The political culture of the UK

That the UK was the dominant global power throughout the 19th century has been key in establishing the modern British state and its political culture. This power was based on political stability, economic strength, and military force. Political stability was achieved through the Habeas Corpus Act 1679, which placed legislative restraints on the powers of the state, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which resulted in the sovereignty of Parliament.¹¹³ This principle of parliamentary sovereignty is one that is fundamental to the British notion of national sovereignty. The importance of this principle, along with the longevity of the parliamentary system, explains some of the resistance to the institutional change that European integration

¹¹⁰ Herbert Kitschelt, "Parties and Political Intermediation", *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹¹¹ Moisei Ostrogorski, *La démocratie et l'organisation des partis politiques*, 1903, cited by Rémi Lefebvre, "Le travail de mobilisation électorale", in Antonin Cohen, Bernard Lacroix and Philippe Riutort (eds.), *Nouveau manuel de science politique*, La Découverte, Paris, 2009, p. 419.

¹¹² Julien Fretel, "Le leadership partisan", in Antonin Cohen, Bernard Lacroix and Philippe Riutort (eds.), *ibid.*, p. 462.

¹¹³ Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, Penguin, New York, 1993, pp. 378-382.

entailed.¹¹⁴ Further, that the UK is an old democracy could have caused the perceived democratic deficit of the EU's institutions to have a greater impact on UK public opinion.¹¹⁵ By way of illustration, it should be noted that 70 per cent of MPs surveyed considered the EU's decision-making process to be not at all democratic or not democratic enough. The achievement of political stability relatively early allowed the UK to focus on economic and industrial development, and thus move ahead of its rivals. This development came, however, at the expense of the agricultural sector. As a powerful trading nation, the UK became a strong supporter of free trade. The pound sterling became the dominant international currency and the importance of the City of London, for the UK economy and as an international hub, grew.¹¹⁶ The decline of the agricultural sector and the importance of financial services, meant the interests of the UK economy evolved to be quite different from those of many of its continental neighbours. The UK's economic strength enabled it to develop its military force and further expand its Empire. As the world's greatest military power, the UK served as global hegemon until the outbreak of the World War I in 1914.¹¹⁷ Despite its decline, the UK played a fundamental role in World War II and was a key actor in the construction of the subsequent global institutional order. The UK's status as a former great power has had a considerable impact on its political history. Much national pride is associated with the UK's 'glorious' past, which impacts collective attitudes towards European integration. For example, John Redwood, a hard-Eurosceptic Conservative MP, referred, during interview, to the UK as "a proud, independent nation" with "little to gain" from European integration.¹¹⁸ Some feel that the UK limited itself by joining the European Communities. Some believe that, with full sovereignty returned, the UK has the potential to be a great global power again. However, this pride is based on a vision of the UK's past that is heavily influenced by events pre-1945 and much less by events since World War II.¹¹⁹

The relative strength of political extremisms influences political attitudes towards European integration.¹²⁰ How such political extremisms are viewed, whether they are accepted or rejected as a legitimate form of political expression, affects their ability to influence attitudes towards integration. Unlike in many continental European states, where the rise of nationalisms

¹¹⁴ Jeffrey J. Anderson, "Europeanization and the Transformation of the Democratic Polity, 1945-2000", *op. cit.*, p. 814.

¹¹⁵ Robert Rohrschneider, "The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-Wide Government", *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire. 1875-1914*, Abacus, London, 1994, pp. 39-40.

¹¹⁷ Michael Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005, p. 33.

¹¹⁸ John Redwood, interview by telephone, 27 May 2016.

¹¹⁹ Oliver J. Daddow, "Euroscepticism and History Education in Britain", *Government and Opposition*, vol. 41, issue 1, 2006, p. 73.

¹²⁰ Cécile Léconte, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

was identified as a key cause of World War II, nationalism was less discredited in the UK. This was reflected in the responses of UK politicians to the questionnaire, who, in general, attributed less importance than their French counterparts to the role played by European integration in fostering peace in Europe. Nonetheless, extremist parties have had very limited success in the UK. This is due, in part, to the Westminster electoral system that disadvantages marginal parties, making it very difficult for their candidates to win seats in Parliament. As a result, extremist parties have tended, until recently, to lack legitimacy and have limited access to a public platform. Also, both the Conservative and the Labour parties have taken ownership of the issue of immigration, and competed with one another over it, depriving extremist parties of a key issue on which to compete.¹²¹ However, by making the issue of immigration a competitive dimension, the two mainstream parties have legitimised the views of extremist political actors outside Parliament, notably members of the UK Independence Party, and thereby enabled them to influence the political debate. Further, the principle of free movement of workers within the EU has created a link between integration and immigration, and thus served as a basis for UK Eurosceptics to criticise the EU.

Identity is of great importance in determining attitudes towards Europe and integration.¹²² Eurobarometer data on attachment to Europe and the EU suggest that the UK national identity is exclusive rather than inclusive. Data gathered over the past 20 years show that UK citizens are less attached to Europe and the EU than other EU citizens. In advance of the 2016 referendum, 50 per cent of UK respondents felt fairly or very attached to Europe, compared to an EU average of 59 per cent. Further, only 40 per cent of UK respondents felt attached to the EU, compared to the EU average of 49 per cent.¹²³ The exclusiveness of UK national identity means a dual sense of European or EU identity is less likely, which in turn negatively impacts support for integration. Ruiz Jiménez et al show that the UK was one of just two EU member states for whom national pride and high levels of attachment to national sovereignty were key to national identification. It is therefore unsurprising that they find the UK to have low levels of ‘closeness’ to Europe and low levels of dual identity.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Michael Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK*, *op. cit.*, p. 337

¹²² Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?”, *op. cit.*; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *op. cit.*

¹²³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83. European Citizenship*, July 2015.

¹²⁴ Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez, Jaroslaw Józef Górnjak, Ankica Kopic, Paszkal Kiss and Maren Kandulla, “European and National Identities in EU’s Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components”, *op. cit.*

In his analysis of the literature on UK support for European integration, Juan Diez Medrano identifies fear of lost identity as one of two principal causes for low levels of support. He suggests the fear of lost identity might be traced to a sense of national superiority which, in turn, could be explained by historical factors, such as the UK's role in World War II and ties with non-European countries. The UK's distinctiveness is so important that some prioritised protecting national identity and sovereignty over engaging in a Community with recognised political and economic benefits. These concerns about national identity and sovereignty tended to be justified by references to the singularity of British culture or differences between British culture and other European cultures.¹²⁵ Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering contend that the British people view themselves as being different from continental Europeans and view the latter, grouped together, as 'the Other'. Like Diez Medrano, they highlight the importance of the UK's ties with non-European countries, contrasting this sense of Europe as 'the Other' with a sense of solidarity with other English-speaking countries.¹²⁶

The attitudes of politicians, too, are shaped by their sense of 'Europeanness'.¹²⁷ The level of attachment to Europe of politicians is particularly important given the role that political elites play in the construction of national identity as either inclusive or exclusive.¹²⁸ The statements of certain prominent individuals over the years could give the impression that UK politicians were as unattached to Europe as the general public. In 1930, Winston Churchill wrote, "We are with Europe, but not of it".¹²⁹ In 1962, the Labour Party leader, Hugh Gaitskell, argued "we are not Europeans".¹³⁰ In 1990, the former Conservative Party Chairman, Norman Tebbit, wrote that "different as our Continental neighbours are from each other, we are even more different from each of them".¹³¹ These statements reveal, again, a sense of 'otherness' among both Conservative and Labour politicians. However, data gathered through the questionnaire on UK MPs reveal that 75 per cent of respondents felt attached to Europe, a level much higher than the general public. More precisely, 31 per cent of MPs felt very attached and

¹²⁵ Juan Diez Medrano, *op. cit.*

¹²⁶ Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, "Introduction: Euroscepticism and the Evolution of European Political Debate", in Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (eds.), *Euroscepticism. Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹²⁷ Heinrich Best, György Lengyel, and Luca Verzichelli, "European Integration as an Elite Project: An Introduction", *op. cit.*

¹²⁸ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration", *op. cit.*, p. 424.

¹²⁹ Winston Churchill, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 15 February 1930.

¹³⁰ Hugh Gaitskell, *Speech to Labour Party Conference 1962*, 3 October 1962 <https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/05f2996b-000b-4576-8b42-8069033a16f9/publishable_en.pdf>.

¹³¹ Norman Tebbit, cited in Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism", in Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 142.

44 per cent felt attached to Europe. Those who felt (very) attached tended to point to shared history and values, and a common civilization as the bases of their attachment. Yet, it could be seen that levels of attachment to Europe were lower among Conservative than among Labour politicians (see Table 1.1). The feelings of Conservative politicians were thus more in line with those of the general public. In terms of culture and values, 53 per cent of respondents believed the UK to have most in common with European countries, 36 per cent believed it to have most in common with Commonwealth countries, and 10 per cent the United States of America. Notable, again, is that a high proportion of Conservative respondents considered the UK to have most in common with Commonwealth countries, whereas relatively few Labour respondents considered this to be the case (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.1. Levels of attachment to Europe among UK MPs

To what extent do you feel attached to Europe?

	Very attached	Attached	Little attachment	Not at all
Conservative	13%	33%	20%	33%
Labour	33%	50%	17%	-

Table 1.2. Perceptions of common culture and values among UK MPs

In terms of culture and values, the UK has most in common with :

	European countries	The USA	The Commonwealth
Conservative	14%	7%	79%
Labour	56%	22%	22%

The identification of Conservative politicians with Commonwealth countries reflects the importance of historical ties with non-European English-speaking countries in shaping identity in the UK, as highlighted by Harmen and Spiering, and Diez Medrano. Conservatives’ attachment to the Commonwealth is, according to Wellings and Baxendale, part of a wider ‘Anglosphere’ model than provides an alternative to European integration.¹³² The tendency for Conservative and Labour politicians to identify differently with Europe and the EU also came through during the interviews. Unsurprisingly, hard-Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs interviewed were unattached to the EU and, in some cases, Europe. For example, David Nuttall claimed that Europe “does not have a common history”, and, as a result, the “EU is an artificial construct”.¹³³

¹³² Ben Wellings and Helen Baxendale, “Euro-scepticism and the Anglosphere: Traditions and Dilemmas in Contemporary English Nationalism”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, issue 1, 2015.

¹³³ David Nuttall, interview by telephone, 27 April 2016.

David Davies said he was “attached to European countries, but not to the EU”. He considered European countries to “have common values, but these have been undermined by the EU”.¹³⁴ In contrast to Conservative MPs, Labour MPs regularly expressed a sense of European identity. For example, Paul Flynn stated that the UK “is part of a European family of nations with a shared history and culture” and that there is “a unity within Europe that the UK does not share with the US or Asia.”¹³⁵ Lewis Moonie, although Eurosceptic, claimed that “the UK is no more different from other European states than they (other European states) are from each other.”¹³⁶ Paul Flynn considered that a key impact of the UK’s EU membership was the increase in the number of, what he referred to as, “little Englanders” in Parliament. He considers this group to have “delusions of importance and a false idea of English nationhood and history, and the power of the UK on the global stage.” This viewpoint was shared by Virenda Sharma, who felt that many UK MPs are “stuck in the past” in terms of their sense of national identity.¹³⁷ As with the general public, the results of the questionnaire and interviews show a link between politicians’ attachment to Europe and their support for European integration. Almost 50 per cent of respondents who felt (very) attached to Europe rated their overall support for the UK’s membership of the EU at 10 out of 10, and over 75 per cent rated their support at 8 out of 10 or more. Conversely, almost 55 per cent of those who felt little or no attachment to Europe rated their overall support for the UK’s membership of the EU at 2 out of 10 or less.

The low levels of ‘Europeanness’ of Conservative politicians surely caused them to cue the public towards an exclusive national identity, one which views continental Europe as ‘the Other’. This tendency to oppose the nation and ‘the Other’ is typical of populism, which makes politics a ‘campaign to save the country’.¹³⁸ Labour politicians, on the other hand, are more likely to cue the public towards a more inclusive sense of national identity. This situation is reflected in Diez Medrano’s observation that the UK is a divided nation, with some characterising the UK as “rich and powerful” and demonstrating “fairness”, and others characterising the UK as “poor and powerless” and “anti-European, isolationist or parochial”.¹³⁹ These divisions seem to be symptomatic of a nation in post-imperial decline, with no durable

¹³⁴ David Davies, interview in person, 19 April 2016.

¹³⁵ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone, 6 January 2016.

¹³⁶ Lewis Moonie, interview by telephone, 3 March 2015.

¹³⁷ Virenda Sharma, interview in person, 26 January 2016.

¹³⁸ Margaret Canovan, “Populism and the two faces of democracy”, *Political studies*, vo. 47, 1999, cited in Chris Gifford, “The rise of post-imperial populism: The case of right-wing Euroscepticism in Britain”, *op. cit.*, p. 855.

¹³⁹ Diez Medrano, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

unifying conception of nationhood.¹⁴⁰ Since accession, Europe and the EC/EU has served for some as ‘the Other’ in opposition to which a post-imperial British nation can be styled.¹⁴¹

1.1.2. The political system of the UK

The UK is quite unusual in that the exercise of power is not subject to a written constitution. Rather, the UK has a body of constitutional law based on statute, common law, and convention. The UK’s evolutionary approach to institutional change stands in contrast to the treaty basis of the EU’s institutional powers.¹⁴² Common law, one of the sources of the UK’s constitution, is established by legal precedent. Subject to judicial interpretation, the UK’s common law is in constant change. The flexibility typical of the UK’s legal system is often considered a positive characteristic, which allows for easier and faster adaptation to current circumstances. Yet, the absence of codification means the common law system is distinct from the codified civil law legal systems in place in all EU member states other than Ireland.

The UK has a highly majoritarian political system. The system is characterised, on the horizontal, executive-parties dimension, by a strong executive with a dominant cabinet, a tendency for single-party governments, a small number of effective political parties, and a disproportionate electoral system.¹⁴³ As a parliamentary monarchy, executive powers are vested in the government. The government is headed by a Prime Minister, who is appointed by the monarch as leader of the party commanding majority support in the House of Commons, and single-party governments are the norm. The culture of compromise that can be observed in states where coalitions are more common, as within and between EU institutions, is therefore quite absent in the UK executive. The rarity of coalitions does, however, result in greater stability of the executive and the political system as a whole.

The UK’s bicameral Parliament comprises a directly-elected 650-member lower house, the House of Commons, and an 800-member upper house, the House of Lords, composed of appointed and hereditary peers. For the purposes of this thesis, the focus is on the House of Commons and its directly-elected members. As is typical of majoritarian political systems, the UK Parliament is a strong institution.¹⁴⁴ The principle of parliamentary sovereignty ensures the

¹⁴⁰ David McCrone and Richard Kiely, “Nationalism and Citizenship”, *Sociology*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, cited in Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*, p. 856.

¹⁴¹ Chris Gifford, *idem*.

¹⁴² Simon Bulmer and Martin Burch, “The Europeanization of the UK Government: From Quiet Revolution to Explicit Step-Change?”, *Public Administration*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2005.

¹⁴³ Jeffrey J. Anderson, “Europeanization and the Transformation of the Democratic Polity, 1945-2000”, *op. cit.* p.801.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

supremacy of the legislature, giving it the right to create or repeal any law. Parliament has a proud reputation as a forum for national debate, which is characterised by its adversarial nature, which encourages competition between the parties. This antagonism stems from the fact that the vast majority of MPs in the House of Commons sit in one of the two main political parties, which are rarely required to reach consensus. In fact, the Conservative and Labour parties tend to position themselves in resistance to one another and the views of the opposition can simply be ignored by the governing party if it holds, as it often does, a majority of seats. This extends to Parliamentary committees, whose opinions, too, the government can simply disregard.¹⁴⁵ This zero-sum game approach taken by Parliamentary parties serves to further highlight the contrast between the UK's majoritarian political system and that of the EU. Moreover, the large parties typical of the UK's majoritarian system are 'broad-church' parties that bring together a wide range of political views. In such parties it can be difficult to silence dissidents.¹⁴⁶ This is particularly so where the governing party has a narrow majority.¹⁴⁷

On the vertical, federal-unitary dimension, too, the UK political system displays strong majoritarian characteristics. In particular, the UK has a unitary and centralized government, and this despite the process of devolution that began following the referenda of 1997.¹⁴⁸ While few member state political systems display levels of federalism similar to that of the EU polity, the UK, again, stands out as one of the most majoritarian states on the federal-unitary dimension.

Under the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011, general elections are held every five years. Before the Act came into force, convention stated that an election was called when the Prime Minister requested the Monarch dissolve Parliament. It was therefore for Prime Ministers (and their advisers) to decide when an election was held and they tended, as a result, to request the dissolution of Parliament at the moment that was most electorally advantageous for them and their party.¹⁴⁹ Elections to the House of Commons use the first-past-the-post electoral system, one of the most disproportionate, using the Gallagher index, of the EU15 states studied by Anderson.¹⁵⁰ Under this system, the candidate who receives the most votes, regardless of the majority, wins the seat.¹⁵¹ The system also disadvantages small parties where their support is

¹⁴⁵ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁶ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁷ Mark Aspinwall, "Structuring Europe: Powersharing institutions and British preferences on European integration", *Political Studies*, vol. 48, no. 3, June 2000, pp.434-436.

¹⁴⁸ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p.809.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-370.

¹⁵⁰ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 804.

¹⁵¹ The first-past-the-post electoral system exaggerates changes in popular support for parties, and a party can win a majority of seats in Parliament despite receiving only one-third of the popular vote and little more support than its nearest rival. In fact, a party can win more seats than its opponents without necessarily polling more votes.

spread across a wide geographical area. It is very difficult for smaller parties to enter the UK Parliament, and power tends, therefore, to be held almost exclusively by the two main parties. As a result, both parties and voters are increasingly strategic.¹⁵² Usherwood contends that, in majoritarian systems like the UK, individuals are more likely to join one of the big, mainstream parties as this is their best hope of being elected. As a result, these parties incorporate a variety of opinions.¹⁵³ However, as argued by Gifford, above, it can be difficult to silence dissidents in large, ‘broad-church’ parties. As a result, opposition or scepticism tends to be indulged by the Conservative and Labour parties so as to ensure internal cohesion.¹⁵⁴ The first-past-the-post system can also result in MPs in safe seats representing their constituency for decades. This allows MPs to develop strong ties with their constituents, which could cause them to be more loyal to constituency opinion. It could, on the other hand, cause MPs in safe seats to pay less attention to public opinion and, conversely, those with narrow majorities to pay close attention. Until the 1999 elections, the first-past-the-post system was also used for elections to the European Parliament. As a result, MEPs from the Conservative or Labour Parties held the vast majority of UK seats in the European Parliament. The introduction of a more proportional electoral system in 1999 resulted in a greater number of UK parties holding seats in the European Parliament, including small and marginal parties.¹⁵⁵ This gave smaller and marginal parties a platform and the chance to increase their credibility.

From a high of 83.9 per cent in 1950, turnout at general elections fell to a low of 59.4 per cent in 2001. Since then it has risen consistently, although turnout at general elections has not passed 69 per cent, suggesting a decline in public interest in political debate.¹⁵⁶ In addition to declining turnout, a further long-term trend is the fall in support for the Conservative and Labour Parties. Voters have become increasingly volatile and the strength of voter identification with parties has weakened.¹⁵⁷ Whereas, in the 1950s, the Conservative and Labour Parties shared over 90 per cent of the vote and held almost all seats in the House of Commons, from the mid-1970s, increasing support for the Liberal/Liberal Democrat Party and the Scottish National Party in Scotland, reduced the two main parties’ share of the vote and seats. From the early 2000s, support for the UK Independence Party grew, splitting the vote

¹⁵² Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 378-379.

¹⁵³ Simon Usherwood, “Opposition to the European Union in the UK: The Dilemma of Public Opinion and Party Management”, *Government and Opposition*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2002, pp. 211-230.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, “Introduction: Euroscepticism and the Evolution of European Political Debate”, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *Briefing Paper No. CBP7529*, House of Commons Library, 13 December 2018, p. 51.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-379.

further. A low of 65 per cent of combined popular support for the Conservative and Labour Parties was recorded at the 2010 general election, although the parties nonetheless held 564 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons.¹⁵⁸ The fall in support for the Conservative and Labour Parties reflected declining voter attachment to the two main parties, a result of which was to reduce the ‘top down’ influence of these parties over the positions of their supporters. Increasing popular support for smaller parties could be expected to have an impact on the political offer of the Conservative and Labour Parties.

Unsurprisingly, turnout at European Parliament elections was lower than at general elections. Turnout in the UK never passed 38.2 per cent (in 2004) and fell as low as 23.1 per cent in 1999.¹⁵⁹ The UK thus had one of the lowest turnout rates at EP elections in the EU. Low turnout at EP elections is typical and is due to the ‘second-order’ nature of these elections, which the electorate tend to consider to be less important than national legislative or presidential elections. As such, campaigns are dominated by national issues and the electorate tends to vote based on whether or not they are satisfied with the governing party.¹⁶⁰ However, Till Weber claims that, decades after the first direct elections to the European Parliament, the second-order election theory is not always correctly applied, and shows that the extent to which questions of European integration impact voter behaviour at European Parliament elections is determined by domestic factors.¹⁶¹ In the case of the UK it seems that latterly, and despite continued low turnout, EP elections were viewed less as second-order elections by the electorate. In fact, from 2004, the voting public appeared to use EP elections as an opportunity to express their opinion on European integration and not just on the governing party.

Little use is made of referenda in the UK and there is a sense that this decision-making tool undermines the sovereignty of Parliament. Since 1975 only three UK-wide referenda have been held, two of which related to the UK’s continued membership of the EC/EU. Referenda have been held more frequently in the constituent countries of the UK on questions of devolution and independence. At the 1975 referendum on the UK’s continued membership of the EC, turnout was 63.9 per cent, just nine points less than the previous general election, while turnout at the 2016 referendum was 72.2 per cent, six points more than at the previous general

¹⁵⁸ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁰ Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt, “Nine Second-Order National Elections – A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results”, *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, March 1980.

¹⁶¹ Till Weber, “When the cat is away the mice will play: why elections to the European parliament are about Europe after all”, *Politique européenne*, vol. 2, no. 28, 2009.

election.¹⁶² No constitutional obligation exists to hold a referendum on the transfer of sovereignty to the EU, and the results of the referenda of 1975 and 2016 were not legally binding. The turnout at these two referenda is perhaps surprising given the low turnout at European Parliament elections, but indicates the importance attached to the issue of continued EC/EU membership by the public. Notable is that the UK was expected to hold a referendum on the approval of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 or 2006, yet no referendum was held to approve the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008. The holding of referenda increases the salience of the Europe issue and could increase levels of Euroscepticism among politicians.¹⁶³ Further, such referenda strengthen mass-elite linkages, notably the bottom-up influence of public opinion and especially where there are intra-party divisions on the Europe issue.¹⁶⁴ Although the UK held few referenda on the Europe issue, these phenomena – high salience of the Europe issue, political Euroscepticism, and strong bottom-up influence of public opinion – could be observed in the ten years preceding the 2016 referendum. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon was ratified in 2008 without the holding of a referendum, a vote that was desired and expected by many. As a result, the 2016 ‘in-out’ referendum campaign effectively began in 2008; increasing the influence of public opinion on the positioning of politicians.

1.1.3. *The UK party system*

Although popular support for the Conservative and Labour Parties has fallen considerably since the 1950s, they continue to hold the vast majority of seats in the House of Commons.¹⁶⁵ It is the electoral system of the UK that causes there to be few effective, or relevant, political parties. Sartori determines the relevance of a party based on its electoral strength and its governing or coalition-bargaining potential. A party’s electoral strength is reflected in the percentage of seats it holds in the lower chamber of parliament. A party’s governing or coalition-bargaining potential is determined by its participation, over time, in a governing majority, which implies its ideological acceptability to other parties. However, some parties are considered to be relevant despite having limited coalition-bargaining potential. Parties that have ‘blackmail potential’ – the ability to change the nature of party competition, especially from centripetal to

¹⁶² Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁶³ Simon Usherwood and Nick Startin, “Euroscepticism as a Persistent Phenomenon”, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

centrifugal – are also deemed to be relevant.¹⁶⁶ In the UK, for the period under study in the coming chapters, the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat Parties should be considered relevant, as should the UK Independence Party from 1999 due to its ‘blackmail potential’. Although the Scottish National Party, and other such ‘regional’ parties, are certainly relevant within their respective regions, they are not so at the national level. Also, while the Green Party has had a more regular, and sometimes greater, presence in Parliament than UKIP, the former does not have the ‘blackmail potential’ that allows it to influence the policy of the major parties. A brief overview of the ideology and strategy of these relevant parties is provided below, including a cursory first look at each parties’ position on European integration.

The modern Conservative Party can trace its origins to a split in the Tory Party in 1846. Having initially opposed free trade and small government, the party’s position changed towards the end of the 19th century.¹⁶⁷ A mainstream party on the right of the political spectrum, the Conservative Party is the UK’s most established and successful office-seeking party. Since 1918, the party has spent over 60 years in government and, when not in government, it has always held the second highest number of seats in the House of Commons.¹⁶⁸ Under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher (1975-1990), Conservative Party ideology moved further to the right, resulting in greater liberalisation of the market and the shrinking of the state.¹⁶⁹

Having supported the UK’s accession to the EC, the party’s position on European integration shifted to become quite critical of both the process and its outcomes from the 1980s.¹⁷⁰ Criticism of the outcomes of integration, which had been marginalised since the 1960s, was legitimised by Margaret Thatcher’s increasingly confrontational approach to the EC from the mid-1980s. Euroscepticism, and even outright Eurorejection, within the Conservative Party was crystallised by the ratification of the Treaty on European Union in 1993.¹⁷¹ Such criticism and opposition has only increased within the party since then and has been a source of deep intra-party divisions. Although a broad range of attitudes towards European integration

¹⁶⁶ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and party systems. A framework for analysis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

¹⁶⁷ The Tory Party split over the repeal of the Corn Laws. In opposing the repeal, the emerging Conservative Party positioned itself in opposition to free trade and small government, and instead envisioned Britain as a society led by a traditional, landed aristocratic elite. However, by the end of the 19th century the Conservative Party had come to accept and even support the industrial revolution, free trade, and small government. *See Moran, 2005, p. 321-323*

¹⁶⁸ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁹ Bill Jones, “Political ideas: the major parties”, in Bill Jones and Philip Norton (eds.), *Politics UK*, Routledge, Oxon, 2014, p. 73.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

¹⁷¹ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique”, in Agnès Alexandre-Collier, Karine Cabrol and Valérie Rossellini-Papillon (eds.), *Les partis politiques britanniques et l’intégration européenne*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2002, p. 53.

remained present within the Conservative Party, Euroscepticism, in its soft and hard forms, became prevalent. In fact, over 80 per cent of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire rated their support for the UK's membership of the EU at 4 out of 10 or less, and approximately 60 per cent rated their support at 2 out of 10 or less. These attitudes were reflected in the positions adopted by Conservative MPs at the 2016 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU. Of the 323 Conservative MPs who publicly declared their position in advance of the referendum, 138 voted for the UK to leave the EU.¹⁷² Conservative Party MEPs initially sat in the centre-right, Europhile European Peoples Party (EPP) political group of the European Parliament, alongside MEPs from France's *Rassemblement pour la République-Union pour un mouvement populaire* and *Les Républicains* and Germany's Christian Democratic Union. From 2009 Conservative Party MEPs founded and sat in the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group. In the ECR, Conservative MEPs were joined by fellow Eurosceptics, firmly on the right of the political spectrum, including MEPs from Poland's Law and Justice Party.

The Labour Party was established as a national party in 1918. From the outset the party brought together a variety of leftist ideological traditions. Whereas these different groups were able to come together in support of certain policies, differences at times led to internal crises. Heavy electoral defeats in the 1980s led to fundamental changes in the party ideology under the leadership of Neil Kinnock.¹⁷³ Whereas, prior to the repeal of the socialist Clause IV and the launch of 'New Labour' in the mid-1990s, the Labour Party was firmly on the left of the political spectrum, today's Labour Party is on the centre-left, accepting the market economy and some privatisation.¹⁷⁴ A mainstream, established, office-seeking party, Labour has spent over 35 years in government since 1918. Since 1922, when not in government, the party has held the second highest number of seats in the House of Commons.¹⁷⁵

In repositioning itself on the centre-left, the Labour Party reshaped its Europe policy. While the party officially supported accession to the EC, there were deep divisions and the party adopted a Euroreject position from the late 1970s, advocating the UK leave the EC. This position was renounced in the late 1980s under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, and the party

¹⁷² BBC, "EU vote: Where the cabinet and other MPs stand", 22 June 2016 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35616946>>.

¹⁷³ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-330.

¹⁷⁴ Bill Jones, "Political ideas: the major parties", *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁷⁵ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

became supportive of an increasing number of policies.¹⁷⁶ With its move to a moderately Euroenthusiast position, the Labour Party became the more supportive of the two main parties from the late 1980s. The adoption of a more Europhile position seems also to have been due to the growing belief within the Labour Party that “elections were being lost due to the party’s anti-EC stance”.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, Labour respondents to the questionnaire were sincerely supportive of the UK’s membership of the EU and there was much greater party unity on the Europe issue. The party did, however, count a small number of hard Eurosceptics. Approximately 80 per cent of Labour respondents rated their support at 8 out of 10 or more, and almost 45 per cent rated their support for membership at 10 out of 10. This unity of support could be seen in the positions taken by Labour MPs at the 2016 referendum. Of the 228 Labour MPs who publicly declared their intention in advance of the referendum, 218 voted for the UK to remain in the EU.¹⁷⁸ Labour Party MEPs sat in the centre-left, Europhile Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats political (PASD) group of the European Parliament, alongside MEPs from France’s *Parti socialiste* and Germany’s Social Democratic Party.

The mainstream Liberal Democrat (LibDem) Party is the successor of the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party’s main opposition until WWI. The Liberal Party led Britain into the war, which resulted in intra-party divisions and weakening, which, coupled with the establishment of the Labour Party in 1918, contributed to the party’s demise. The LibDems was founded in 1988 following the merger of the Liberal Party with the Social Democrats (SDP), the latter founded in 1981 by former Labour MPs opposed to the leadership’s radical socialist policies and supportive of European integration. The LibDem’s history adds to the inherent complexity of its centrist ideology.¹⁷⁹ Due to the Liberal Party’s experience in government prior to 1918, the LibDem Party can be considered an established party. Also, the LibDems held office in coalition with the Conservative Party from 2010 to 2015. The LibDems is a policy-seeking party, although as the third largest party in the House of Commons until 2015, it could at times also be considered an office-seeking party.¹⁸⁰ Unlike the Conservative and Labour Parties, the LibDems was always a Euroenthusiast party and the issue was not a source of internal divisions. An insufficient number of LibDem MPs responded to the questionnaire to allow for data to be presented. However, all eight LibDem MPs voted in favour of the UK remaining in the EU at

¹⁷⁶ Agnès Alexandre-Collier and Emmanuelle Avril, *Les partis politiques en Grande-Bretagne*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2013, p. 124.

¹⁷⁷ Kelvin Hopkins, interview by telephone, 18 May 2016.

¹⁷⁸ BBC, “EU vote: Where the cabinet and other MPs stand”, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.* pp. 334-335.

¹⁸⁰ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

the 2016 referendum.¹⁸¹ LibDem MEPs sat in the centrist, vocally Europhile Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) political group of the European Parliament.

The Anti-Federalist League, established in 1991, was relaunched as the UK Independence Party in 1993. The party was founded to lead opposition, not only to further integration, but to the UK's continued membership of the EU.¹⁸² UKIP's unified, Euroreject stance stood in contrast to the, albeit muted, support for integration of established parties. Initially a single-issue party, UKIP has widened its political offer over time, although it remains a marginal, far-right, anti-establishment party. Despite its minimal presence in the House of Commons, UKIP had a profound impact on the political and public debate around the Europe issue. This is due to the fact that popular support for the party at general elections increased steadily from 1997, and the party won seats in the European Parliament from 1999.¹⁸³ That a party with an extreme ideology attracted such popular support and made electoral gains is highly unusual in the UK's majoritarian political system. Until its demise with the UK's departure from the EU, UKIP could be considered a vote- and policy-seeking party. Of course, UKIP's one MP voted in favour of the UK leaving the EU at the 2016 referendum. Party MEPs sat in the far-right, hard Eurosceptic Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) political group of the European Parliament until the 2019 elections.

1.1.4. Internal party organisation: the Conservative and Labour Parties

The Conservative Party emerged from a parliamentary faction of the Tory Party in the mid-1800s. A mass party was later created, meaning the parliamentary party, and its leadership in particular, established dominance over the party organization. Nonetheless, constituency associations remained the key organizational unit, and the Conservative Party is essentially the sum of these constituency groupings. A sharp fall in party membership, the electoral defeats of 1997 and 2001, and the changing political landscape of Scotland and Wales post-devolution led to changes to the Conservative Party's organization in 1998. These changes, which reflected changes that had already been introduced in the Labour Party, aimed to more closely associate the wider membership of the party. This aim is clear in the creation of the National Convention and Policy Forums, both of which provide for the bottom-up flow of ideas, and the new rules concerning the selection of the party leader. In addition to seeking to involve the wider

¹⁸¹ BBC, "EU vote: Where the cabinet and other MPs stand", *op. cit.*

¹⁸² Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

¹⁸³ Karine Tournier-Sol, "La montée de l'UK Independence Party dans les années Blair", in Agnès Alexandre-Collier, Bernard d'Hellencourt and Pauline Schnapper (eds.), *Le Royaume-Uni et l'Union Européenne depuis 1997*, Editions Universitaires de Dijon, Dijon, 2007, p. 36.

membership more, the reforms also sought to organize the party more centrally and thus the role of Central Office, the party's organisational machine, came to be of greater importance.¹⁸⁴

The Conservative Party is, in fact, three distinct organisations: the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, the Conservative Central Office, and the Conservative Parliamentary Party. As a result, precise membership can be difficult to establish. Having peaked at a reported 2.8 million in 1953, membership of the party fell drastically during the 1950s and 60s, and again in the early 1990s. The Conservatives continued, nonetheless, to have more individual members than any other party up until the mid-1990s. Party membership fell by more than half in the 2000s, and by 2014 stood at less than 150,000. Having been double that of the Labour Party in the early 1950s, Conservative Party membership fell below that of its key rival from around 2010. Building on Michels' theory, as discussed above, party members tend to be more driven by ideology than party leaders.¹⁸⁵ This is the case for Conservative Party members, who tend to position themselves further to the right on the political spectrum and be more Eurosceptic. If the Conservative Party was going to be successful in increasing membership, its policies would need to better reflect the preferences of typical members. Noteworthy is that the majority of party members are within the 60+ age group, and a considerable proportion live in the south of England.¹⁸⁶ The age and geographical location of Conservative Party members are relevant as these are two characteristics typical of Eurosceptic voters. It should also be noted that, as Conservative Party membership declined from the 1990s, membership of the UK Independence Party increased to reach a high of just less than 46,000 in 2015.¹⁸⁷ This increase in UKIP membership is particularly significant given that, according to hard Eurosceptic Conservative MP and former Executive Secretary of the 1922 Committee, Nigel Evans, "most UKIP members are former Conservative Party members".¹⁸⁸ Further, as at 2017, half of UKIP members lived in the south of England, a stronghold of the Conservative Party in terms of members.¹⁸⁹ Conservative Party supporters, like members, have profiles that dispose them to Euroscepticism.¹⁹⁰ It stands to reason, therefore, that the party would seek to adapt its Europe policy to please its more Eurosceptic members and supporters.

¹⁸⁴ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-304.

¹⁸⁵ Herbert Kitschelt, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁸⁶ Lukas Audickas, Noel Dempsey and Philip Loft, "Membership of UK Political Parties", *Briefing Paper*, no. SN05125, House of Commons Library, 9 August 2019, pp. 19-21.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ Nigel Evans, interview in person, 27 January 2016.

¹⁸⁹ Lukas Audickas, Noel Dempsey, Philip Loft, "Membership of UK Political Parties", *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁹⁰ David Denver, "Elections and voting", in Bill Jones and Philip Norton (eds.), *Politics UK*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

Competitive election is the most common route to political leadership in the UK. Membership of a party is almost essential if an individual is to be elected, and election to Parliament is necessary for the advancement of a political career as government ministers are rarely appointed from outside Parliament. In the case of the Conservative Party, although candidates must be approved by the Central Office, it is constituency associations that compile a list of possible candidates. Constituency associations therefore wield a great deal of power, especially in Conservative safe-seats, and activists seek to retain their influence over the process.¹⁹¹ These constituency associations could be viewed as influential ‘opinion leaders’ that cue the party’s supporters and make it difficult for the central, Parliamentary Party to ignore their views.¹⁹² Constituency associations, whose members tend to be more Eurosceptic than the Parliamentary Party, will clearly attempt to nominate candidates who share their members’ opinions. Peter Lilley, Conservative MP and former member of Thatcher’s and John Major’s Cabinets, stated clearly during interview that “an openly Europhile individual would find it difficult to be selected as a Conservative candidate” and that it would be “necessary to play down any ‘Europhilia’ by criticising certain EU policies”.¹⁹³ Lilley’s belief was shared by a number of his Conservative colleagues. Notably, John Howell spoke during interview of a “fear” among Conservative politicians of being labelled ‘Europhile’ or federalist. However, having a strong constituency majority meant Howell felt he could express his (albeit limited) support for European integration.¹⁹⁴ Flick Drummond referred to “pressure from Conservative Party members” causing candidates to adopt more Eurosceptic positions. Like Howell, she said that having a strong majority allowed her to assert her pro-EU stance in advance of her re-selection.¹⁹⁵ Further, according to Mark Pritchard, candidates’ positions on European integration became a greater feature of questioning in 2015 in advance of the 2016 referendum.¹⁹⁶ Labour MPs interviewed were less nuanced on the question of the influence of the Conservative candidate selection procedure on positions of party MPs, with Alan Meale MP stating that Euroscepticism was “a route [for Conservative candidates] to be selected for a seat”.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-395.

¹⁹² Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁹³ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone, 13 January 2016.

¹⁹⁴ John Howell, interview in person, 22 April 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Flick Drummond, interview by telephone, 26 February 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Mark Pritchard, interview in person, 26 January 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Alan Meale, interview in person, 12 October 2016.

All backbench Conservative MPs are members of the 1922 Committee, which meets weekly when Parliament is in session. This Committee has a number of elected officers, including a Chair, whose role it is to inform the party's leadership of backbench opinion.¹⁹⁸ The Chair of the 1922 Committee can therefore be a highly influential figure, especially where backbench opinion differs from that of the party leadership. That Conservative backbenchers organise in such a way boosts their influence over the party leadership.

As the leader of the Conservative Party has traditionally been in a position of strength, leadership contests have tended to be violent.¹⁹⁹ Once selected, the party leader continues to be in a precarious position due to the strength of backbench organisation and the increasing importance of membership opinion. A vote of no-confidence in the leader can be triggered when just 15 per cent of the party's MPs write to the Chair of the 1922 Committee, who schedules the vote in agreement with the party leader. Sir Desmond Swayne, Conservative MP and former Parliamentary Private Secretary from 2001 to Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Howard and David Cameron as leaders of the Opposition, and to Cameron as Prime Minister until 2012, stated during interview that "the odds are stacked against the leader" due to the party's leadership selection process.²⁰⁰ Until 1965, the party leader was chosen through a secretive process of consultation, and between 1965 and 1998 the leader was elected through a secret ballot of all Conservative MPs. In 1998, a two-stage process for selecting the party leader was introduced by which MPs first vote to select two candidates who are then presented to party members.²⁰¹ This system gives members of the Conservative Party a great deal of power and can result in potential leadership candidates playing to membership opinion.

The Parliamentary Conservative Party is a broad-church party that embraces views from across the right of the political spectrum, from one-nation conservatism to the advocacy of free markets and small government. The radical policy changes introduced during Thatcher's premiership were a source of divisions within the party between those who supported her liberal economic policies and those who advocated a return to a more caring conservatism. Thatcherites established the No Turning Back Group in 1985 to defend and, later, ensure the pursuit of this new radical ideology. For some Thatcherites, the pursuit of economic liberalism was incompatible with many of policies of the EC/EU. David Baker et al have shown that a

¹⁹⁸ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

¹⁹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰⁰ Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone, 24 May 2016.

²⁰¹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

'hyperglobalist' ideology has been a key driver of Euroscepticism in the Conservative Party.²⁰² As a result, the Europe issue, too, became a source of intra-party division. Alexandre-Collier highlights the links between Thatcherism and Euroscepticism, showing that the majority of Conservative MPs who opposed the ratification of the TEU being on the right of the party.²⁰³ This situation was reflected by the fact that most members of the No Turning Back Group joining the Eurosceptic Bruges Group upon its founding in 1989. Further Eurosceptic groups, the Fresh Start Group and the European Research Group, were established in 1992 and 1993 respectively. Although it can be difficult to silence dissidents in broad-church parties, efforts are made to preserve unity so as to retain an electoral advantage.²⁰⁴ As a result, Euroscepticism was indulged by the Conservative Party leadership and intra-party conflicts over European integration resulted in the party's official policy becoming increasingly Eurosceptic.²⁰⁵ There were nonetheless supporters of integration within the Parliamentary Party. Although most were Europragmatists, there were also some notable Euroenthusiasts.

Intra-party divisions over Europe were evident when respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether their own views on the EU were in keeping with the official position of their party. Just 7 per cent of Conservative respondents considered their views to be in keeping with the party's position (see Table 1.3). That such a small proportion of Conservative MPs considered their personal views to be in keeping with official party policy indicates the pressure the party leadership was under to develop an EU policy that would unite the party. The decision, in 2014, of Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless to leave the Conservative Party and join UKIP was symptomatic of this. Further, it should be remembered that the Parliamentary Party divided almost evenly at the 2016 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU. These ongoing divisions, despite the party's increasingly Eurosceptic policy, were a strategic problem. Where a party is deeply divided over the Europe issue, it sends confusing messages to the electorate resulting in increased variation in support for the EU among its supporters.²⁰⁶ Further, a divided party it is less able to attract EU issue voting and, in the case of the Conservative

²⁰² David Baker, Andrew Gamble and David Seawright, "Sovereign nations and global markets: Modern Conservatism and hyperglobalism", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2002.

²⁰³ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique", *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁰⁴ Daniel Gaxie, "What we Know and do not Know About Citizens' Attitudes Towards Europe", *op. cit.* p. 4.

²⁰⁵ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁶ Matthew Gabel and Kenneth Scheve, "Mixed Messages. Party Dissent and Mass Opinion on European Integration", *European Union Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2007, p. 54.

Party, benefit from public Euroscepticism.²⁰⁷ In fact, as has been seen, intra-party divisions serve to increase the bottom-up influence of a party's supporters on party elites.²⁰⁸

In contrast to the Conservative Party, the Labour Party existed as a mass movement before becoming a parliamentary force, giving the party on the ground the dominant voice.²⁰⁹ The party was established as a federation of amalgamated organizations, including individual constituency parties and trade unions, each of which made a financial contribution and enjoyed voting rights. These features created a tension between composite organizations, which tend to be more ideologically driven, and the parliamentary leadership, which is more focused on achieving power. After the Conservatives took office in 1979, a period of struggle ensued within the Labour Party, leading to changes in the party organization.²¹⁰

Like that of the Conservative Party, membership of the Labour Party peaked in 1952 and 1953 when the party counted over 1 million members. Thereafter, membership declined, and drastically so in the late 1970s.²¹¹ Through trade union membership, however, affiliation with the party peaked at 6.5 million at the end of the 1970s.²¹² Following an increase in the mid-1990s, party membership achieved levels similar to that of the Conservative Party and increased sharply from 2014 to reach approximately 550,000.²¹³ In contrast to Conservative Party members, less than half of Labour Party members are within the 60+ age group, and half live in the North, and the Midlands and Wales.²¹⁴ The lower average age of party members could have an impact on attitudes towards European integration as support for membership is higher among younger age groups. However, the geographical location of members is important as this factor correlates with higher levels of Euroscepticism. It should be noted that, as at 2017, 38 per cent of UKIP members lived in the North and the Midlands and Wales.²¹⁵ While UKIP initially drew the support of typically wealthy former Conservative voters, the anti-EU party later also attracted the support of working-class former Labour voters.²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ Catherin E. de Vries, "EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties' Electoral Fortunes", *op. cit.*

²⁰⁸ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

²⁰⁹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-308.

²¹¹ Lukas Audickas, Noel Dempsey, and Philip Loft, "Membership of UK Political Parties", *op. cit.*, pp. 7-10.

²¹² Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

²¹³ Lukas Audickas, Noel Dempsey and Philip Loft, "Membership of UK Political Parties", *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²¹⁶ Chris Bickerton, "Labour's lost working-class voters have gone for good", *The Guardian*, 19 December 2019 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/19/labour-working-class-voters-brexit>>.

Although constituency Labour parties play an important role in short-listing candidates for elections, the Labour Party exercises greater central control over candidate selection than does the Conservative Party. This allows the party's leadership to advance candidates whose views are in keeping with official party positions, including on European integration.²¹⁷ According to Labour MP, Paul Flynn, "the EU issue isn't borne in mind when selecting candidates".²¹⁸

Until 1981, the leader of the Labour Party was elected each year at the beginning of the parliamentary session. Since 1981, however, the leader has been elected annually by an electoral college composed of the Parliamentary Party, constituencies, and trade unions. Initially the vote of trade unions weighed more heavily than that of the others, which was of great importance given the strength of union membership by the end of the 1970s. However, the balance was reset in 1993 to give all three groups equal voting powers. This change had a fundamental impact on the ability of trade unions to influence party policy.²¹⁹ Aspiring party leaders must, therefore, please not only the more ideologically driven elements of the membership but also those more focused on gaining or retaining power.

The present-day Parliamentary Labour Party embraces a narrower range of views than does the Conservative Party, with most Labour MPs now occupying the centre-left ground. This stands in contrast to the deep divisions within the party in the 1970s and 80s, due in part to differing attitudes towards EC membership. Intra-party conflicts saw the party divided at the 1975 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EC and led to the defection of a number of sitting Labour MPs to establish the SDP in 1981. The ideological shift towards the centre from the late-1980s achieved its aim of returning the party to power. The party's political offer met the demand of the public, its 'client'.²²⁰ The move was therefore accepted by most on the left wing, leading to greater party unity. However, a small minority on the left-wing of the party never accepted the party's move towards the centre. This faction tended also to be more Eurosceptic, with some even opposing the UK's continued membership of the EU, considering it to be incompatible with their socialist aims. However, no influential Eurosceptic groups, of the sort seen in the Conservative Party, were created within the Labour Party.

The Labour Party's relative unity over the Europe issue was evident when respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether their own views on the EU were in keeping with the

²¹⁷ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-396.

²¹⁸ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

²¹⁹ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-308.

²²⁰ Emmanuelle Avril, *Du Labour au New Labour de Tony Blair. Le changement vu de l'intérieur*, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2007.

official position of their party. Fully 72 per cent of Labour respondents considered their views to be in keeping with the party's positions (see Table 1.3). Further, it should be recalled that only ten Labour MPs declared publicly their intention to vote in favour of the UK leaving the EU at the 2016 referendum. The relative absence of divisions over the Europe issue within the Labour Party from the mid-1990s meant, in theory, that it had a greater top-down ability to influence public opinion.²²¹

Table 1.3. UK MPs' views on EU compared to official party policy

Do you feel that your own views on the EU are in keeping with the official position of your party?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Conservative	7%	60%	33%
Labour	72%	6%	22%

1.2. Political culture and system, and political competition in France

In terms of political culture, political system, and party system, France displays a number of characteristics that appear to influence attitudes of politicians towards European integration and impact political competition. Only to a limited extent, however, do these characteristics foster competition around the Europe issue.

1.2.1. The political culture of France

Historicism is a key feature of French political culture, more so than in other major Western states. Much like the UK, France was a global power during the 19th century, exerting its power through a widespread empire. However, in contrast to the UK, this does not mean that a sense of national pride is associated with the past. Rather, the past is often a feature of contemporary political debates, and political divisions and allegiances are often based on interpretations of historical events and individuals.²²² A key example of such historicism based on the legacy of one individual can be found in Gaullism. De Gaulle is associated with a number of long-standing national ambitions that have been adopted across the political spectrum, including national unity, the maintenance of France's standing on the international stage, and the

²²¹ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

²²² David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *Contemporary France. An Introduction to French Politics and Society*, *op. cit.* pp. 2-4.

independence (especially vis-à-vis the USA) of its foreign and defence policy.²²³ That de Gaulle accepted European integration reluctantly, and on condition that intergovernmentalism prevail, has influenced the attitudes of future politicians towards European integration. Notably, critics of supranationalism frequently claim to uphold de Gaulle's legacy. This tendency to personalise politics also results in factions often being based on support for a particular leader.²²⁴

Although it achieved political stability after the UK, France is also an old democracy with strong institutions. As such, it could be expected that France, like the UK, would resist pressures for adaptation resulting from European integration.²²⁵ French institutions have certainly been heavily impacted by EC/EU membership and, where integration has taken a more supranational path, there has indeed been considerable resistance. It could also be expected that the perceived democratic deficit of the EU's institutions would have a greater impact on French attitudes towards integration.²²⁶ Over two-thirds of *députés* surveyed considered the EU's decision-making process to be not at all democratic or not democratic enough, a figure almost as high as among UK MPs. However, French politicians have tended to view European integration as a means of maintaining France's standing on the international stage, whereas many of their UK counterparts considered the process limited the UK's ambitions. As in the UK, France's relative political stability allowed for the pursuit of economic development. In contrast to the UK, however, the French state retained a central role in the management of the economy. Further, despite economic development, the agricultural sector continues to occupy an important position in the French economy. The tendency for *dirigisme* and the importance of the agricultural sector mean French economic practices and interests have tended to be more compatible with European integration than those of the UK.

The rise of nationalisms was viewed in France as a key cause of World War II. Nationalism was discredited as a result and, further, is considered incompatible with the French Republican ideology, which views all citizens as equal irrespective of any difference.²²⁷ In contrast to their UK counterparts, the vast majority of French politicians surveyed and/or interviewed considered European integration to have played a fundamental role in suppressing dangerous nationalisms and ensuring long-lasting peace in Europe. All respondents from the LR and PS parties believed France to have benefitted from European integration in terms of

²²³ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *Contemporary France. An Introduction to French Politics and Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²²⁵ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 814.

²²⁶ Robert Rohrschneider, *op. cit.*

²²⁷ Sophie Duchesne, "Identities, Nationalism, Citizenship and Republican Ideology", in Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 3*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005.

peace-building. France nonetheless has a well-established extremist political tradition, with parties from the full range of the political spectrum represented in the National Assembly. With the exception of the far-right *Rassemblement national*, extremist parties are considered to be Republican and their views regarded as a legitimate form of political expression. As such, Republican extremist parties, which have tended to be more critical of European integration than mainstream parties, are more able to influence attitudes.

Goldmann suggests national and European identities are more compatible in France than in the UK.²²⁸ Eurobarometer surveys carried out over the past 20 years show that French citizens are as attached to Europe and the EU as other EU citizens on average, and are therefore more attached than UK citizens. In Autumn 2015, 61 per cent of the French public felt fairly or very attached to Europe, compared to the EU average of 59 per cent and 50 per cent in the UK. Further, 55 per cent of the French public felt attached to the EU, compared to the EU average of 49 per cent and 40 per cent in the UK.²²⁹

As in the UK, French politicians are more attached to Europe than is the general public. Over 96 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire felt attached to Europe. More precisely, 72 per cent of politicians felt very attached to Europe and 25 per cent felt quite attached, levels of attachment far higher than among UK politicians. Those who felt (very) attached tended, like UK MPs, to point to shared values and history as the bases of this attachment, although they also mentioned common rights and duties. In contrast to the UK, where attachment was much higher among Labour MPs than among Conservatives, levels of attachment to Europe were high among both LR and PS *députés*, with all LR, and almost all PS, respondents feeling attached to Europe. The high level of ‘Europeanness’ of LR *députés* contrasts with the low levels among their centre-right counterparts in the UK Conservative Party.

Table 1.4. Levels of attachment to Europe among French *députés*

To what extent do you feel attached to Europe?

	Very attached	Attached	Little attachment	Not at all
<i>Les Républicains</i>	62%	38%	-	-
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	81%	15%	4%	-

²²⁸ Kjell Goldmann, “Internationalisation and the nation-state: Four issues and three non-issues”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 41, 2002, p. 296, cited in Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez, Jaroslaw Józef Górniak, Ankica Kovic, Paszkal Kiss and Maren Kandulla, “European and National Identities in EU’s Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components”, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²²⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83. European Citizenship*, *op. cit.*

During interview, a number of LR *députés* insisted upon their attachment to Europe and a sense of common identity and history, something which Conservative MPs did not do. For example, Damien Abad, LR leader in the National Assembly, insisted upon “*les valeurs communes et les problèmes communs*” of Europeans.²³⁰ Notable is that LR *députés* from the Grand-Est region often attributed their attachment to Europe to the World Wars and their impact on the region. Denis Jacquat, a *député* from the Moselle region, referred to “*le traumatisme de la guerre*” and the “*l’esprit européen, l’esprit de Robert Schuman*” of the city of Metz, within his constituency.²³¹ Frédéric Reiss, *député* from the Bas-Rhin region, noted that it was thanks to European integration that “*les pays qui étaient autrefois ennemis sont maintenant amis.*”²³² This prevalent sense of ‘Europeanness’ among French politicians plays an important role in constructing an inclusive national identity, conducive to public support for European integration.²³³ As with the general public, the results of the questionnaire show a link between politicians’ attachment to Europe and their support for integration. Almost 75 per cent of respondents who felt attached or very attached to Europe rated their overall support for France’s membership of the EU at 10 out of 10, and over 95 per cent rated their support at 8 out of 10 or more. These high levels of support for membership were present among both LR and PS respondents. That the politicians of the two main parties feel attached to Europe and support integration is important in terms of cueing the public towards a more inclusive national identity, compatible with a sense of European identity.

1.2.2. *The political system of France*

France has a written constitution and the legal system is a codified, civil law system. As such, the French constitution and legal system are similar to the treaty-based, codified system of the EU. The French political system is majoritarian, although not to the same extent as that of the UK. On the horizontal, executive-parties dimension, the system is characterised by a strong executive, a relatively low number of effective political parties, and a highly disproportionate electoral system.²³⁴ France is one of the few EU member states to have a semi-presidential, dual executive system, established by the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. Executive power is thus shared by the President and the government, headed by the Prime Minister. Disagreement at

²³⁰ Damien Abad, interview in person, 19 April 2016.

²³¹ Denis Jacquat, interview by telephone, 26 April 2016.

²³² Frédéric Reiss, interview in person, 20 April 2016.

²³³ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration”, *op. cit.*

²³⁴ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p.804.

the top of the executive over competences and policy can arise, and the potential for such discord increases where the President and the Prime Minister are not of the same political party.²³⁵ However, the Constitutional reform of 2000, which reduced the Presidential term from seven to five years, lessened the likelihood of cohabitation and made it more probable that the President will enjoy the support of a majority of the National Assembly for the duration of his or her term.²³⁶ The increased likelihood of support reinforces the majoritarian characteristics of the French political system by strengthening the executive. Contrary to what might be expected in a majoritarian political system, governments are not always single-party and, in fact, coalitions are more common.²³⁷ A degree of compromise, at least within the executive, is therefore necessary and brings the French political system slightly closer to that of the EU and a number of other member states.

France's bicameral Parliament comprises a directly-elected 577-member lower house, the National Assembly, and a 348-member upper house, the Senate, composed of indirectly elected representatives of local and regional authorities. For the purposes of this thesis, the focus will be the National Assembly and its directly-elected members, *députés*. A *député* can hold more than one elected mandate and, as at 2012, 76 per cent of *députés* exercised at least one other mandate.²³⁸ This double territorial link could serve to strengthen ties between a politician and their constituents.²³⁹ There is consensus among academics, journalists, and politicians that the French Parliament is a relatively weak institution. Its role in the policy-making process and in controlling the government is limited.²⁴⁰ Parliamentary committees are also weaker than those of most other Western European states.²⁴¹ Notably, the National Assembly is far less powerful than the House of Commons. Neither is it considered to be a forum of national debate as is the UK Parliament. There is, however, an entrenched adversarial political culture within the National Assembly, typical of majoritarian political systems, that fosters inter-party competition.

²³⁵ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

²³⁶ Robert Elgie, "The French Presidency", in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2013, pp. 20-21.

²³⁷ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *France in the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1998, p. 46.

²³⁸ Sylvain Brouard, Olivier Costa and Eric Kerrouche, "The 'New' French Parliament: Changes and Continuities", in Cole, Alistair, Meunier, Sophie, Tiberj, Vincent (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

²³⁹ Limits to the number and type of mandates held were introduced in 2014 and, since, a *député* or *senateur* cannot concurrently exercise a local executive mandate, such as mayor or (vice-) president of a departmental or regional council. A Parliamentarian can, however, be a municipal, departmental or regional councillor <<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-elections-en-France/Le-cumul-des-mandats-electoraux>>.

²⁴⁰ Sylvain Brouard, Olivier Costa and Eric Kerrouche, "The 'New' French Parliament: Changes and Continuities", *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁴¹ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

On the vertical, federal-unitary dimension the French political system displays majoritarian characteristics. In particular, France has a unitary and centralized government.²⁴² However, France, unlike the UK, does not stand out among EU member states in terms of the vertical distribution of powers.

Both Presidential and legislative elections take place every five years.²⁴³ The second ballot electoral system, used for both elections, is classed as highly disproportionate using the Gallagher index, even more so than the UK's first-past-the-post electoral system.²⁴⁴ It is, therefore, quite rare that a candidate from a marginal party wins a place in the second round of elections, especially Presidential elections. The legislative elections of 1986 were an exception as a proportional representation electoral system was introduced, for those elections only, resulting in the election of 35 *députés* of the *Front national* to the National Assembly.²⁴⁵ Despite the unlikelihood of candidates from marginal parties being elected, the campaign for the first round of elections provides a public platform for parties from across the political spectrum. The electoral support enjoyed by certain marginal parties at the first round allows them to influence policy despite their weak presence in Parliament. Notwithstanding the use of a highly disproportionate electoral system, a slightly higher number of effective parties have been present in the National Assembly than in the House of Commons, meaning a wider range of political viewpoints has been represented.²⁴⁶ Nonetheless, French politics was dominated, until 2017, by the RPR-UMP-LR and the PS. In contrast to Presidential and legislative elections, a proportional electoral system is used for European Parliament elections, which has been the case since the introduction of direct elections in 1979. As a result, and as in the UK, a greater number of French parties, including small and marginal parties, hold seats in the European Parliament, giving them the opportunity to present their EU policy.

Voter turnout at French Presidential and legislative elections is relatively high compared to other EU member states, including the UK, which suggests a greater interest among the French public in politics. Turnout at Presidential elections since 1965 has averaged 80.43 per cent and at legislative elections since 1958 the average turnout has been 69.91 per cent.²⁴⁷

²⁴² Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 805, 809.

²⁴³ Since the introduction of the five-year Presidential term in 2002, legislative elections take place shortly after the Presidential elections, giving the sense that the second elections merely confirm the result of the first.

²⁴⁴ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 804.

²⁴⁵ Assemblée nationale, "Les résultats des élections législatives du 16 mars 1986" <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/leg5repnew.asp>>.

²⁴⁶ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 804.

²⁴⁷ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections présidentielles", *France Politique* <<http://www.france-politique.fr/elections-presidentielles.htm>>; Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections législatives", *France Politique* <<http://www.france-politique.fr/elections-legislatives.htm>>.

Nonetheless, since the 1980s and 1990s there has been a decline in voter turnout, especially at legislative elections. Concurrent with the decline in turnout, there has been an increase in support for smaller mainstream or marginal parties. The fragmentation of the vote was fostered by the introduction of proportional representation for the 1986 elections. However, the return to the two-ballot electoral system in 1988 did not reverse the trend of increasing support for smaller parties.²⁴⁸ This trend reflects the situation in the UK, where support for the two main parties has also declined. As in the UK, therefore, this fall in support could be expected to reduce the ‘top down’ influence of the RPR-UMP-LR and PS over their supporters. Further, growing popular support for smaller parties could be expected to have an impact on the political offer of these parties.

As in other member states, and in keeping with the second-order election theory, turnout at European Parliament elections is lower than at Presidential and legislative elections and has consistently been below the EU average since direct elections were introduced in 1979. Also, as in most member states, turnout has declined at almost every election, reaching a low of 40.63 per cent in 2009 before rising slightly in 2014.²⁴⁹ Nonetheless, turnout of the French electorate at European Parliament elections has never fallen as low as in the UK.

The French Constitution provides for the holding of referenda. Apart from that to adopt the Constitution of the 5th Republic, nine referenda have been held, three of which related to European integration. Turnout at the 1972 referendum on the enlargement of the EC, was 60.2 per cent,²⁵⁰ considerably lower than at the previous Presidential and legislative elections. Unlike the UK, France has held referenda on treaty-ratification. Turnout at the referendum on the Treaty on European Union in 1992 was 69.7 per cent,²⁵¹ some 15 points below the second round of the previous Presidential elections but similar to the previous legislative elections. Turnout at the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 was 69.37 per cent,²⁵² around 10 points below the second round of the previous Presidential elections but higher than the previous legislative elections. The holding of referenda increases the interaction between politicians and the public, and especially the bottom-up influence of public opinion on the positioning of

²⁴⁸ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

²⁴⁹ European Parliament, “Results of the 2014 European elections” <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html>>.

²⁵⁰ Le Conseil Constitutionnel, “Tableau récapitulatif des référendums de la Vème République” <<https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/referendum-sous-la-ve-republique/tableau-recapitulatif-des-referendums-de-la-ve-republique>>.

²⁵¹ *Idem.*

²⁵² *Idem.*

politicians.²⁵³ This phenomenon of increased mass-elite interaction, and a concurrent increase in Eurosceptic positioning among politicians, could be observed around the time of the referenda of 1992 and 2005. Yet, the bottom-up influence of French public opinion on the positions of French *députés* during these referendum periods appears to have been less than that of UK public opinion on UK MPs in advance of the 2016 referendum.

1.2.3. *The French party system*

Until 2017, the RPR-UMP-LR and the PS held the majority of seats in the National Assembly. The dominance of these two most established parties was, however, never as great as that of the Conservative and Labour Parties in the UK. Despite the use of a highly majoritarian electoral system, a number of smaller mainstream parties and even some marginal parties have quite consistently held seats in the French Parliament. Nonetheless, there are relatively few relevant political parties in the National Assembly. Applying Sartori's method to the French party system, for the period under study in the coming chapters, the RPR-UMP-LR, the PS, and the *Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF) should be considered relevant. So, too, should the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) prior to the mid-1980s as it enjoyed strong popular support and participated in PS-led governments. Like UKIP, the *Front national* (FN) should be considered as relevant from the early 1990s due to its 'blackmail potential'. While other parties have, at various points, held a considerable proportion of the seats in the National Assembly and might have participated in a governing majority, their relevance has been short-lived and they have not succeeded in influencing the policy of the major parties. A brief overview of the ideology and strategy of these relevant parties is provided below, including a cursory first look at each parties' position on European integration.

Today's LR political party can trace its origins to the *Rassemblement du peuple français* (RPF), founded by Charles de Gaulle in 1947. The RPF was relaunched as the *Union pour la nouvelle République* (UNR) in 1958 and again as the *Union des démocrates pour la République* (UDR) in 1968 by Georges Pompidou in support of de Gaulle's presidency. Jacques Chirac assumed the leadership of the UDR following Pompidou's death and re-established the party as the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) in 1976. Members of the RPR, along with many members of the UDF, founded the *Union pour la majorité présidentielle* in 2002. This group subsequently became the *Union pour le mouvement populaire* (UMP). The UMP was an attempt to regroup the various political forces on the centre-right, something of an umbrella

²⁵³ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

group. However, the UDF left the UMP in 2007 to found a new, independent party. The UMP was relaunched by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2015 as *Les Républicains*.²⁵⁴

The LR is a mainstream, centre-right party. Like its precursors, it is very much an office-seeking party and could be considered the most established party of the 5th Republic. Since 1959, four of the eight Presidents (de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, Jacques Chirac, and Nicolas Sarkozy) have been of the UNR and its successors, and Gaullist Prime Ministers have been in office for more than half of the duration of the 5th Republic. In terms of ideology and strategy, the LR and its predecessors have much in common with the UK's Conservative Party. The party tends towards social conservatism and, although 'Christian democracy' has been far less successful in the French right than in other European states, small Christian parties, such as the *Parti chrétien-démocrate*, came under the UMP umbrella.²⁵⁵

The LR could be described as moderately Euroenthusiast, having supported for the most part both the process and outcomes of European integration, albeit with limited zeal. True to the values and principles of de Gaulle, who initially opposed the founding of the European Communities, the party is firmly attached to the principle of national sovereignty. This has resulted, at times, in intra-party divisions over the Europe issue. There is, however, full recognition of the need for international and European cooperation to best ensure French interests.²⁵⁶ A strong consensus exists within the LR in support of French membership of the EU, with all respondents to the questionnaire rating their support at 7 out of 10 or more, and over 70 per cent of the respondents rating their support at 10 out of 10. It is clear that, despite their ideological and strategic similarities, LR and Conservative politicians take quite different views of their state's membership of the EU. LR MEPs sit in the centre-right, Europhile EPP political group of the European Parliament, which Conservative MEPs left in 2009 to establish the Eurosceptic ECR group.

The PS, founded in 1969, succeeded the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (SFIO), founded in 1905. François Mitterrand, who assumed the leadership of the party in 1971 and served as President from 1981 to 1995, is the party's prominent figure. The PS is a mainstream party on the left and centre-left, and is very much an established, office-seeking party. The party has had two Presidents (Mitterrand and François Hollande), and the

²⁵⁴ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

²⁵⁵ Florence Haegel, "Political Parties: The UMP and the Right", in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁵⁶ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *France in the European Union*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-88.

government has been led by a PS Prime Minister for approximately twenty years during the 5th Republic. In terms of ideology and strategy, the PS is similar to the UK's Labour Party.²⁵⁷

The PS is historically internationalist and could be described as Euroenthusiast. However, its support for the outcomes of European integration are not as entrenched as its support for the process per se, which has resulted, at times, in divisions within the party over the Europe issue.²⁵⁸ Nonetheless, a very strong consensus exists within the party in support of French membership of the EU, with almost all respondents to the questionnaire rating their support at 9 out of 10 or more. It can be seen that the views of PS *députés* on their state's membership of the EU are very similar to those of Labour MPs. PS MEPs sit in the centre-left, Europhile PASD political group of the European Parliament alongside UK Labour MEPs.

The UDF was established in 1978 in support of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's presidency.²⁵⁹ Giscard d'Estaing had sat within de Gaulle's UNR before leaving in 1966. The UDF was a confederation of small parties of the centre and non-Gaullist right. In terms of ideology, there are certain similarities between the UDF and the UK's Liberal Democrats. Having formed electoral alliances with the RPR at national elections throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the UDF lost many of its members to the UMP upon its establishment in 2002. The UDF continued to exist, until 2007, although it experienced important divisions.²⁶⁰ The UDF was an established, office-seeking party. Although Giscard d'Estaing was the UDF's only President, the party's candidate reached the second round of Presidential elections on two other occasions. Further, the UDF led or participated in several governments with the RPR and UMP. The UDF also formed alliances with the RPR at European Parliament elections during the 1980s and 1990s.²⁶¹ This was, however, an electoral strategy as the UDF was more instinctively internationalist than its partner, and could be considered firmly Euroenthusiast. This is not to say, however, that some divisions did not exist within the UDF on the Europe issue. These divisions were reflected by the fact that, not all UDF MEPs sat in the centrist, vocally Europhile ALDE political group of the European Parliament.

A division in the socialist movement at the Tours Congress in 1920 resulted in the emergence of the PCF.²⁶² The PCF was the largest party on the left from the end of World War II until the mid-1970s, after which it lost much support to the PS. A non-mainstream party on

²⁵⁷ Eric Agrikoliansky, *Les partis politiques en France*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2015, pp. 73-77.

²⁵⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-93.

²⁵⁹ Eric Agrikoliansky, *Les partis politiques en France*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

²⁶⁰ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

²⁶¹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²⁶² Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *Les partis politiques. La vie politique française*, Chronique sociale, Lyon, 2014, p. 143.

the far-left, the PCF retained its relevance in the early 1980s as a junior partner in the PS-led government.²⁶³ Although it is an internationalist party, the PCF is highly critical of European integration; it opposed the establishment of the European Communities and has campaigned against treaty ratification. Criticism focuses principally on social issues, but the party also expresses concerns over transfers of national sovereignty.²⁶⁴ As a result, the PCF could be considered strongly Eurosceptic, showing elements of support for the process of integration but being highly critical of many of its outcomes. The PCF's criticisms of European integration reflect those of Eurosceptics in the Labour Party prior to the mid-1980s. PCF MEPs sit in the far-left, Eurosceptic United European Left-Nordic Green Left political group of the European Parliament.

The FN was founded in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen by bringing together very diverse parties on the extreme right.²⁶⁵ Although the party is firmly on the far-right, the FN has been successful in attracting the support of voters on both the right and the left.²⁶⁶ Further, despite being an anti-establishment party, the FN is an office-seeking, as well as a vote-seeking party. Popular support for the party, at both legislative and Presidential elections, has increased quite consistently since its founding. The disproportionate electoral system in place has limited the number of seats held by the Party in the National Assembly. However, on two occasions the party's candidate – Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2002 and Marine Le Pen, the former's daughter, in 2017 – has reached the second round of Presidential elections. The FN split in 2018 leading to the creation of its successor party, the *Rassemblement national* (RN). In terms of ideology and strategy, the FN bears some similarities to the UK's UKIP. In particular, both the parties have enjoyed an increase in popular support without that support being translated into seats in the national parliament.

Although in earlier years Jean-Marie Le Pen sought to demonstrate his Europeanism,²⁶⁷ the party's position evolved to become critical of both the process and outcomes of European integration. In 2002, the FN called for an in-out referendum on French EU membership,²⁶⁸ and in the wake of the UK's in-out referendum in June 2016, Marine Le Pen celebrated the result

²⁶³ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

²⁶⁴ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

²⁶⁵ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

²⁶⁶ Jacques Lagroye with Bastien François and Frédéric Sawicki, *Sociologie politique*, Presses de Sciences Po et Dalloz, Paris, 2002, pp. 270-271.

²⁶⁷ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, "Defending the Nation: The Politics of Euroscepticism on the French Right", in Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (eds.), *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

and called for a similar vote in France.²⁶⁹ The EU has given the party an important platform on which to draw attention and distinguish itself from its more Europhile, established rivals. However, in advance of the second round of the 2017 Presidential elections, inconsistencies in the FN's EU policy were evident, contributing to the subsequent split in the party and the founding of RN. Having tended to sit as Independents in the European Parliament, FN MEPs founded the Europe of Nations political group in 2015, which was succeeded by the Identity and Democracy group in 2019. FN MEPs did not sit alongside those of UKIP, reflecting differences in the bases of the parties' Euroscepticism.

1.2.4. *Internal party organisation: the Gaullist parties and the Parti socialiste*

The LR is the latest incarnation of the party founded by de Gaulle in the post-war years. With each re-founding, the internal organisation of the party has changed. As with the UK Conservative Party, a mass party was established after the Parliamentary party meaning that the leadership established dominance over internal organisation. It was not until the founding of the RPR in 1976, with 285,000 members joining in the first year, that the party could be considered a mass, popular party. Membership declined thereafter, although with the creation of the UMP in 2002, efforts were made to simplify and reduce the cost of membership, and increase the role of members.²⁷⁰ Nonetheless, membership never achieved the levels of the UK Conservative Party. Like the Conservative Party's membership, party members tend to be older,²⁷¹ meaning they could be disposed to Euroscepticism.

As in the UK, membership of a party is a key step towards election to the National Assembly. The vast majority of politicians begin their career as members of a political party. However, local election as an independent candidate or gaining the support of an influential mentor, before joining a party, are common routes to achieving a national mandate.²⁷² Where the RPR-UMP-LR is concerned, the selection of candidates is a highly centralised process, with the party's leadership suggesting and validating candidates. Although, according to internal rules, party members can be consulted during the selection process, this remains a mere

²⁶⁹ Olivier Faye, "Marie Le Pen exulte et réclame un 'Frexit'", *Le Monde*, 24 June 2016 <https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/06/24/marine-le-pen-exulte-et-reclame-un-frexit_4957154_823448.html>.

²⁷⁰ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-105.

²⁷¹ Richard Nadeau, Eric Bélanger, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Bruno Cautrès and Martial Foucault, *Le vote des Français de Mitterrand à Sarkozy. 1988-1995-2002-2007*, Presse de Sciences Po, Paris, 2012, pp. 56, 65.

²⁷² Nicolas Hubé, "Le recrutement social des professionnels de la politique", in Antonin Cohen, Bernard Lacroix et Philippe Riutort (eds.), *Nouveau manuel de science politique, op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.

possibility.²⁷³ This centralisation of the candidate selection process differs from the Conservative Party's decentralised process, where constituency associations play an important role. Once selected, the practice is that candidates tend to be reselected.²⁷⁴ Again, this contrasts with the situation within the Conservative Party, where candidates are sometimes deselected by their constituency association.

Typically, competence alone is not enough to climb party ranks and balance must be struck between a range of factors, including appeasing factions and rivals. The centralised organisation of the Gaullists, and neo-Gaullists in particular, has meant that activism and loyalty to the leadership are key in rising through the party ranks.²⁷⁵ As a result, the turnover of party elites is relatively high.²⁷⁶ Also, having attended the elite *Ecole nationale d'administration* (ENA) seems to facilitate achieving positions of power, and the proportion of *énarques* in the government or serving as Cabinet civil servants is higher where Gaullists are in government.²⁷⁷ The frequent presence of *énarques* in positions of power is also relevant because the school recruits on merit and offers a standardised programme emphasising public service ideals.²⁷⁸ This perhaps contributes to the depoliticization of policy-making and the establishment of a consensus around the national interest.

Until 1998, the party leader was elected by party executives. Thereafter the leader was directly elected by members.²⁷⁹ As a result membership opinion must be taken into account to a greater extent by aspiring leaders. Until 2017, the party's candidate at Presidential elections tended to emerge by a process of natural selection.²⁸⁰ This served to reinforce competition to succeed the party leader, competition that was most marked following the death of Georges Pompidou and during the second Presidential mandate of Jacques Chirac.²⁸¹ The party opposed the holding of primaries to designate the Presidential candidate, and was highly critical of the PS for doing so, denouncing the media attention given to the process and going so far as to call

²⁷³ Laure Squarcioni, "Devenir candidat en France: règles et pratiques de selection au PS et à l'UMP pour les élections législatives", *Politiques et Sociétés*, vol. 36, no.2, 2017, pp. 22-23.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁷⁵ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-106.

²⁷⁶ Florence Haegel, "Political Parties: The UMP and the Right", *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²⁷⁷ Luc Rouban, "Les Enarques en Cabinets: 1984-1996", *Les Cahiers du CEVIPOF*, Sciences Po, no. 17, juin 1997 <http://www.cevipof.com/fichier/p_publication/453/publication_pdf_cahierducevipof17.pdf>.

²⁷⁸ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

²⁷⁹ Laurent de Boissieu, "Chronologie: Rassemblement pour la République", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/chronologie-rpr.htm>>.

²⁸⁰ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁸¹ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-106.

into question the legality of the election.²⁸² Nonetheless, in advance of the 2017 Presidential elections, the party organised its first primary to select its candidate, meaning the process became a more public affair.

A key theme of Gaullism is ‘*rassemblement*’ or the rallying of the people and, with that, the rejection of partisan divisions and factions.²⁸³ Divisions on the right have therefore been less prevalent than on the left, with groups on the right tending to be centred around an individual as opposed to around differing ideologies.²⁸⁴ However, following the defeat of Chirac at the 1988 Presidential elections, divisions within the RPR surfaced. Notably, there was a call by some for the party to return to its Gaullist roots. Divisions surfaced again in advance of the 1995 Presidential elections and following the 2012 defeat.²⁸⁵ Divisions over the Europe issue were revealed around the ratification, by referendum, of the Treaty on European Union in 1992, with some prominent Gaullists calling for a ‘no’ vote. Although these divisions subsided, they resurfaced, albeit to a lesser extent, around the ratification of the Amsterdam and Constitutional Treaties in 1997 and 2005 respectively, and at the 1999 European Parliament elections. Nonetheless, the party was united in calling for the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.

This relative unity among Gaullists could be seen when respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether their own views on the EU were in keeping with the official position of their party. Although only 52 per cent of respondents considered their views to be in keeping with the party’s positions, no respondents signalled their opposition to official party EU policy (see Table 1.5). It can be noted that divisions among Gaullists are periodic, which stands in contrast to the on-going divisions within the Conservative Party over EU policy. Further, Gaullist *députés* are far more supportive of official party policy than are their Conservative counterparts. As is typical of a rather broad-church party, the Gaullists have sought to silence dissidents and preserve unity. Where this has not been possible, however, dissidents have been externalised, as in the case of Charles Pasqua in 1999. This approach contrasts with that of the Conservative Party, which sought to integrate and appease opponents of official EU policy.

With the succession of the SFIO and the integration of a section of the *Parti socialiste unifié* (PSU), the PS brought together quite a wide range of views from across the left of the

²⁸² Rémi Lefebvre, “Les primaires à droite. Processus d’adoption et transformations du jeu partisan”, in Rémi Lefebvre and Eric Treille (eds.), *Les primaires ouvertes en France. Adoption, codification, mobilisation.*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2016.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁸⁴ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

²⁸⁵ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 105.

political spectrum. The internal tensions that characterise the PS are not so much strategic as a consequence of the sociological changes within the party since the election of François Mitterrand as President in 1981.²⁸⁶ In contrast to the Gaullist right, the organisational culture of the PS places its activists at the centre.²⁸⁷ However, over time, the representativeness and influence of party activists has declined.²⁸⁸

The launch of the PS saw the party's membership increase from 60,000 in 1970 to 150,000 on the eve of the 1981 Presidential elections. Membership fell to just 100,00 following the party's defeat at the 1993 legislative elections, before rising to around 200,000 in the 2010s. Over time, the PS has tended to have fewer members than the Gaullist parties. Further, elected representatives constitute around one-third of PS members. Unlike the UK's Labour Party, the PS does not have organic ties to unions. As a result of the PS' move towards the centre, ties with the working classes have diminished since the 1980s.²⁸⁹ This again mirrors the evolving relationship between the Labour Party and its traditional base. Again like the Labour Party, the PS tends to enjoy the support of younger voters, although the proportion of younger voters supporting the far-left has increased.²⁹⁰ The socio-economic and age characteristics of PS supporters could be expected to dispose them to support European integration.

In contrast to the centralised process of the Gaullist party, PS Party members are far more involved in the process of selecting Parliamentary candidates and great importance is attached to candidates' membership of the party. Although, once selected, PS candidates tend to be reselected, the process is not as automatic as for Gaullists.²⁹¹ It could therefore be expected that candidates hopeful of reselection will pay close attention to the views of party members. As such, the process of selecting PS candidates bears greater resemblance to that of the Conservative Party.

Having attended the ENA appears to be less of an advantage for those seeking to rise through the party's ranks than it is for ambitious Gaullists, as the proportion of *énarques* in the government or serving as Cabinet civil servants declines when the PS is in government.²⁹² The party leader, the First Secretary, was initially elected by the party's management committee,

²⁸⁶ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

²⁸⁷ Laure Squarcioni, "Devenir candidat en France: règles et pratiques de selection au PS et à l'UMP pour les élections législatives", *op. cit.*, p. 19.

²⁸⁸ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-77.

²⁸⁹ *Idem.*

²⁹⁰ Richard Nadeau, Eric Bélanger, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Bruno Cautrès and Martial Foucault, *Le vote des Français de Mitterrand à Sarkozy. 1988-1995-2002-2007*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

²⁹¹ Laure Squarcioni, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25.

²⁹² Luc Rouban, "Les Enarques en Cabinets: 1984-1996", *op. cit.*

giving an important role to PS federations.²⁹³ Since 1995, the First Secretary has been, in theory, elected by PS members, a system that, again, resembles that of the Conservative Party. However, as candidates are often unopposed, an election does not always occur. A primary has also been held, since 1995, to designate the party's candidate for Presidential elections. Initially limited to party members, an open primary, at which all electors could participate, was held in advance of the 2012 Presidential elections. This had the effect of reducing the power and influence of PS members and activists.²⁹⁴

Factions have tended to be more prevalent in the PS than in the Gaullist parties, and were specifically authorised post-1971.²⁹⁵ It is likely that appeasing factions and rivals has played a greater role in determining the distribution of high-ranking positions within the party. Intra-party divisions have often been based on loyalty to particular leaders, notably Lionel Jospin, Michel Rocard, Laurent Fabius, and Jean-Pierre Chevènement. Yet, at their root has been the question of the ideological positioning of the party, whether it should remain firmly on the left or adopt a more pragmatic, centrist position. A key skill of Mitterrand was his ability to successfully balance the various currents on the left and centre of the party. As Prime Minister from 1997-2002, Lionel Jospin was adept at balancing liberal and interventionist economic and social policies so as to please both party modernisers and more ideologically-driven party activists. After Jospin's defeat at the Presidential elections of 2002, the party's leftists and centrists competed for dominance.²⁹⁶ Divisions continued following the party's defeat at the Presidential elections of 2007, in particular over whether the PS should continue its traditional alliance with the PCF or move towards the centre.²⁹⁷ The party's move towards the centre caused the departure, in 2008, of a number of *députés* and members on the left-wing.²⁹⁸

European integration has also been a source of intra-party divisions, as some in the PS have had difficulty reconciling the market liberalisation introduced at the supranational level with the welfare state dear to socialists.²⁹⁹ This reflects the situation in the Labour Party prior to the mid-1980s. These divisions surfaced, albeit to a limited extent, around the ratification of the Treaty on European Union and contributed to a small faction leaving the PS. However, the

²⁹³ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁹⁴ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

²⁹⁵ Frédéric Sawicki, "Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left", in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

²⁹⁶ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁹⁷ Frédéric Sawicki, "Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left", *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁹⁸ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

²⁹⁹ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 63.

party divided deeply over the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, with a considerable proportion of the party's *députés* campaigning openly for a 'no' vote. Although these divisions over the Europe issue subsided somewhat following the ratification of the Treaty, they nonetheless remain present today. As with Gaullist respondents to the questionnaire, 52 per cent of PS respondents considered their personal opinions on European integration to be in keeping with the official position of their party, however 12 per cent of PS respondents consider their opinions are not in keeping (see Table 1.5). Divisions within the PS are less periodic, and more on-going, than within the Gaullist parties, although they tend only to manifest themselves at key junctures. A number of PS *députés* confirmed this during interview, with Régine Povéda claiming that "*le parti n'est pas guéri*,"³⁰⁰ and Christophe Premat confirming that "*un clivage demeure*".³⁰¹ However, despite these divisions, PS *députés* are more supportive of the party's official EU policy than are their Labour counterparts. While attempts have been made to silence dissidents, the PS, like the Gaullists, have externalised dissidents who refused to fall into line, such as Jean-Pierre Chevènement and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, which has undoubtedly served to boost party unity.

Table 1.5. French *députés*' views on EU compared to official official party policy

Do you feel that your own views on the EU are in keeping with the official position of your party?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
<i>Les Républicains</i>	52%	48%	-
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	52%	36%	12%

In analysing the key characteristics of the political culture, political system, and party system of the UK and France, this first sub-chapter has shown that in both states there are characteristics that could be expected to influence the attitudes of politicians towards European integration, impact political competition, and foster competition around the Europe issue. Both states are former global powers and old democracies. Both have political systems with highly majoritarian characteristics, although the UK Parliament is a more powerful institution than its French counterpart. Both state's party systems have historically been dominated by two mainstream, established parties on the centre-left and the centre-right. Support for these parties has declined in both the UK and France, while support for marginal parties with Euroscepticism

³⁰⁰ Régine Povéda, interview by telephone, 23 May 2016.

³⁰¹ Christophe Premat, interview by telephone, 27 June 2016.

has increased. Further, parties with ‘blackmail’ potential are present in both the UK and French party systems. However, the French tendency for dirigisme stands in contrast to UK’s light-touch regulatory approach. French national identity appears to be more compatible with a concurrent sense of European identity than is the British national identity, and the French public and politicians are more attached to Europe than their UK counterparts. Differences can also be observed in attitudes towards the role of integration in ensuring peace in Europe.

Similarities and differences can also be observed when comparing the dominant centre-right and centre-left parties of the UK and France. As regards ideology and strategy, there are similarities between the Conservative Party and the RPR-UMP-LR. Yet, these parties have quite different views on European integration. While both parties have experienced internal divisions over the Europe issue, divisions in the Gaullist parties have been periodic, at key junctures, whereas those within the Conservative Party were on-going from late 1980s. As to party organisation, both parties have experienced a decline in their membership and tend to enjoy the support of older voters. However, whereas the candidate and leadership selection processes of the Gaullist parties have been, for the most-part, centralised, the processes of the Conservative Party are decentralised, allowing a key role for constituency associations and members. The views of Conservative Party members, who tend to be more Eurosceptic, are therefore more likely to influence the positions of aspiring candidates and leaders. Similarities can also be observed in the ideologies and strategies of the Labour Party and the PS, and, notably, both parties have moved towards the ideological centre. Further, the parties have similar views on European integration. Both parties have experienced internal divisions over the Europe issue. However, whereas dissent within the Labour Party has been limited since the late 1980s, deep divisions within the PS have manifested themselves at key junctures. In terms of party organisation, like the parties on the centre-right, both Labour and PS have seen their membership decline and, more specifically, their ties with the working classes weaken. Whereas the Labour Party’s candidate and leadership processes are more centralised, the PS processes are decentralised, allowing an important role for the party’s membership.

The characteristics of the UK’s political culture, political system, and party system would appear to have a greater impact on attitudes towards, and political competition around, the Europe issue. The second part of the chapter will take this analysis further by studying the impact of Europeanization on political competition in the two states.

2. Europeanization and political competition

As was shown in the Introduction, European integration has a profound impact on member states and the national polity, notably domestic institutions, policies, and politics.³⁰² The scope and extent of change varies between member states. This variation is due to the degree of ‘misfit’ of the national polity with that of the EU,³⁰³ but also the reaction of politicians and the public to the change that integration entails.³⁰⁴

The following sections present and analyse the consequences of European integration for the domestic institutions, policies, and politics, including public opinion, of the UK and France and seek to account for the variations in impacts and responses. Similarities and differences in the consequences of membership for the UK and France are highlighted.

2.1. *Europeanization and political competition in the UK*

The UK experienced partial Europeanization as a result of its membership of the EU. Old, established democracies like the UK tend to be more resistant to change³⁰⁵ and where a member state is proud of its political history it will seek to maintain it.³⁰⁶ However, the considerable misfit between the UK’s majoritarian, uncodified system of governance and its liberalised economic system and the EU’s more consensual, codified system and more regulated economic system meant pressures on the UK to adapt were great.³⁰⁷ It is, therefore, surely unsurprising that the UK’s politicians and public reacted so strongly to the state’s EU membership.

2.1.1. *Europeanization of UK institutions and policies*

The UK government, alongside those of the other member states, became part of a system of collective governance. As for all member states, this entailed a pooling or loss of sovereignty. It also resulted in a strengthening of the executive relative to the other branches of domestic power, a reinforcing of the power of the Prime Minister within the executive, and an increase in the number and workload of government departments involved in EC/EU policy-making.³⁰⁸

³⁰² Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France”, *op. cit.*; Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

³⁰³ Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, *op. cit.*

³⁰⁴ Tanja A. Börzel, *op. cit.*; Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, *op. cit.*

³⁰⁵ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 814.

³⁰⁶ Johan P. Olsen, “The Many Faces of Europeanization”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2002, p. 934.

³⁰⁷ Simon Bulmer and Martin Burch, “The Europeanization of the UK Government: From Quiet Revolution to Explicit Step-Change?”, *op. cit.*

³⁰⁸ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

However, the impact of EU membership on the UK's executive differed somewhat from the norm. Although the role of the UK Foreign Minister declined relative to that of the Prime Minister, European integration gave the Foreign Office a boost following decolonisation.³⁰⁹ Also, successive Foreign Secretaries managed to resist the creation of a separate Ministry for Europe and the elevation of the Minister for Europe to the Cabinet, and thus retained a greater degree of influence over the government's EC/EU policy.³¹⁰ That the UK did not adopt the single currency meant that the Treasury was less Europeanized than many other government departments and, in fact, a certain institutional Euroscepticism could be noted within the department.³¹¹ Variations in the extent of the Europeanization of government departments could have resulted in coordination difficulties. However, in the case of the UK executive, adaptation was facilitated by its centralized coordination system, led by the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office.³¹² The coordination of EC/EU policy was also facilitated by the fact that single party governments are the norm in the UK, lessening the need for inter-departmental negotiation and compromise. Yet, this majoritarian characteristic of the executive also impeded the UK's adaption to membership. The culture of compromise that can be observed in the executives of member states with more consensual political systems, and in the institutions of the EC/EU themselves, is not a feature of the UK's system.

The UK Parliament adapted to EC/EU membership with greater difficulty than the executive.³¹³ Like other member state legislatures, Parliament saw some of its legislative powers transferred to the European Parliament and also experienced a decline in its powers relative to the national executive. Yet, as a strong legislature, the absolute and relative loss of power was greater for the UK Parliament. The impact on Parliament was compounded by the importance of the principle of parliamentary sovereignty to the UK constitution, which conflicted with the principle of the supremacy of EC/EU Law,³¹⁴ and the longevity of the UK's parliamentary system.³¹⁵ Further, the UK legislature differs from that of the EU both functionally and culturally. At a functional level, the UK Parliament is less institutionalised, which affected its ability to deal with the more technical legislation produced by the EU.

³⁰⁹ Andrew Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004, p. 164.

³¹⁰ David Allen, "The United Kingdom: A Europeanized Government in a non-Europeanized Polity", in Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (eds.), *The Member States of the European Union*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

³¹¹ Andrew Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

³¹² Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

³¹³ David Allen, "The United Kingdom: A Europeanized Government in a non-Europeanized Polity", *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³¹⁴ Troels B. Hansen and Bruno Scholl, "Europeanization and Domestic Parliamentary Adaptation: A Comparative Analysis of the Bundestag and the House of Commons", *European Integration On-line Papers*, vol. 6, vol. 15, 2002.

³¹⁵ Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 814.

Although it became more institutionalised, with a number of permanent committees being established, including one in each House to scrutinise EU legislation, UK politicians tend to be elected on their ability to communicate with their constituents rather than on their level of expertise and suitability for work in specialist committees. Culturally, too, the UK legislature differs from that of the EU as, while the EU policy-making process is characterised by a culture of consensualism, the UK's political culture is adversarial. Not only did this cultural difference add to the misfit of the UK's political system with that of the EU, it also meant that, at times, political divisions affected Parliament's ability to effectively scrutinise EU legislation.³¹⁶ Further, this cultural difference was accentuated by the fact that a number of other EU member states have more consensual political systems, meaning, for them, the power-sharing which integration entails perhaps presents less of a 'culture shock'.

As for all member states, EU membership established a new legal order for the UK. With no written constitution and a common law legal system, it could be expected that the UK legal system would have difficulty adapting to the EU's codified, civil law-based legal system. This expectation could be further justified by the fact that the UK was the only EU member state not to have a written constitution, and one of only two – with Ireland – to have a common law legal system. However, despite these fundamental differences, the UK legal system seemed to experience little trouble in adapting, with UK judges requesting preliminary rulings by the European Court of Justice and government ministers accepting the judgements of this court.³¹⁷ Yet it was perhaps not the judiciary, but rather political (and economic) elites, that we could expect to have most difficulty adapting to the EU's codified and civil law system as the UK's common law legal system is appreciated by many in the UK for its flexibility and greater adaptability to the circumstances of the day.

Like UK institutions, national policies were impacted by EC/EU membership. A key factor in determining the extent to which national policies are Europeanized is the member state's economic system. Member states with an economic system that differs considerably from that of the EU's more regulated model will experience the most pressure for adaptation. UK governments have tended towards a 'light-touch' approach to regulation and, in some instances, deregulation has been preferred. While the services sector is dominant in most EU member states, it is a particularly strong component of the UK's economy. Within this, the financial services sector is of great importance. The manufacturing sector is of less importance

³¹⁶ Troels B. Hansen and Bruno Scholl, "Europeanization and Domestic Parliamentary Adaptation: A Comparative Analysis of the Bundestag and the House of Commons", *op. cit.*

³¹⁷ David Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

as a proportion of the UK's GDP and the agricultural sector has, historically, been very weak in terms of economic output. While the continental European states have long been key trading partners of the UK, intra-EC/EU trade was less important to the UK than it is to other member states. In 2016, just 43 per cent of UK exports in goods and services went to EU states.³¹⁸ In terms of government spending, expenditure in the UK is less than in the majority of EU member states.³¹⁹ Further, inequality of income in the UK is also higher than in the majority of EU member states.³²⁰ The UK's economic system, and the role of the state therein, therefore differs considerably from that of the EU and many of its member states, and, as a result, European integration had a considerable impact on national policies.

The European Commission monitors member states' application of EU law and, where a state is not fulfilling its obligations, the former can launch infringement proceedings. Despite the difficulties the UK experienced in adapting to EU policies, the UK had a relatively low number of infringement proceedings brought against it. In 2015, 48 cases were underway, most of which concerned incorrect transposition and/or application as opposed to late transposition. This number was relatively low compared to many other member states.³²¹

2.1.2. *Europeanization of UK politics*

Just as European integration brought about change to UK institutions and policies, it had an impact on national politics. As in other member states, as the scope, depth, and salience of integration increased, UK parties and individual politicians were forced to position themselves on questions relating to integration.³²² As in certain other member states, these positions revealed divisions both between and within parties. However, in the UK, opposition was not reserved to marginal parties and neither was opposition periodic. UK politics really did resist Europeanization.³²³ Also, as the public became more aware, if not more understanding, of integration, public opinion came to bear considerable influence.

³¹⁸ Office for National Statistics, "Who does the UK trade with?" <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/internationaltrade/articles/whodoestheuktradewith/2017-02-21>>.

³¹⁹ OECD, "General government spending" <<https://data.oecd.org/gga/general-government-spending.htm>>.

³²⁰ OECD, "Income redistribution across OECD countries" <<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/3b63e61c-en.pdf?expires=1595156019&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=6D3BAD82687BE2EAAFD138BD0A55C585>>.

³²¹ European Commission, "Monitoring the Application of European Union Law. Annual Report 2015" <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/EU28_factsheet_2015_en_0.pdf>.

³²² Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization and Political Parties: Towards a Framework for Analysis", *Party Politics*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2002; Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

³²³ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*

Throughout member states, European integration has increased in salience since the 1970s. This is shown by a noticeable increase in the number of integration-related statements in national newspapers during election campaigns. In a study of six EU member states, Kriesi shows that the salience of the European integration varied between states, and that the increase in salience was greatest in the most Eurosceptic states, such as the UK, where Europe became a key electoral issue. However, while the salience of European integration increased considerably in the UK between the 1970s and 1990s, the number of integration-related statements was not particularly high. Further, the greatest increase in salience in the member states studied was among conservatives and the new populist right. The UK Conservative Party is a key example of such a conservative party for whom the salience of the European integration issue has increased markedly. In the 1990s one in seven issue-specific statements by the Conservative Party related to Europe.³²⁴ From the early 1990s, the salience of the Europe issue only increased. European integration increased in salience also in terms of the amount of time MPs spent discussing the issue, which constituted an increase in their workload. The majority (55 per cent) of respondents to the questionnaire felt that EU issues were discussed ‘quite often’. A difference can be noted between the perceptions of Conservative and Labour MPs as to the value of the time spent. While 47 per cent of Conservative respondents believed too little time was spent discussing EU issues, 29 per cent of Labour respondents felt this way. Labour MP, Paul Flynn, made a revealing comment on the matter: “There’s not a lot of interest in EU issues, and Eurobores can quickly empty the Chamber”.³²⁵ A more marked difference in perceptions of Parliamentary debate on EU issues could be seen where MPs were asked to comment on the quality of debate. Whereas 67 per cent of Conservative respondents considered debate to be of *good* quality, 83 per cent of Labour respondents considered it to be of *bad* quality.

In the first part of this chapter, we saw that a wide range of attitudes towards European integration were represented in the UK Parliament and, further, Eurosceptic positions were not reserved to a small minority of politicians. Given that two established, mainstream parties have long held the vast majority of seats, it could be considered surprising that Euroscepticism was so present in Parliament. For some time, the Conservative Party was the only established mainstream party in the EU to be classed as Eurosceptic. Also, it should not be forgotten that the Labour Party, for a time, opposed membership of the EC.³²⁶ Whereas, on the whole, the Conservative Party became increasingly critical of the process of European integration and its

³²⁴ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-16.

³²⁵ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

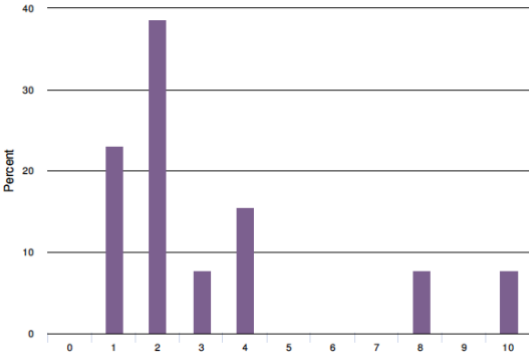
³²⁶ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*, p. 854.

outcomes from the mid-1980s, the Labour Party became more supportive. Positions evolved so that, by 2015/16, over 80 per cent of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire rated their support for the UK’s membership of the EU at 4 out of 10 or less, whereas approximately 80 per cent of Labour respondents rated their support at 8 out of 10 or more (see Figure 1.1). Further, almost 80 per cent of Conservative respondents evaluated the benefits for the UK of EU membership at 4 out of 10 or less, whereas approximately 85 per cent of Labour respondents evaluated the benefits for the UK of EU membership at 7 out of 10 or more (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1. Support for EU membership among UK MPs

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall support for the UK’s membership of the EU?

Conservative MPs



Labour MPs

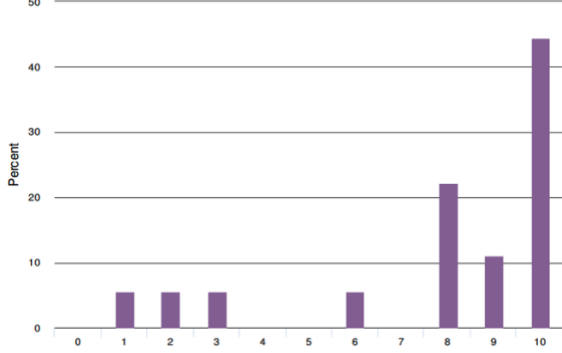
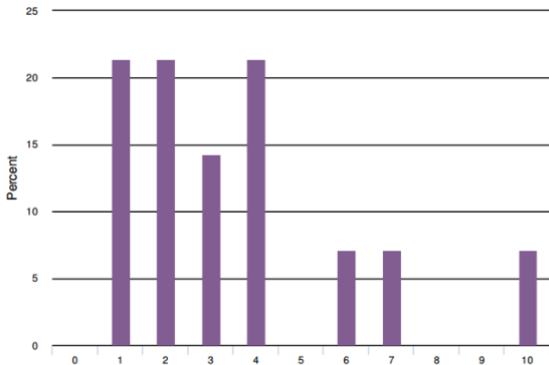


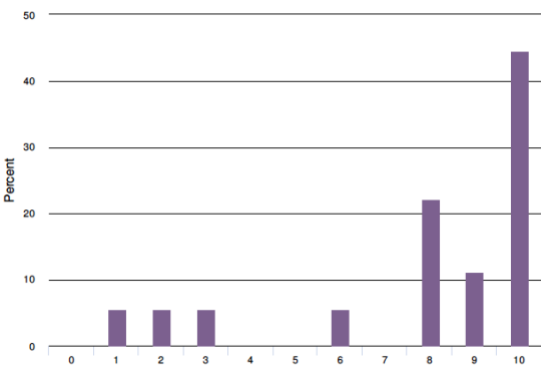
Figure 1.2. Perception of benefits of EU membership among UK MPs

On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted overall from EU membership?

Conservative MPs



Labour MPs



Yet, despite the differences in the positions of these two dominant parties, the Europe issue was not the basis of inter-party competition as often as might be expected. In fact, it is not uncommon for mainstream parties on the left and right to remain quite silent on EU affairs. This was a point made by Conservative MP, John Redwood, during interview. He claimed that there was a “conspiracy between the main parties to not talk about Europe. They tell themselves the public is not interested.”³²⁷ Ladrech contends that party leaders might try to avoid inter-party debate on the issue so as to conceal intra-party divisions.³²⁸ These intra-party divisions, notably within the Conservative Party, are also clear in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. Having been resolved, for the most-part, by a shift towards the centre and greater support for European integration, divisions within the Labour Party subsided from the early 1990s. However, within the Conservative Party, divisions over the Europe issue deepened from the mid-1980s. Intra-party divisions likely served to reduce the top-down influence of the Party over its supporters.³²⁹ Further, divisions seem to have increased the bottom-up influence of party supporters on party elites.³³⁰ Intra-party divisions can potentially cause a party to lose votes,³³¹ hence efforts to conceal differences within the Conservative Party over European integration or, ultimately, integrate party Eurosceptics.

UK respondents to the questionnaire were, on the whole, moderately supportive of a range of EU policies, ranging from the Single Market and the Structural Funds, to enlargement and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Support for the Single Market and enlargement, in particular, are consistent with the importance of trade for the UK economy and the desire to expand the area of free trade. There was, however, a relative consensus in opposition to Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Opposition to EMU is unsurprising given the historical importance of the pound sterling. Neither is it surprising that there is relatively little support for the CAP, given the low importance of the agricultural sector for the UK economy. Differences could nonetheless be observed in the positions of Conservative and Labour Parties’ respondents on EU policies (see Table 1.6). The majority of Conservative respondents were somewhat or fully opposed to all the policies mentioned, except the Single Market. John Redwood confirmed this finding with

³²⁷ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

³²⁸ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³²⁹ Leonard Ray, “When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration”, *op. cit.*

³³⁰ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *op. cit.*

³³¹ Simon Usherwood, “Opposition to the European Union in the UK: The Dilemma of Public Opinion and Party Management”, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

his claim that “most in the Parliamentary Conservative Party [could] not stand policies imposed by the EU.”³³² It seems that for many in the Conservative Party, integrative steps taken beyond the establishment of the Single Market were steps too far. David Nuttall echoed a number of his Conservative colleagues when he said that “the EU has changed and is no longer just about trade”.³³³ Further, there was a belief, seemingly widely shared by Conservative Eurosceptics, that this move towards more political integration was intentionally “kept from the British people”.³³⁴

Within the Conservative Party there were divisions over certain policies, most notably enlargement and the Climate and Energy Package. However, as Sir Desmond Swayne noted, “the current atmosphere is the most collegiate and relaxed it has been in twenty years.”³³⁵ Vocal Conservative supporters of European integration were a minority. Flick Drummond, who rated her support for EU membership at 10 out of 10, said that only “a few” of her Conservative colleagues shared her position on the EU.³³⁶ There were divisions even *among* Eurosceptics, as highlighted by Peter Lilley who noted that “although [he was] on the Eurosceptic side of the party, [he had] differences of opinion with some other Eurosceptics.”³³⁷ Labour respondents were far more supportive of EU policies than Conservatives. All respondents signalled their (strong) support for the Structural Funds, and almost all (strongly) supported the Single Market and the Climate and Energy Package. However, the wide range of positions of Labour respondents on other policies was striking. This included enlargement and the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which some Labour respondents fully supported while others fully opposed. Despite this range of positions, however, Paul Flynn insisted during interview that the Labour Party was “quite united” on the EU issue and that there were, in 2016, “far fewer critics of the EU in the party today than in the past”.³³⁸ This was confirmed by Labour MP and former Blair Cabinet member, Andrew Smith, who claimed that the party was “more relaxed about our differences than the Conservatives because there’s no more than a handful of [Labour] MPs who want to leave [the EU].”³³⁹

³³² John Redwood, interview by telephone.

³³³ David Nuttall, interview by telephone.

³³⁴ David Davies, interview in person.

³³⁵ Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

³³⁶ Flick Drummond, interview by telephone.

³³⁷ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

³³⁸ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

³³⁹ Andrew Smith, interview by telephone, 10 March 2016.

Table 1.6. Support of UK MPs for selected EU policies

To what extent do you support the following EU policies?

	(Very) supportive	Fully/somewhat opposed
Single Market		
Conservative	73%	27%
Labour	83%	17%
Economic & Monetary Union		
Conservative	7%	93%
Labour	17%	83%
Common Agricultural Policy		
Conservative	21%	79%
Labour	35%	65%
Enlargement		
Conservative	47%	53%
Labour	61%	39%

On the whole, respondents to the questionnaire were more willing to acknowledge the benefits for the UK of European integration than they were supportive of EU policies. Again, differences could be observed between Conservative and Labour respondents (see Table 1.7). The free movement of goods and services was the only benefit that the majority of Conservative respondents recognised. Notably, a strong majority of Conservative respondents considered integration to have brought little or no benefits for the UK in terms of peace-building. In contrast, the majority of Labour respondents considered that European integration had been (very) beneficial for the UK in all domains mentioned, except agriculture. It is perhaps surprising for a party on the left that the most beneficial domains were considered to be the free movement of goods and services, and workers. Unlike their Conservative colleagues, a solid majority of Labour respondents attributed peace in Europe to integration and some Labour MPs interviewed specifically cited peace as a positive outcome of European integration. Internally, both parties were quite united in their perceptions of the benefits (or lack thereof) of integration. However, within the Conservative Party, divisions could be observed over the benefits of integration for economic growth, which undoubtedly reflected differences within the party over economic policy and notably the pursuit of Thatcherite economic liberalism. Within the Labour Party divisions could be noted over the benefits for agriculture and infrastructure. There were also some, albeit a very small minority, within the party who opposed the Single Market. For example, during interview, hard-Eurosceptic Labour MP, Kelvin Hopkins, claimed the EU was

“a neoliberal economic construct”, which “takes power away from democratically elected governments and gives it to the markets.”³⁴⁰

Table 1.7. UK MPs’ perceptions of the benefits of integration in selected domains

To what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted from EU integration in the following domains?

	(Very) beneficial	No/little benefits
Peace-building		
Conservative	20%	80%
Labour	72%	28%
Free movement goods & services		
Conservative	67%	33%
Labour	94%	6%
Free movement workers		
Conservative	33%	67%
Labour	89%	11%
Economic growth		
Conservative	40%	60%
Labour	78%	22%

When asked about the drawbacks of the UK’s membership of the EU, the vast majority of respondents cited sub-optimal decision-making outcomes. This was the most common response for Conservative respondents, along with loss of sovereignty and the implementation of EU legislation, with each factor being cited by over 90 per cent of respondents. Loss of sovereignty was also frequently raised by the Conservative MPs interviewed. Claims such as David Nuttall’s that the “sovereignty of Parliament has been eroded” were commonplace among Eurosceptic Conservative MPs.³⁴¹ Further, 80 per cent of Conservative respondents also cited the national contribution to the EU budget as a key drawback. For Labour respondents, sub-optimal decision-making outcomes was by far the most commonly cited drawback, with loss of sovereignty being cited by just 30 per cent of Labour respondents. Further, the national contribution to the EU budget was cited as a drawback by fewer than one in four Labour respondents.

Most respondents were not satisfied with the EU’s decision-making process, with most considering it to be not democratic enough or not at all democratic. This is perhaps to be expected given that the UK is an old democracy. Nonetheless, differences could, again, be

³⁴⁰ Kelvin Hopkins, interview by telephone.

³⁴¹ David Nuttall, interview by telephone.

observed between Conservative and Labour respondents. Whereas 60 per cent of Conservative respondents considered the process to be not at all democratic, this was the case for only 11 per cent of Labour respondents. In fact, 50 per cent of Labour respondents considered the EU’s decision-making process to be fairly democratic. Although a majority of respondents believed the UK to have some influence in the decision-making process, a range of views were displayed. Unsurprisingly, 60 per cent of Conservative respondents considered the UK to have little influence and 7 per cent considered the UK has no influence. David Davies claimed to speak for many of his colleagues when he said that the EU is “undemocratic” and “the UK has little control over EU laws, which come mostly from the Commission instead of the European Parliament.”³⁴² John Redwood went so far as to claim that “the EU has wrecked UK democracy”.³⁴³ In contrast, 56 per cent of Labour respondents considered the UK to be of influence and 11 per cent even considered the UK to be of great influence.

On the whole, for a narrow majority of respondents, levels of support for the UK’s membership of the EU had not changed over time. A considerable minority did, however, signal that their support had increased or decreased over time. Again, marked differences could be observed between Conservative and Labour respondents (see Table 1.8). The positions of Conservative respondents had evolved the most, with two-thirds having become less supportive of the UK’s membership of the EU. The majority of Labour respondents indicated that their position had not changed and, where it had done, this was mostly in a positive sense. The signing and ratification of the Treaty on European Union and the Lisbon Treaty were the most common points at which the level of support of respondents evolved. For Conservative respondents, the TEU was the most common trigger of a change in position, with John Redwood referring during interview to Maastricht as “a watershed moment” for the Conservative Party.³⁴⁴ For Labour respondents the Lisbon Treaty was the most common trigger.

Table 1.8. Evolution of UK MPs’ support for EU membership

Has your support for the UK’s membership of the EU changed over time?

	Yes, more supportive	Yes, less supportive	No
Conservative	7%	67%	27%
Labour	28%	11%	61%

³⁴² David Davies, interview in person.
³⁴³ John Redwood, interview by telephone.
³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

When asked about the future of European integration, the most common response (39 per cent) was that integration should continue at the same pace, although a narrow majority felt that integration had gone too far or far enough. However, here again a marked difference could be seen between Conservative and Labour respondents. Whereas 80 per cent of Conservative respondents felt that integration had gone too far and 13 per cent felt it had gone far enough, just 17 per cent of Labour respondents felt that integration had gone too far and 39 per cent felt it had gone far enough. Although a minority, 45 per cent of Labour respondents felt that integration should continue at the same pace or at a faster rate. The responses of Labour MPs revealed the party to be somewhat divided over the future pace of integration. When asked which scenario would be best for the UK, a solid majority of respondents indicated they would want to see the status quo maintained or for the UK to become a fully participating member of the EU. Among Conservative respondents, however, only 7 per cent sought the maintenance of the status quo. In fact, two-thirds wanted to see the UK leave the EU, with, perhaps, a future membership of the European Economic Area or the European Free Trade Association. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of Labour respondents saw the UK's future in the EU. While 44 per cent of respondents sought the maintenance of the status quo and 22 per cent hoped the UK would become a fully participating member, 22 per cent sought the 'repatriation' of certain powers. These responses of Conservative and Labour MPs foretold the positions of MPs at the referendum of 2016.

2.1.3. UK public opinion on European integration

The increasing salience of the Europe issue contributed to the ending of the permissive consensus of European publics in support of European integration. The permissive consensus of the UK public ended in the early 1990s. Nonetheless, public support for membership was consistently lower, and opposition higher, than the average of member states from 1973. In fact, in the year of accession a higher percentage of the UK population opposed membership (34 per cent) than supported it (31 per cent).³⁴⁵ Yet, at the 1975 referendum, two-thirds of voters supported the UK remaining in the EC.³⁴⁶ Although support for membership grew in the 1980s and reached a high in 1991, the peak of 57 per cent in the UK was considerably lower than the EC average of 72 per cent at that time.³⁴⁷ Support for EU membership declined throughout the EU following the ratification of the TEU, but the rate of decline in support in the UK was much

³⁴⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 1*, July 1974.

³⁴⁶ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

³⁴⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 35*, *op. cit.*

faster, as was the rate of increase in opposition to membership. After 1992, support for EU membership never rose above 50 per cent and after 1998 it did not rise above 40 per cent. Support for membership in the UK reached a low of just 25 per cent in 2000, with opposition at 24 per cent.³⁴⁸ Opposition continued to rise, reaching 32 per cent in 2008.³⁴⁹ Ultimately, in June 2016, 52 per cent of voters voted for the UK to leave the EU.

UK citizens tended to view EU membership in terms of a practical, utilitarian evaluation of costs versus benefits. Emotional, affective factors seemed to have less bearing on public opinion.³⁵⁰ In 2015, only 40 per cent of UK citizens felt either fairly or very attached to the EU, whereas, on average, 49 per cent of EU citizens felt attached to the EU.³⁵¹ UK citizens associated more readily with negative images of the EU, such as insufficient border controls, bureaucracy, and waste of money, and more crime. On the whole, EU citizens tend to cite the positive effects of integration – the freedom of movement of persons, the Euro, cultural diversity, peace – as the characteristics they most associate with the EU.³⁵²

However, despite growing public opposition to EU membership, UK voters did not consider the issue to be of great importance. This was reflected in the very low turnout of UK voters at European Parliament elections, which fell as low as 23.1 per cent in 1999 and reached a high of just 38.2 per cent in 2004.³⁵³ Also, Eurobarometer data show that other issues were far more important to the UK electorate than the Europe issue. These key issues included unemployment, the economic situation, and health and social security. However, it is notable that crime and immigration were also among the most important issues for UK voters, and, at times, they were the two most important issues.³⁵⁴ This is important as these two issues are often associated with European integration, viewed by some as a negative consequence of EU membership. The issues of immigration, crime, and European integration could therefore be grouped together by politicians so as to avoid multiple, costly, competitive dimensions.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁸ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 53*, October 2000.

³⁴⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 69*, November 2008.

³⁵⁰ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

³⁵¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83. European Citizenship*, July 2015.

³⁵² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 84*, December 2015.

³⁵³ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

³⁵⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 82*, December 2014.

³⁵⁵ Herbert Kitschelt, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

2.1.4. *Potential for political gain by UK parties and individual politicians*

Where an issue is of greater salience, the ability of parties to influence the opinions of its supporters should increase.³⁵⁶ However, three factors limited the ability of the Conservative and Labour Parties to influence the opinions of their supporters on European integration. First, as was noted above, the parties' leadership sought to avoid debate around the Europe issue and thus limited its salience. Second, both parties were, in turn, divided over the issue. Intra-party divisions weaken the ability of parties to influence their supporters.³⁵⁷ Further, divisions among politicians on the Europe issue serve to drive public opposition to integration.³⁵⁸ Third, the majority of the national newspapers sold each day in the UK are owned by groups taking Eurosceptic positions. As a result, newspapers in each category – popular tabloids, mid-market tabloids, and quality broadsheets – regularly published overtly Eurosceptic, and sometimes factually inaccurate, articles. This impacted the way politicians spoke to journalists about the EU, with governments often giving journalists the impression that they were 'defending' the UK against the EU or other member states.³⁵⁹ Former Labour MP, Alan Meale, was particularly critical of the role of the Eurosceptic media in fostering public Euroscepticism. He claimed MPs were "pressurised by the media to take a stance [on a question of European integration] before they [were] ready". Meale said MPs started "speaking on issues they were previously not interested in" and that he "regularly [saw] fellow MPs taking stances based on media coverage".³⁶⁰ Meale's Labour colleague, Paul Flynn, stated that "Conservatives are slaves to the right-wing media".³⁶¹

Overall, respondents to the questionnaire tended to perceive the public as attaching some importance to the EU issue, with few considering the electorate to attach a lot of importance to the issue. However, Conservative respondents considered the electorate to attach much more importance to the EU issue than did Labour respondents (Table 1.9). Also, whereas a solid majority of all respondents believed their constituents to be supportive of EU membership, relatively few Conservative respondents believed this to be the case (see Table 1.10). These figures could explain to a considerable extent the positions adopted by both Conservative and

³⁵⁶ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁵⁷ Leonard Ray, "When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration", *op. cit.*

³⁵⁸ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration", *op. cit.*, p. 430.

³⁵⁹ Charles Grant, "Why is Britain Eurosceptic?", Centre for European Reform, 2008 <<https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/essay/2008/why-britain-eurosceptic>>.

³⁶⁰ Alan Meale, interview in person.

³⁶¹ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

Labour MPs. However, in light of the result of the 2016 referendum in Labour-held areas, Labour MPs appear to have over-estimated their constituents' support for EU membership.

Table 1.9. UK MPs' perceptions of importance of EU issue for electorate

How much importance do you believe the electorate attaches to issues relating to the EU?

	A lot of importance	Some importance	Little importance	None
Conservative	27%	53%	20%	-
Labour	-	61%	39%	-

Table 1.10. UK MPs' perceptions of constituents' support for EU membership

To what extent do your constituents support the UK's membership of the EU?

	Majority supports	Majority opposes
Conservative	27%	73%
Labour	89%	11%

Given the limited ability of parties to influence the opinions of their supporters on European integration and the increase in public opposition to membership, encouraged by an overwhelmingly Eurosceptic press, the bottom-up influence of supporters' opinions on parties increased. According to Labour's Paul Flynn, "the UK has become populist and law-making tends to be based on impressions rather than evidence."³⁶² In light of intra-party divisions over the Europe issue, the Conservative Party was particularly susceptible to the opinion of its supporters and members, who tended to be much more opposed to European integration than the public as a whole. Flick Drummond confirmed that "pressure from Conservative Party membership [was] a factor" driving opposition to EU membership among MPs.³⁶³ The perception among Conservative MPs that the electorate attached considerable importance to the Europe issue and that, by 2015, the majority of constituents did not support EU membership undoubtedly added to this pressure. Further, UKIP was perceived as a considerable threat to the Conservative Party, both electorally and in terms of party membership. In fact, Sir Desmond Swayne, cited the "UKIP threat" as a reason for the change in the party's EU policy and stated that the EU issue was "an electoral problem rather than a party problem".³⁶⁴

As a result of these factors, it would seem, European integration became a competitive dimension for the Conservative Party and many Conservative MPs adopted Eurosceptic

³⁶² Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

³⁶³ Flick Drummond, interview by telephone.

³⁶⁴ Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

positions. To make an issue the basis of political action is costly and risks bringing little political gain if the salience of the issue is low. However, this strategic move was made in a context of increasing evidence that Europe issues impacted voter choice at national elections.³⁶⁵ Conservative Eurosceptics therefore had an incentive to push the Europe issue up the agenda and, where possible, group the issue with other issues considered important to the public, such as immigration and crime.³⁶⁶ They adopted a polis-shaping strategy, which aimed to change the scope of debate. It could be argued this strategy sought to promote a heresthetic agenda, pursued in an attempt to make political gains.³⁶⁷

It would seem that Conservative MPs were influenced by electoral considerations in positioning themselves on European integration as early as 1992. A study of Conservative MPs during the 1992 Parliament shows a correlation between Conservative MPs' constituency majority and their positions on European integration. The smaller a MP's majority, the more likely they were to position as Eurosceptic.³⁶⁸ This would suggest that positioning as Eurosceptic was seen, at least by Conservative MPs, as a means of ensuring the continued support of their constituents. Also, there is evidence to suggest that, from the mid-1990s, the position of Conservative MPs on European integration could impact their advancement within the party hierarchy. However, the Labour Party and its MPs are not immune to incentives to adopt Eurosceptic positions. As Andrew Smith said during interview, "UKIP is a threat to the Labour Party, too, because it has succeeded in attracting support from people who previously voted Labour, or who might otherwise vote Labour".³⁶⁹ It seems, however, that many within the Labour Party under-estimated the threat posed by UKIP. Further, there is little to suggest that the position of Labour MPs on European integration impacted their advancement within the party. On this point, Paul Flynn stated during interview that "an individual's position on the EU doesn't affect his career within the party".³⁷⁰

Usherwood showed in 2002 that if the electorate did not attach great importance to European integration, a party risked losing support if it allowed itself to be defined by the

³⁶⁵ Catherine E. de Vries, "EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties Electoral Fortunes", *op. cit.*

³⁶⁶ Herbert Kitschelt, *op. cit.*; Ian Budge and Dennis J. Farlie, *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*, *op. cit.*

³⁶⁷ Charles Lees, "'Dark Matter': Institutional Constraints and the Failure of Party-Based Euroscepticism in Germany", *op. cit.*

³⁶⁸ Luke Stanley, "The 'Dispossessed', the 'Never-Possessed' and the 'Bastards'. Debunking Major's Myths of the Eurosceptics", The Bruges Group, London, 2014, pp. 36, 39.

³⁶⁹ Andrew Smith, interview by telephone.

³⁷⁰ Paul Flynn, interview by telephone.

issue.³⁷¹ The situation has evolved considerably since then, with EU member state publics attaching greater importance to the issue, particularly in the UK in the ten years preceding the 2016 referendum. In such a context, the risk taken by parties and individual MPs in allowing themselves to be defined by the Europe issue was much less. Whether parties and individual MPs in the UK made political gains from their positions on European integration will be addressed in later chapters.

2.2. *Europeanization and political competition in France*

France, like the UK, is an old, established democracy and could, therefore, be expected to resist the change that results from EU membership.³⁷² Also, like the UK, France's majoritarian political system has come under pressure to adapt to the EU's more consensual system, and the removal of barriers has clashed at times with the French tendency towards economic protectionism. A strong reaction from French politicians and the public, as in the UK, could therefore be expected. However, while European integration has periodically been a source of debate, disagreement, and even division, the reaction of French politicians and the public has not been as strong, and as consequential, as in the UK.

2.2.1. *Europeanization of French institutions and policies*

As in other member states, the process of European integration has resulted in a strengthening of the executive relative to the other branches of domestic power in France. However, as a semi-presidential, dual executive system, powers, including foreign and European affairs, are shared between the President and the government, headed by the Prime Minister.³⁷³ While it is the President who attends summit meetings of the European Council, EU policy is developed by the President working alongside the Prime Minister and government ministers.³⁷⁴ It is the Prime Minister's office that oversees the coordination of EU policy, led by the *Secrétariat Général des affaires européennes* (SGAE).³⁷⁵ The dual executive system increases the possibility of discord at the heart of the executive, especially where the President, Prime Minister, and government ministers are from different political parties. The 5th Republic has seen three

³⁷¹ Simon Usherwood, "Opposition to the European Union in the UK: The Dilemma of Public Opinion and Party Management", *op. cit.*, p. 219.

³⁷² Jeffrey J. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 814.

³⁷³ Robert Elgie, "The French Presidency", in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁷⁴ Alistair Cole and Helen Drake, "The Europeanization of the French polity: continuity, change and adaptation", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 7, no. 1, March 2000, p. 28.

³⁷⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

periods of cohabitation, during which the potential for intra-executive discord increased, but did not necessarily do so. The sharing of powers within the French executive necessitates a degree of compromise. This intra-executive culture of compromise is more in line with the consensualism typical of the EU's institutions, and contrasts somewhat with the single-leader, and typically single-party, executive of the UK, in which a culture of compromise is quite absent.

As in many other member states, the French Parliament has had more difficulty adapting to EU membership than the executive. Since the early 1990s, in particular, the National Assembly has undergone considerable change and the Europe issue is evermore present in debates.³⁷⁶ Whereas the Constitution of the 4th Republic recognised Parliamentary supremacy, the powers of Parliament were limited by the Constitution of the 5th Republic and de Gaulle was particularly reluctant to allow parliamentarians to have influence over EC policy-making. The powers of the relatively weak National Assembly have nonetheless been weakened further by the transfer of legislative powers to the EU's institutions. By expanding the scope of delegated legislation, the Constitution eases the transposition of EU directives, but, in doing so, further limits the powers of the National Assembly relative to the national executive and the EU's institutions. With the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament from 1979, Parliamentary Delegations for the European Communities were created in both the lower and upper houses of Parliament. French Parliamentary committees tend to be weaker than those of most other Western European states.³⁷⁷ Yet, the European Affairs committee of the National Assembly has been particularly active.³⁷⁸ That the French Parliament was weak relative to the executive and relative to other national parliaments before Europeanization took effect has undoubtedly lessened the shock felt by *députés* as powers have been transferred to the European level, which stands in contrast to the experience of the UK Parliament.

With a written constitution and a civil law legal system, it could be expected that the French legal system might experience less pressure for change as a result of EU membership. Nonetheless, initial difficulties arose from the fact that the Community's body of law was being built at the same time as the hierarchy of French legal norms was being re-established with the 5th Republic.³⁷⁹ Difficulties have also arisen around questions of the compatibility of the provisions of EU law with the Constitution, and the Constitutional Council has been called

³⁷⁶ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, Les Presses Sciences Po, Paris, 2018, pp. 19-20.

³⁷⁷ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

³⁷⁸ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³⁷⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

upon to give advice.³⁸⁰ Where EU law is not compatible with the Constitution, the latter must be amended if the former is to be ratified, a process which can necessitate a national referendum. Therefore, despite the better ‘fit’ of the French legal system, it appears to have had more difficulty adapting to EU membership than the common law legal system of the UK.

In certain respects, the French economic system is rather similar to the European system, and certainly displays less ‘misfit’ than does that of the UK. While the services sector is the largest economic sector in France, this sector, and within it the financial services sector, is not as dominant as in the UK. Although the agricultural sector is not particularly strong in terms of economic output or employment, it is nonetheless important as a large proportion of the French territory is rural and French farmers are key beneficiaries of the CAP. Almost 60 per cent of French trade is with other EU member states, and seven of France’s top ten trading partners are members of the EU.³⁸¹ French government spending as a proportion of GDP is the highest of EU member states and is considerably higher than UK government spending,³⁸² and inequality of income is lower than in most member states, notably the UK.³⁸³ This reflects a tendency for French governments to intervene, protect, and redistribute, similar to the EU but in contrast to the *laissez-faire* approach of UK governments.

Despite considerable similarities between the French economic system and the EU model, France has nonetheless experienced some difficulties in adapting to EU policies. These difficulties are reflected in the number of infringement proceedings brought against France to the European Court of Justice by the European Commission. In 2015, 80 cases were underway, most of which concerned incorrect transposition and/or application as opposed to late transposition. This number was relatively high compared to most other member states.³⁸⁴ It is also perhaps surprising that the infringement rate is higher in France than in the UK.

2.2.2. *Europeanization of French politics*

The national politics of France have, like its institutions and policies, been impacted by European integration. As the scope and depth of integration has increased, and with it the salience of the Europe issue in political and public debate, French parties and individual politicians, like their UK counterparts, have had to position themselves on questions relating to

³⁸⁰ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

³⁸¹ Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires Etrangères, “La France et ses partenaires économiques, pays par pays” <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-economique-et-commerce-exterieur/la-france-et-ses-partenaires-economiques-pays-par-pays/>>.

³⁸² OECD, “General government spending”, *op. cit.*

³⁸³ OECD, “Income redistribution across OECD countries”, *op. cit.*

³⁸⁴ European Commission, “Monitoring the Application of European Union Law. Annual Report 2015”, *op. cit.*

integration.³⁸⁵ These positions have revealed divisions both between and within parties, including mainstream, established parties. However, these divisions have been periodic.

As a long-established and unitary state, France, like the UK, could be expected to find the Europeanization of political life difficult.³⁸⁶

Whereas UK politics resisted Europeanization, the compromises necessitated by integration have become part of French political life.³⁸⁷ Also, as the public has become more aware of integration, public opinion has come to bear some influence. However, the influence of public opinion on the positions of politicians has not been great.

As in other member states, the salience of European integration has increased in France. Kriesi shows that the number of integration-related statements in national newspapers during election campaigns in France in the 1970s was the highest of the six states studied and one of the highest in the 1990s. However, it can also be observed that, although the issue increased in salience between the 1970s and 1990s, the increase was not as great in France as in other member states studied. Notably, the Europe issue increased in salience less in France than it did in the UK.³⁸⁸ The increased salience of European integration is reflected in the workload of *députés*, who spend time discussing the issue. Of those *députés* who responded to the questionnaire, the majority (56 per cent) felt that EU issues were discussed quite often in Parliament. There was a relative consensus between LR and PS respondents as to the value of the time spent discussing EU issues, with a solid majority in both parties considering that not enough time was spent discussing EU issues. A slight difference could, however, be noted between the perceptions of LR and PS respondents concerning the quality of debate. Whereas the 57 per cent of LR respondents considered debate to be of good quality, the majority of PS respondents 54 per cent considered it to be of bad quality.

In the first part of this chapter, we saw that a wide range of attitudes towards European integration are represented in the French National Assembly. However, there has long been a consensus between the two main parties in support of EU membership, even if support has not always been enthusiastic. In 2015/16, all LR respondents to the questionnaire rated their support at 7 out of 10 or more, and over 70 per cent of those respondents rated their support at 10 out of 10. Almost all PS respondents rated their support at 9 out of 10 or more (see Figure 1.3).

³⁸⁵ Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization and Political Parties: Towards a Framework for Analysis", *op. cit.*; Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*

³⁸⁶ Helen Drake and Susan Milner, "Change and resistance to change: the political management of Europeanisation in France", *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1999, p. 167.

³⁸⁷ Helen Drake, "Perspectives on French relations with the European Union: an introduction", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁸⁸ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Further, 85 per cent of LR respondents evaluated the benefits for France of EU membership at 7 out of 10 or more and approximately 75 per cent of PS respondents evaluated the benefits for France of EU membership at 10 out of 10 (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.3. Support for EU membership among French députés

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall support for the UK’s membership of the EU?

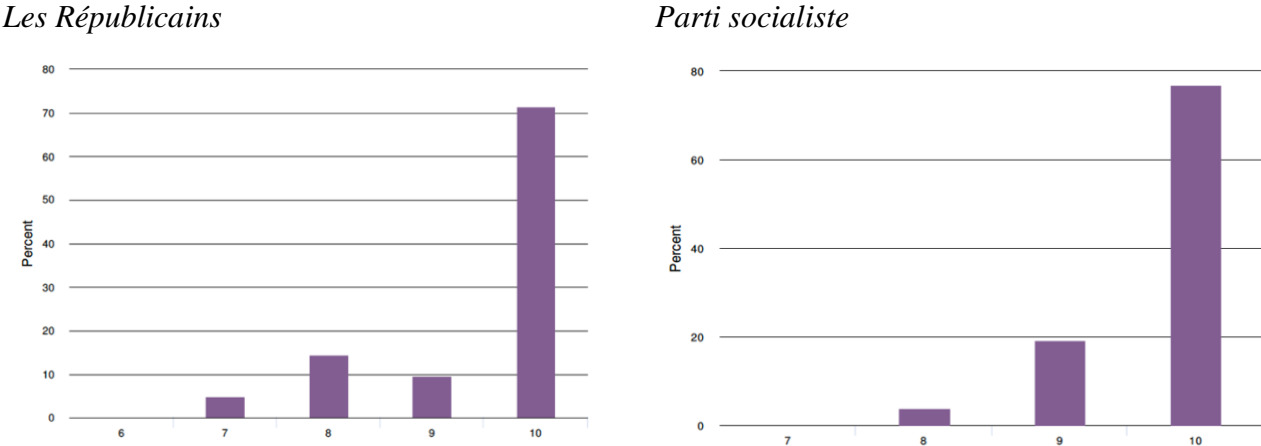
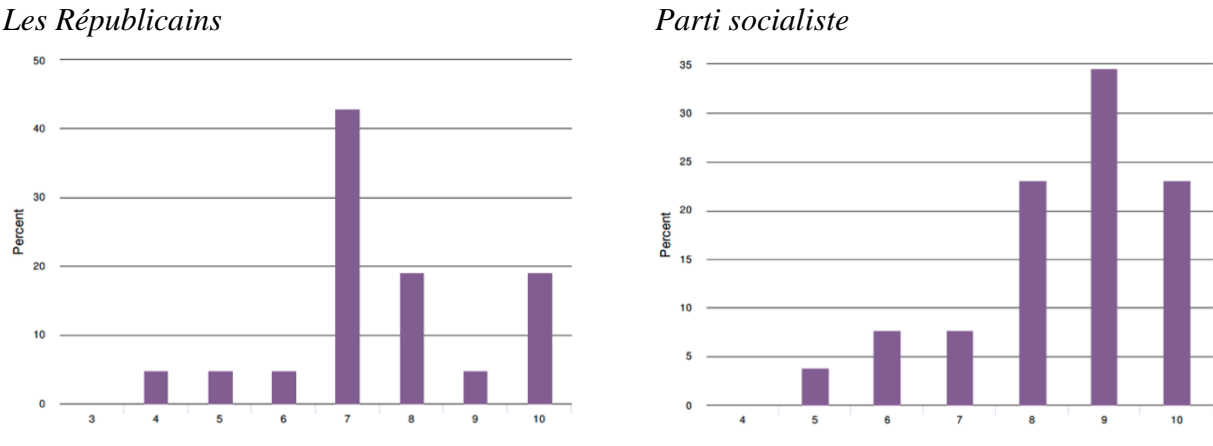


Figure 1.4. Perception of benefits of EU membership among French députés

On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted overall from EU membership?



Despite some intra-party differences as to the benefits of EU membership, a strong consensus exists between and within the two main parties in support of French membership of the EU. This contrasts starkly with the situation in the UK. Further, support among LR and PS

députés is stronger than among Europhile UK MPs. Given the mainstream consensus, it is unsurprising that the Europe issue has not been a subject of inter-party competition in France. Such inter-party consensus has the effect of lessening the incentive to draw attention to the issue.³⁸⁹ However, as Ladrech suggests, party leaders also avoid debate on the issue so as to contain intra-party divisions,³⁹⁰ which, as we have seen, have arisen periodically within the LR and PS. Whereas divisions within the LR manifested themselves around the ratification of the TEU, divisions within the PS were revealed to the greatest extent around the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. The periodicity of intra-party divisions stands in contrast to the on-going divisions within the Labour Party prior to the mid-1980s and the Conservative Party from the late 1980s.

French respondents to the questionnaire were, on the whole, supportive or very supportive of a wide range of EU policies, ranging from the Single Market, EMU and the CAP, to the CFSP and common defence. There was, however, a solid consensus in opposition to further enlargement of the EU. During interview, LR *députés* tended to justify their opposition to further enlargement by referring to “*la diversité des peuples européens*”³⁹¹ or “*les différences entre les Etats membres, même en Europe de l’Ouest*”,³⁹² and “*les tensions*”³⁹³ that this has caused. PS *députés* appeared not to be opposed, in principle, to further enlargement but rather felt that “*les élargissements passés sont allés trop vite.*”³⁹⁴ They tended to emphasise the need to first “*rétablir les bases de l’intégration*”³⁹⁵ and ensure that “*les réformes nécessaires soient apportées*” in accession states.³⁹⁶ Few differences could be observed between LR and PS respondents in terms of their support for specific policies (see Table 1.11). Also, within the parties, few divisions were evident. One exception was the future enlargement of the EU, which one-third of PS respondents supported. Clearly, this situation differs greatly from that in the UK where divisions both between and within the two main parties were evident.

³⁸⁹ Leonard Ray, “When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration”, *op. cit.*

³⁹⁰ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³⁹¹ Denis Jacquat, interview by telephone.

³⁹² Jean-Claude Mignon, interview in person, 22 June 2016.

³⁹³ Damien Abad, interview in person.

³⁹⁴ Pascale Crozon, interview by telephone, 24 May 2016.

³⁹⁵ Régine Povéda, interview by telephone, 23 May 2016.

³⁹⁶ Cathérine Quéré, interview in person, 19 April 2016.

Table 1.11. Support of French *députés* for selected EU policies*To what extent do you support the following EU policies?*

	(Very) supportive	Fully/somewhat opposed
Single Market		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	90%	10%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	92%	8%
EMU		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	95%	5%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	100%	-
CAP		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	90%	10%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	92%	8%
Enlargement		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	5%	95%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	31%	69%

Respondents to the questionnaire were, on the whole, slightly less willing to acknowledge the benefits for France of European integration than they were supportive of EU policies. This contrasts with UK respondents, who tended to acknowledge the benefits of membership more than they supported membership, and suggests the support of French politicians for integration is more affective, whereas the support of their UK counterparts is more utilitarian. Nonetheless, a strong majority of respondents considered integration to have been beneficial or very beneficial in all the domains mentioned, other than the level of social protection, which most felt had not been beneficial for France. Few differences could be observed between LR and PS respondents, other than concerning the free movement of workers, which LR respondents considered to be more beneficial than did PS respondents (see Table 1.12). Internally, both parties appeared to be united in their perceptions of the benefits of integration. The sole exceptions that could be noted were divisions within the LR over the benefits of free movement of workers and within the PS over the benefits of integration for the level of social protections. During interview, PS *députés* frequently expressed regret that European integration “*a mis trop d’accent sur l’économie*”³⁹⁷ and had not resulted in a more social Europe.

³⁹⁷ Cathérine Quéré, interview in person.

Table 1.12. French *députés*' perceptions of the benefits of integration in selected domains

To what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted from EU integration in the following domains?

	(Very) beneficial	No/little benefits
Peace-building		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	100%	-
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	100%	-
Free movement goods & services		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	90%	10%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	77%	23%
Free movement workers		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	57%	43%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	31%	69%
Level of social protection		
<i>Les Républicains</i>	33%	67%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	42%	58%

When asked about the drawbacks of membership of the EU, the vast majority of French respondents, like their UK counterparts, cited sub-optimal decision-making outcomes. This was the most common response for both LR and PS respondents. Over 40 per cent of LR respondents also cited loss of national sovereignty and loss of cultural identity as drawbacks. Notable is that only 10 per cent of LR respondents considered the national contribution to the EU budget to be a drawback. Other than sub-optimal decision-making outcomes, few PS respondents cited other drawbacks. Just 30 per cent considered the implementation of EU legislation to be a drawback and 20 per cent cited loss of national sovereignty. Further, during interview, certain PS *députés* sought to emphasise the feeling that transfers of sovereignty “*ne posent pas de problème en soi*”³⁹⁸ or “*ne sont pas préoccupants*”.³⁹⁹ PS *député* Hervé Pellois claimed that “*on va perdre notre souveraineté si on ne s’intègre pas*”.⁴⁰⁰ Brigitte Allain, Europe Ecologie Les Verts (EELV) *député*, questioned “*qu’est-ce que la souveraineté si ce n’est pas avoir le pouvoir de répondre aux besoins du peuple.*”⁴⁰¹ The loss of national sovereignty was of greater concern to respondents on the centre-right in both the UK and France. Nonetheless, Conservative MPs expressed far greater concern for loss of sovereignty than LR *députés*. As in the UK, most respondents were not satisfied with the EU’s decision-making process, with most

³⁹⁸ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone, 30 June 2016.

³⁹⁹ Christophe Premat, interview by telephone.

⁴⁰⁰ Hervé Pellois, interview by telephone, 23 May 2016.

⁴⁰¹ Brigitte Allain, interview by telephone, 9 November 2016.

considering it to be not democratic enough or not at all democratic. This is perhaps unsurprising given that France, like the UK, is an old democracy. However, whereas LR respondents were relatively unified, with two-thirds considering the process to be not democratic enough, PS respondents were quite divided, with 46 per cent considering the process to be fairly democratic and 19 per cent considering it to be not at all democratic. Nonetheless, a majority of respondents believed France to have some influence in the decision-making process. A majority (57 per cent) of LR respondents considered France to have some influence and 10 per cent even considered France to be of great influence. PS respondents were even more optimistic, with almost 70 per cent believing France to have some influence and 27 per cent believing France to have great influence. The perceptions of French respondents stand in stark contrast to those of UK Conservative MPs who considered the UK's influence to be minimal.

On the whole, for 70 per cent of respondents, levels of support for France's membership of the EU have not changed over time. The levels of support of LR respondents have evolved more than those of their PS colleagues. Notable is that, where a change in position had occurred, it was more likely to have been towards a more favourable position, with 24 per cent of LR respondents having become more supportive of French EU membership over time (see table 1.13). This contrasts markedly with the Conservative respondents, two-thirds of whom became less supportive over time. The signing and ratification of the Treaty on European Union was the most common point at which the levels of support of respondents evolved, particularly for LR respondents. Whereas the TEU tended to have a positive impact on the support among LR respondents, the effect was the opposite for Conservative respondents. The period after 2009 was also frequently cited as a point of change, particularly for PS respondents.

Table 1.13. Evolution of French *députés*' support for EU membership

Has your support for the UK's membership of the EU changed over time?

	Yes, more supportive	Yes, less supportive	No
<i>Les Républicains</i>	24%	10%	67%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	12%	12%	76%

When asked about the future of European integration, the majority (55 per cent) of respondents expressed a desire to see integration taking place at a faster rate. This stands in contrast to the UK, where the majority of respondents felt that integration had gone either too far or far enough. However, a difference could be seen between LR and PS respondents on this point. Among LR respondents, not only was support for a faster rate of integration lower than

average, but 28 per cent of respondents considered that integration had gone far enough or even too far. During interview, Jean-Claude Mignon emphasised his belief in “*une Europe des Etats nations*.”⁴⁰² Frédéric Reiss expressed a desire to see the EU “*revenir à l’essentiel*” and for integration to be “*mené par un noyau dur de dix à quinze Etats membres*.”⁴⁰³ In contrast, however, Damien Abad presented himself as a “*fédéraliste conditionnel*”, a supporter of a federal Europe subject to certain conditions being fulfilled. He noted, however, that he is more pro-integration than the majority in his party and that most in the LR “*ont une préférence pour l’intergouvernementalisme et ils considèrent inacceptable une Europe supranationale*.”⁴⁰⁴ It seems clear, therefore, that there are divisions within the LR over the future pace of integration. In contrast, almost two-thirds of PS respondents hoped to see integration take place at a faster rate and just 16 per cent considered that integration had gone far enough or even too far. Responses showed the party to be quite unified in terms of the future pace of integration. While LR respondents were far more supportive of further integration than their Conservative counterparts, they were, like Conservatives, less enthusiastic about, and more divided over, the question than their colleagues on the centre-left. PS respondents, like their Labour counterparts, were both more supportive of further integration and more united thereon than their colleagues on the centre-right.

2.2.3. French public opinion on European integration

The permissive consensus of the French public in support of European integration came to an end, as it did in other member states, in the early 1990s. Levels of support for, and opposition to, French EC/EU membership have remained close to average over time. In 1974, 68 per cent of the French public considered EC membership to be a good thing.⁴⁰⁵ Although support declined throughout the 1970s, it rose during the 1980s to peak at 75 per cent in 1987.⁴⁰⁶ Yet, at the 1992 referendum on the TEU, the French public voted narrowly by 51.04 per cent to ratify the Treaty.⁴⁰⁷ As in many member states, a decline in support for integration followed the ratification of the TEU. However, the decline in support among the French public was relatively slow, as was the increase in opposition to membership. Nonetheless, support for EU

⁴⁰² Jean-Claude Mignon, interview in person.

⁴⁰³ Frédéric Reiss, interview in person.

⁴⁰⁴ Damien Abad, interview in person.

⁴⁰⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 1*, op. cit.

⁴⁰⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 28*, December 1987.

⁴⁰⁷ Ministère de l’Intérieur, “Référendum du 20 septembre 1992” <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Referendums/elecresult__referendum_1992/\(path\)/referendum_1992/000/000.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Referendums/elecresult__referendum_1992/(path)/referendum_1992/000/000.html)>.

membership fell to just 46 per cent in 1996 and has rarely risen above 55 per cent since then.⁴⁰⁸ In 2005, 55 per cent of voters opposed the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.⁴⁰⁹ By 2015, 32 per cent of French citizens felt that France could better face the future outside the EU.⁴¹⁰ Nonetheless, public support for European integration has remained relatively stable over time, with approximately half of respondents to Eurobarometer surveys considering membership to be a good thing in 1979 and in 2007.⁴¹¹ Also, support for membership has consistently been higher, and opposition lower, in France than in the UK.

In 2015, 55 per cent of French citizens felt either fairly or very attached to the EU, higher than the EU average of 49 per cent and the 40 per cent of UK citizens who felt attached to the EU.⁴¹² On the whole, French citizens readily identify with the positive achievements of European integration, including the freedom of movement of persons and the Euro. Also, more than average in the EU, French citizens associate cultural diversity and peace with European integration. This differs considerably from the tendency of EU citizens, and the UK public in particular, to identify more readily with negative images of the EU. Nonetheless, French citizens also associate certain negative characteristics with the EU, including waste of money and inadequate border controls, and do so to a greater extent than the EU average.⁴¹³

The relatively high salience of the European integration as a political issue is reflected in the number of articles on the subject published in the press. Far more articles are published in the French press than in the UK, and those articles are longer on average.⁴¹⁴ However, despite the relatively high salience of European integration, French voters show limited interest in the issue.⁴¹⁵ This is reflected in the turnout at European Parliament elections, which is considerably lower than at national elections and is slightly below the EU average.⁴¹⁶ Eurobarometer data shows that unemployment is quite consistently the most important issue for French voters, followed by the economic situation and, periodically, inflation. Latterly, however, terrorism

⁴⁰⁸ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 46*, May 1997.

⁴⁰⁹ Ministère de l'Intérieur, "Référendum du 29 mai 2005" <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Referendums/elecresult__referendum_2005/\(path\)/referendum_2005/000/000.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Referendums/elecresult__referendum_2005/(path)/referendum_2005/000/000.html)>.

⁴¹⁰ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83*, July 2015.

⁴¹¹ Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", in Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 4*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2008, p. 65.

⁴¹² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83. European Citizenship*, *op. cit.*

⁴¹³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 84*, *op. cit.*

⁴¹⁴ Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcon, "Media Representation of the European Union: Comparing Newspaper Coverage in France, Spain, and the United Kingdom", *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 4, 2010, p. 403.

⁴¹⁵ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴¹⁶ European Parliament, "Results of the 2019 European elections" <<https://europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/>>.

and immigration have grown in importance for voters.⁴¹⁷ That immigration is of increasing concern to the public could be of importance as this issue might be linked by some, as in the UK, to European integration.

2.2.4. *Potential for political gain by French parties and individual politicians*

The Europe issue is relatively salient in France.⁴¹⁸ This factor, combined with the relative unity on the issue between and within the LR and PS, should increase the ability of those parties to influence their supporters. However, given the inter-party consensus in support of European integration, there is little interest in these parties emphasizing the issue as they stand to gain little from doing so.⁴¹⁹

Overall, respondents to the questionnaire tended to perceive the public as attaching some importance to the EU issue. Just 6 per cent of respondents considered the electorate to attach a lot of importance to the EU issue, a situation which reflects the overall perception of respondents in the UK. PS respondents considered the electorate to attach more importance to the EU issue than those from the LR (see Table 1.14). During interview, Dominique Raimbourg indicated that the PS is “*plus prudent depuis 2005.*”⁴²⁰ Chantal Guittet warned that European politicians “*devraient tenir compte des préoccupations exprimées par la population.*”⁴²¹ Yet, despite some differences in the perceptions of PS and LR respondents, there is much greater consensus between the two parties as to the importance attached by the public to the EU issue than between the Conservative and Labour Parties. Also, the vast majority of both LR and PS respondents believed their constituents were supportive of EU membership (see Table 1.15). Nonetheless, a considerable proportion of PS respondents believed the majority of their constituents opposed membership.

Table 1.14. French députés’ perceptions of importance of EU issue for electorate

How much importance do you believe the electorate attaches to issues relating to the EU?

	A lot of importance	Some importance	Little importance	None
<i>Les Républicains</i>	-	67%	33%	-
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	12%	52%	36%	-

⁴¹⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 82, op. cit.*
⁴¹⁸ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
⁴¹⁹ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
⁴²⁰ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone, 24 May 2016.
⁴²¹ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone.

Table 1.15. French députés' perceptions of constituents' support for EU membership

To what extent do your constituents support the UK's membership of the EU?

	Majority supports	Majority opposes
<i>Les Républicains</i>	86%	14%
<i>Parti socialiste</i>	79%	21%

PS députés sought to explain the attitudes of their supporters towards integration. Dominique Raimbourg, referred “*le problème des partisans du PS*” and the fact that the PS “*n’a pas pu accomplir ce que veulent nos partisans.*”⁴²² Guittet suggested that declining levels of support for EU membership were due to the fact that “*la population ne constate pas d’amélioration du niveau de vie.*”⁴²³ Yet, what also came through in interviews with PS députés was a desire to convince the electorate of the merits of EU membership, rather than fear of the electoral consequences of openly supporting integration. The need to better inform the public on European integration was a recurring theme in interviews with LR députés too. However, this often was accompanied by criticism of the EU. While Abad criticised the EU for being “*trop technocratique et éloignée des citoyens,*”⁴²⁴ Reiss claimed the EU “*ne répond pas aux préoccupations des nos citoyens.*”⁴²⁵ As in the UK, députés’ perceptions of their constituents’ support for EU membership could help explain their own positions on European integration.

Although the LR and the PS are quite united in support of EU membership and the various outcomes of European integration, certain intra-party tensions remain. The divisions revealed at key junctures in the process of European integration are not entirely in the past, and could potentially resurface around a future revision of the Treaties. It should be recalled, for example, that 28 per cent of LR respondents to the questionnaire considered that integration had gone far enough or even too far. Given that public support for EU membership has fallen considerably since the high of the late 1980s and popular support for extremist parties on both the right and the left has grown, the LR and PS could be susceptible to Eurosceptic opinion among their supporters.

There is little to suggest, however, that there are political incentives for LR or PS députés to adopt a Eurosceptic position. European integration is not a competitive dimension for either the LR or the PS. Rozenberg shows that députés’ positions on the Europe issue do not help them get elected because the issue is not of enough importance to the electorate.

⁴²² Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

⁴²³ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone.

⁴²⁴ Damien Abad, interview in person.

⁴²⁵ Frédéric Reiss, interview in person.

Nonetheless, *députés* are conscious of public opinion and are careful not to draw attention to their support for a controversial EU treaty or legal act. Rozenberg concludes that Euroscepticism seems to mobilise parliamentarians to a greater extent where a parliament is strong within the national political system, which is not the case of the National Assembly.⁴²⁶ Also, there is evidence to suggest that *députés* who express Eurosceptic views will not advance through the ranks of either the LR or PS. In fact, vocal critics of the parties' EU policy who failed to fall into line have been externalised rather than integrated. A difference can therefore be observed between the incentives for UK and French politicians to adopt Eurosceptic positions. The difference is most marked where a comparison is made of the centre-right Conservative Party and the LR.

In analysing the Europeanization of institutions, policies, and politics in the UK and France, this second sub-chapter has shown that both states have been heavily impacted by their membership of the EU in ways that could be expected to influence attitudes of politicians towards European integration, impact political competition, and foster competition around the Europe issue. However, while certain similarities in the experiences of the UK and France can be observed, there are important differences in terms of institutional and policy adaptation. Whereas the absence of a culture of compromise within the UK's executive has impeded its adaptation to EU membership, the French executive has perhaps been aided by the fact that political actors are accustomed to intra-executive power-sharing. In contrast to France's relatively weak Parliament, the UK Parliament experienced great pressure for adaptation, which can explain, to a certain extent, the stronger reaction of its politicians to the consequences of the UK's EU membership. On the whole, EU policies tend to be more compatible with the French economic system than they were with the UK system. In contrast, the UK's economic system is characterised by a 'light-touch' approach to regulation, a large financial services sector and a small agricultural sector, and the greater importance of global trade. In terms of the Europeanization of politics, the salience of European integration has increased considerably in both the UK and France, requiring politicians to position themselves. However, although the issue is more salient in France than in the UK, the increase in salience was greater in the UK. Further, while the permissive consensus ended and public support for EU membership fell in both states, support was lower and opposition was higher in the UK. These two factors could further explain the stronger reaction of UK politicians to European integration.

⁴²⁶ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-83.

When comparing the reactions to EU membership of politicians from the two main parties of the UK and France, important differences can be noted. Key is that, while there was a relative consensus between and among LR and PS respondents in support of both the process and outcomes of integration, there were profound differences *between* Conservative and Labour respondents, and *among* Conservative respondents. This meant that, while there is seemingly little basis for political competition around the Europe issue between or within the two main French parties, the issue could be expected to become the basis of inter-party competition between the Conservative and Labour parties, and *within* the Conservative Party itself. Whereas the positions of Labour respondents bore many similarities to those of LR and PS respondents, Conservative respondents stood out in terms of their strong negative reaction to the consequences of the UK's membership of the EU. While responses revealed considerable divisions within the Conservative Party, on the whole, Conservative respondents displayed low levels of support for EU membership and recognised few benefits of European integration. Rather, Conservative MPs considered there to be a number of drawbacks of EU membership, notably loss of national sovereignty, budgetary transfers, and limited influence. Far more so than respondents from the other three parties, Conservative MPs believed the public attached considerable importance to the Europe issue and their constituents opposed membership. Given divisions within the Conservative Party, negative public opinion was more likely to impact the positions of Conservative MPs. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the majority of Conservative respondents had become less supportive of EU membership over time.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to identify features of the national political contexts of the UK and France that might create political incentives for Euroscepticism and to draw preliminary conclusions as to the impact of political competition on the positions of political parties and individual politicians on European integration. There are a number of features of the UK political culture, political system, and party system that created incentives for Euroscepticism. That the UK was once the dominant global power has shaped its ambitions on the international stage, and some viewed EC/EU membership as limiting the UK's potential. National pride in the past, and in the memory of World War II in particular, meant that less credit was attributed to European integration for maintaining peace in Europe. As an old, established democracy that has long enjoyed political stability, the UK resisted change, and the

importance of the principle of parliamentary sovereignty exaggerated pressures for adaptation. National pride and sovereignty are key elements of British national identity, meaning the UK's national identity is an exclusive one. A sense of distinctiveness or exceptionalism, linked to the UK's former power status and the importance of Commonwealth ties, is rather commonplace, as is the fear of loss of national identity. As a result, the way British national identity has been constructed made it somewhat incompatible with a dual sense of attachment to the EU. Low levels of attachment to the EU among the public and Conservative politicians explained, in part, their low levels of support for European integration.

The UK's highly majoritarian and uncodified political system differs considerably from that of the EU and the majority of its member states, and there are a number of features that could have fostered Euroscepticism. Of those features, key was the relative strength of the Parliament and thus the greater impact experienced by this institution as a result of integration. Crucial, also, was the absence of a culture of compromise both within the executive and the legislature – adversarialism is a key characteristic of the UK's political system. As a result, the transfers of sovereignty required by integration were viewed by many, especially Conservative, politicians, not as a necessary step taken so as to strengthen the UK, but as a serious drawback that weakened the state. In addition to these differences in the political system, important differences could also be seen in the UK's economic system. Most significant were the strength of the financial services sector and the weakness of the agricultural sector within the UK economy, the lesser importance of intra-EC/EU trade, and the UK's preference for light-touch regulation or deregulation. These features put the UK economy at odds with the EC/EU 'model', and, for some, especially Conservative, politicians, meant integration held few or no benefits.

Taking into consideration their political ideologies and strategies, it could be expected that both the Conservative and Labour Parties be supportive of European integration. However, whereas the Labour Party became more supportive of integration, the Conservative Party become increasingly Eurosceptic, meaning an inter-party consensus in support of integration was absent. Further, whereas the Labour Party reconciled internal divisions over the Europe issue, divisions within the Conservative Party were ongoing, profound and, latterly, polarised. The position of Conservative politicians, and the party as a whole, can be explained in part by the factors set out above, namely low levels of attachment to the EU, the importance of national sovereignty, and a preference for economic liberalism. However, other factors were clearly at play. While the increasing salience of the Europe issue and growing public opposition to EU membership certainly influenced the position of the Conservative Party and its (aspiring) MPs

on European integration, these factors had the potential to shape the positions of all UK parties and individual politicians. Specific to the Conservative Party were the lower levels of support for membership among its supporters and members (both in reality and perceived), the belief that the public attached considerable importance to the EU issue, the role of (Eurosceptic) members in selecting the party leader and constituency associations in selecting candidates, and the electoral threat posed by UKIP. These factors undoubtedly incentivised Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party. Whereas inter-party divisions rarely resulted in the Europe issue being the basis of inter-party competition, divisions within the Conservative Party served to incentivise intra-party competition. In contrast to their Conservative colleagues, Labour MPs were more attached to the EU, attributed less importance to national sovereignty, and considered integration to be more in keeping with their economic preferences. Their supporters and members were (and were perceived to be) more supportive of membership and, in any case, played a lesser role in selecting the party's leader and candidates. Further, UKIP became (or was perceived to be) an electoral threat to the party only latterly. Once the party had a unified position on European integration, public and supporter opinion had less influence over party policy. These factors meant that there was little political incentive for Euroscepticism within the Labour Party.

There are certain features of the French political culture, political system, and party system that could create incentives for Euroscepticism. Like the UK, France was a key global power and continues to have close ties with French-speaking former colonies. Yet the past is not necessarily a source of pride, and successive French leaders have viewed European integration as a means of maximising, rather than limiting, French influence on the international stage. Further, integration is widely credited with having ensured long-lasting peace in Europe, unlike in the UK. Levels of attachment to the EU higher than in the UK can be seen among the public and mainstream politicians alike, reflecting a greater compatibility of French and European identities. This relatively high attachment to the EU explains, in part, higher levels of support for European integration among the public and mainstream politicians.

France, like the UK, is an old, established democracy and its political system, too, is highly majoritarian. As a result, there has, at times, been resistance to the change necessitated by European integration, which could have fostered Euroscepticism. There are, however, certain features of the political system that bring the French model closer to that of the EU and lessen the impact of EU membership. The dual executive system calls for a certain culture of compromise at the heart of the executive, as does the tendency for multi-party governments, a culture quite absent from the UK executive. The relatively weak National Assembly has been

less impacted by integration than stronger legislatures, such as that of the UK, and the codified legal system of France does not differ fundamentally to that of the EU. The loss of national sovereignty is less of a concern for French mainstream politicians than it was for their UK counterparts. Nonetheless, French politicians, notably Gaullists, have tended to favour intergovernmentalism over supranationalism. The French economic system, with the importance accorded to the agricultural sector, the greater weight of intra-EU trade, and the tendency for intervention and redistribution, appears more compatible with the aims and means of European integration than does the UK economic system. Nonetheless, there are certain aspects of European integration that have been the subject of criticism by French mainstream politicians. While LR *députés* tend to regret the widening of membership of the EU and the scope of integration, PS *députés* would prefer a more social Europe. Although less obvious than in the UK, some institutional and policy bases for Euroscepticism are nonetheless present in France.

In keeping with their political ideologies and strategies, both the RPR-UMP-LR and PS have been supportive of European integration over time. That there has long been a supportive consensus between these two parties has meant there has been little incentive to make the Europe issue a competitive dimension, despite the rather high salience of the issue. This is particularly so given that the public has been relatively supportive of EC/EU membership, and LR and PS *députés* tend to believe their constituents are supportive of membership. Although divisions within the parties over European integration have manifested themselves, these have been periodic. For the most part, divisions were reconciled, or where this was not possible, dissidents were externalised. However, although European integration seems not to be the basis of political competition, parties and individual politicians are certainly conscious of growing opposition to EU membership and electoral support for the FN. The more factional PS, which affords a more important role to party members in the selection of candidates and divided deeply over the relatively recent ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, appears to be particularly conscious of the opinion of its supporters.

In the following chapters these preliminary conclusions will be tested. In particular, it will be shown if and when the Europe issue became a competitive dimension in the UK and France, and whether parties or individual politicians made political gains as result of their position on European integration. This will allow for a better understanding of the status quo revealed through the fieldwork on politicians' positions on European integration.

Chapter 2

From War to Union: France Leads while Britain Struggles to Find a Role

Introduction

In the wake of World War II, faced with the loss and devastation engendered by conflict, Western European states sought to ensure national security and economic reconstruction. Certain states, most notably the United Kingdom and France, also sought to maintain their standing on the international stage. There was widespread recognition and acceptance that securing these objectives would require some form of cooperation between states, yet there were differences as to the form this cooperation should take. Some conceived of European cooperation in specific sectors, focusing on the removal of trade barriers or the creation of defence alliances, whereas others had a more wide-ranging vision. Some viewed the nation state as the only actor capable of guaranteeing the national interest and opposed any transfer of sovereignty, whereas others considered such a transfer as essential to quell nationalisms and rebuild a strong and stable Europe. It was acknowledged that cooperation should include West Germany. Yet states, particularly France, were fearful of future German belligerence and there was some reluctance to treat West Germany as an equal partner. There was also the matter of how to address the perceived threat of the Soviet Union and the expansion of its sphere of influence. Tied to this were concerns about communist opposition parties in western European states.

The USA, determined to see peace, economic recovery, and the suppression of communist forces in Europe, was adamant that European states in receipt of Marshall Plan funds should cooperate with one another. This led to the establishment of the intergovernmental Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) by eighteen states, including the UK, France, and West Germany, in 1948. The following year, the intergovernmental Council of Europe was established, again with the UK, France, and West Germany as founding members. Yet, the USA wanted western European states to go further, putting pressure on them to deepen their cooperation and to allow for West Germany's full economic recovery and military rearmament, which it considered vital for European stability. It was in this context that the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, proposed the creation of a Coal and Steel

Community (ECSC) in May 1950. This Community would be governed by supranational, as well as intergovernmental, institutions.

Whereas the UK had played a key role in the establishment of the OEEC and the Council of Europe, it opted not to join the ECSC at its founding with the signature of the Treaty of Paris in 1951. It was therefore France alone that took the lead in founding what would, forty years later, become the European Union. In light of the success of the ECSC, the six member states decided to establish two further communities, the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community, with the signature of the Treaties of Rome in 1957. Together, through the community institutions, the member states would establish a common market, a common agricultural policy, and structural funds, among other policies. Membership of the communities expanded, with the UK joining at the first enlargement in 1973. By the mid-1980s, member states had committed to the completion of a single European market and the transfer of considerable powers to community institutions. Throughout this period, from the founding of the Communities to the late 1980s, the process of European integration enjoyed public support in the form of a permissive consensus.⁴²⁷ As such, integration was of minimal salience and member state leaders could pursue their policies throughout this period subject to limited political or public scrutiny.

Just as states had differed as to the form cooperation should take, as the process advanced, they sometimes differed as to the scope and depth of European integration within the Communities. Such differences could also be observed within member states, *between* political parties and, in some instances, *within* political parties. A new cleavage in domestic politics began to emerge, and not merely between mainstream and marginal parties. This chapter charts the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and individual politicians on integration from the post-war period to the launching, in December 1990, of the intergovernmental conferences on political and economic union. In doing so, this chapter prepares the reader for the more detailed study of the positions of parties and individual politicians in Part Two of this thesis. The first sub-chapter focuses on the period leading up to each state's accession to the European Communities and studies how parties and individual politicians positioned themselves on membership. The second sub-chapter studies the consequences of membership for political debate in a context of on-going permissive consensus and limited salience of the Europe issue. In doing so, this chapter identifies the points at which the Europe issue was a cause of divisions between and within parties, and seeks to understand

⁴²⁷ Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold, *Europe's Would-be Polity*, *op. cit.*

the basis of those divisions. The extent to which these divisions became the basis of political competition is also studied. Did divisions always stem from differences in perceptions of the national interest and political ideology? Or did strategic considerations play a role in shaping positions on integration, even in the earlier stages of the process?

This chapter argues that, in the early years of integration, positions were mostly determined by perceptions of the national interest and these perceptions were, in most cases, influenced by political ideology. However, it is also argued that, at certain points, when it was believed that political gains could be made, competition between parties and, in some cases, within parties influenced positions on European integration.

1. France leads while the UK holds back

Having established the intergovernmental Organisation for European Economic Cooperation and Council of Europe in the late 1940s, the Schuman Plan of 1950 went further by proposing the establishment of a Coal and Steel Community. This Community would be governed by a supranational High Authority as well as an intergovernmental Council of Ministers. Moreover, a Parliamentary Assembly and a Court of Justice would be established. As such, membership of the ECSC, and those Communities established subsequently, fostered the inter-dependence of member states, and entailed a certain transfer of national sovereignty. While for some states, notably the UK, any transfer of sovereignty was unacceptable, states that joined the Communities calculated that such a transfer of power was in the national interest. The pursuit of European integration through the Communities was particularly important in the context of the Cold War and growing popular support for Communist parties in western Europe. This is not to say, however, that the Treaties of Paris and Rome were not a source of political divisions in the six states that founded the Communities. Nonetheless, with the focus at the time being on domestic issues, those leaders who sought to have their state join the Communities were successful in ensuring the parliamentary ratification of the Treaties.

The following sections present and analyse positions on European integration in the aftermath of World War II in the UK and France. Specifically, the sections trace how parties and individual politicians positioned themselves on membership in the period leading up to and around each state's accession to the European Communities, and show if and why the question was the basis of political divisions and competition.

1.1. Britain's late arrival: reluctant pragmatism?

Forster identifies two distinct periods in the thirty years following the end of World War II and the referendum confirming the UK's membership of the European Communities, the first running from 1945-61 and the second beginning in 1961. In the aftermath of World War II, while the UK supported the notion of cooperation among western European states it declined to participate in any form of cooperation that would entail transfers of national sovereignty and supranationalism. Whereas divisions appeared between and within French mainstream parties on the question of integration, British mainstream parties were quite united in the view that membership of the European Communities, at the time of their founding, was not in the UK's interest. This consensus, present within the Labour and Conservative governments of the period, which included the majority of the parties' MPs and activists, was a key feature of the first period.⁴²⁸

The UK maintained its position despite considerable pressure from the US for the UK to lead post-war European cooperation. It stood back as six of its western European allies established three Communities. Instead, the UK sought to recover its international standing through a privileged bilateral relationship with the USA, the development of the Commonwealth of Nations, and the establishment of a European Free Trade Association.⁴²⁹ It became clear, however, that this would not bring the same benefits as membership of the European Communities. The decision to apply for membership of the Communities marked the beginning of the second period and the end of the consensus that had existed until that time.⁴³⁰ Divisions emerged both between and within the two main political parties. Pro-Community politicians, particularly those within the Labour Party, faced considerable opposition from within their parties.

1.1.1. Post-war pride and attachment to national sovereignty

Soon after the end of World War II, a general election was held. The Labour Party won the election, and the wartime Conservative Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was succeeded by Clement Attlee. Attlee's government was supportive of efforts towards European cooperation, which it viewed as essential in order ensure European security and economic growth.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ Anthony Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics. Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 10.

⁴²⁹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*

⁴³⁰ Anthony Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics. Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴³¹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Nonetheless, the government, which held office from 1945 to 1951, was determined that any cooperation with its European neighbours should be a means for the UK to maximise its global status without ceding national sovereignty, and thus favoured intergovernmental cooperation. While there was a solid consensus within the Labour Party in opposition to supranationalism, there were intra-party differences as to what would be the alternative. While some favoured a strong alliance with the US, others favoured the development of the Commonwealth. Attlee's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was a "pugnacious defender of Britain's great power status", comparable to Churchill, and advocated a third force idea that would see the UK become an independent power that would serve as a bridge to the US.⁴³² Despite its diminished international standing, the UK remained Europe's strongest power and, in response to US pressure for it to take the lead, sought to use its influence to encourage its neighbours to pursue cooperation within the intergovernmental OEEC and the Council of Europe. However, the US was adamant that European cooperation must be based on more than loose intergovernmental ties, which led to Schuman's proposal for a supranational Coal and Steel Community. The UK opposed the supranational nature of the ECSC and the transfers of sovereignty that membership would entail. Both the Labour government and the Conservative opposition viewed supranational integration as unnecessary, and considered it an "idealistic", rather than a pragmatic, approach to European cooperation.⁴³³ The UK's stance was further based on the belief that its commercial and military interests lay as much outside Europe as within.⁴³⁴ Intent on prioritising Atlanticist and Commonwealth alternatives, the UK government chose not to join the Community at its creation in 1951, although it did sign an Association Agreement with the Community in 1954. The Labour government made the decision against joining with the support of the Conservative opposition, the majority of the parties' MPs and activists, high-ranking civil servants, and influential trade unions. A consensus existed between and within the two mainstream parties, and beyond.

Yet, it was not only perceptions of the UK's future interests that determined the positions of politicians on membership of the ECSC. Of great importance, too, were perceptions of the UK's role in the World Wars. The World Wars had a heavy physical and psychological impact on the UK, as they did on other European states. However, whereas the memory of war brought politicians in the Communities' founding states to view European integration as a

⁴³² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans. Britain and European Integration, 1945-1998*, Pearsons Education, Harlow, 2000, pp. 13, 26.

⁴³³ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁴³⁴ David A. Messenger, "Dividing Europe: The Cold War and European Integration", in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

bulwark against dangerous nationalisms and ensure long-lasting peace, the UK's wartime experience was more likely to elicit a sense of national pride and a desire to retain a dominant role on the international stage. As one of the three major allied powers, the UK was the sole western European state to play a leading role in establishing the post-war global order, participating in the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences and the Bretton Woods Conference. It had established a 'special relationship' with the US and, in the context of decolonisation, the Commonwealth of Nations allowed the UK to maintain cooperation with, and influence over, its (former) colonies. To this day, there is less recognition among UK politicians than among their French counterparts of the role played by European integration in fostering peace. Although two-thirds of UK politicians surveyed considered the UK to have benefitted from integration in terms of the peace-building between member states, 16 per cent of respondents felt that the UK had benefitted little, and almost 18 per cent believed integration to have brought no benefits in terms of peace-building. Fully 80 per cent of Conservative respondents believed European integration to have brought no benefits to the UK in terms of peace-building. Among those interviewed, peace was only occasionally cited as a basis of their support for integration. Further, unlike French interviewees, British politicians, even those who were alive during World War II, did not refer to sorrowful memories of the (post-)war era.

As leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill was critical of the government's failure to associate itself with the Schuman Plan, which might have allowed the UK to guide states away from supranationalism in favour of intergovernmentalism. Further, in a speech made at the University of Zurich in 1946, Churchill advocated a United States of Europe in which "the material strength of a single state [would be] less important" and called for the creation of a unified European army to work in cooperation with the USA and Germany.⁴³⁵ As a result of these positions, in advance of the 1950 general election, Churchill came under pressure from Conservative Party leaders who called on him to conceal his pro-Europeanism as there were concerns that his position could have negative electoral consequences.⁴³⁶ This was a first instance of electoral considerations influencing positioning on the Europe issue. Yet, although Churchill had voiced strong support for European integration, he was opposed to the UK being part of any such supranational project. Further, despite believing that the UK shared a number of interests with other European states, he considered the UK to be fundamentally different from its neighbours. It should be recalled that, in 1930, Churchill wrote that "we are with Europe, not of it". The experience of World War II had not only reinforced British national

⁴³⁵ Winston Churchill, *Speech at University of Zurich*, 19 September 1946 <<https://rm.coe.int/16806981f3>>.

⁴³⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

identity and pride, but emphasised differences between the UK and other Europeans. In this context, transfers of national sovereignty were viewed as a sign of weakness, and, in the eyes of its politician at the time, the UK was not weak.⁴³⁷

In advance of the 1950 and 1951 general elections, neither the Conservative nor the Labour Party manifestos raised the question of the UK's membership of the ECSC, reflecting the on-going inter-party consensus in opposition to membership. The parties did, however, refer to the need for cooperation with European partners, with the Conservative Party's manifestos of 1950 and 1951 calling respectively for "closer unity in Europe"⁴³⁸ and a "United Europe"⁴³⁹. Nonetheless, on his return to office as Prime Minister in 1951, Churchill's aversion to supranationalism continued.⁴⁴⁰ He appointed Anthony Eden, who was firmly opposed to any UK involvement in the process of European integration, as Foreign Secretary. That Churchill appointed an 'anti-European' to this role indicated his own position on the process of integration that was underway. The sense of 'otherness' Churchill had expressed was also conveyed by Eden in a speech given in 1952 in which he stated that membership of a "federation on the continent of Europe" was something "we know in our bones we cannot do".⁴⁴¹ This sense of Europeans as 'the other' can be contrasted with a sense of closeness between the UK and other English-speaking countries, suggesting a mutually exclusive alternative.⁴⁴² As was shown in Chapter 2, a strong sense of national pride and attachment to national sovereignty might impede the development of a sense of European identity and contribute to a feeling of 'otherness'. As was also shown through responses to the questionnaire, although UK politicians have become more attached to Europe than the general public, a sense of difference from other European nations remained present among a considerable proportion of politicians, notably among Conservative MPs.

Parallel to the establishment of the ECSC, the French government proposed the creation of a European Defence Community (EDC). By then, the six founding states (EC6) had made it clear that participation in negotiations necessitated acceptance of the principle of supranationalism. The UK therefore neither joined the EDC nor participated in negotiations. Although the UK supported the establishment of the EDC, it sought to have it and the ECSC

⁴³⁷ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴³⁸ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1950" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1950/1950-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁴³⁹ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1951" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1951/1951-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁴⁴⁰ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁴⁴¹ Anthony Eden, *Speech at Colombia University*, 14 January 1952.

⁴⁴² Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, "Introduction: Euroscepticism and the Evolution of European Political Debate", *op. cit.*, p. 16.

brought under the authority of the intergovernmental Council of Europe, of which it was a member.⁴⁴³ The actions of the UK contributed to the failure of the EDC. Subsequently, the UK sponsored and joined the intergovernmental Western European Union (WEU) in 1954. Some considered the establishment of the WEU to be a victory against supranationalism.⁴⁴⁴ Yet, this 'loss' may have given greater impetus to those who sought the establishment of a supranational common market. Invited to join the Spaak Committee, which convened from July 1955 to April 1956 to discuss the creation of a common market and an atomic energy community, the UK government, under the leadership of the 'anti-European' Anthony Eden since April 1955, opted to send an official from the Board of Trade rather than a senior government minister. This appointment reflected the UK's continued disinterest in membership of such a supranational organisation.⁴⁴⁵ In fact, the UK withdrew early from negotiations as it supported neither the creation of a customs union nor an atomic energy community.

Membership of the proposed common market would limit states' right to set their own tariff rates, and would therefore impact the UK's trade with non-EC trade partners. Notably, it would prevent the UK from granting preferential access to Commonwealth states. Given the continued importance of its trade with Commonwealth states, this provision risked having detrimental economic consequences for the UK. Further, and perhaps even more importantly, the UK's prominent role within the Commonwealth served as a symbol of the UK's power status, which many were unwilling to sacrifice. Even recently, a considerable proportion of UK politicians, and notably a strong majority of Conservative MPs, considered the UK to have most in common with Commonwealth states in terms of culture and values, and this even though there was wide recognition that the UK's interests were more aligned with those of other European states. This reflects the importance that the UK has long attached to the Commonwealth and its standing within the organisation, and the extent to which the UK's identity has been shaped by relations with non-European English-speaking countries. As such, the UK was also concerned about the consequences of membership of a European common market for its bilateral relationship with the US. The UK had made this relationship a key basis of its foreign policy and was unwilling to compromise it by conducting relations, at least in part, through the EC. Although the UK attached great importance to trade liberalisation, it feared that its privileged position with the US would be usurped by the EC if it were to join the

⁴⁴³ Anthony Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁴⁴⁴ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁴⁴⁵ *Idem.*

Common Market.⁴⁴⁶ In an attempt to reap the benefits of free trade, without transferring sovereignty or compromising other relationships, the UK initiated the creation of an intergovernmental European Free Trade Association (EFTA). EFTA was established in 1959 and the UK was joined by six other signatory states – Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland.

1.1.2. A reality check and a change of mind

The UK watched as the EC proved to be a great success. The economic growth of EFTA members was less than that of EC member states. Between 1950 and 1973, whereas British economic growth averaged 3 per cent per annum, West German and French growth was 6 per cent and 5.1 per cent, respectively, per annum.⁴⁴⁷ Further, between 1958 and 1968, real earnings in EC member states increased by 75 per cent between 1958 and 1968, whereas earnings in the UK rose by only 38 per cent.⁴⁴⁸ Despite the importance attached by the UK to the Commonwealth, relations with its member states proceeded less smoothly than hoped, and patterns of trade began to change. Further, the Suez Crisis of 1956 revealed the limits of the UK's power and negatively impacted its relationship with the US. This left UK fearful of being marginalised on the international stage. Also, the US continued to actively support UK membership of European supranational organisations.⁴⁴⁹

Harold Macmillan had succeeded Eden as Prime Minister in 1957. Macmillan was a member of a pro-Europe group within the Conservative Party, known as the 'Strasbourg Tories'.⁴⁵⁰ Under Macmillan's leadership, the Party's policy on European integration could be expected to evolve. Since he came to power, the economic benefits of membership had come to outweigh the political costs, in terms of sovereignty.⁴⁵¹ It was in view of this that, in August 1961, Macmillan submitted an application for membership of the EC. Despite Macmillan's pro-Europeanism, the government's move nonetheless came somewhat as a surprise as the Party's 1959 general election manifesto had given no indication that its position on membership had changed or might change.⁴⁵² The decision to apply was a pragmatic choice by the government,

⁴⁴⁶ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴⁴⁷ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴⁴⁸ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁵⁰ David Baker, Andrew Gamble, Nick Randall, and David Seawright, "Euro-scepticism in the British Party System: 'A Source of Fascination, Perplexity, and Sometimes Frustration'", in Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (eds), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euro-scepticism*, Volume 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, p. 97.

⁴⁵¹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴⁵² Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1959" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1959/1959-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

not one made based on any great enthusiasm for integration. It was believed that remaining outside the EC held more risks than joining.⁴⁵³ The bases of the government's decision to apply for membership did not bode well for the UK's future relationship with the EC. In fact, the government's application was merely a request to discuss the possibility of UK accession, as opposed to an unconditional commitment to membership, which again reflects a lack of enthusiasm.⁴⁵⁴ Perhaps surprisingly, the application enjoyed strong support within the Conservative Party. The success of the EC, particularly in terms of economic growth, presented the Conservative Party with an opportunity to make political gains by taking the UK into the EC, allowing it to enjoy similar economic growth. The collective change in position was also due, in part, to a generational change. The intake of MPs at the general elections between 1950 and 1959 had been more supportive of European integration than opposed. The resignation of Eden, a leading opponent of integration, had further contributed to the shift towards pro-Europeanism within the party.⁴⁵⁵

As the Conservative Party held a solid majority of seats, the application also enjoyed the support of the majority of Parliament. Nonetheless, opposition was strong and Macmillan's application for membership marked the end of the consensus that had existed until that time and the beginning of a new period. Divisions emerged both between and within the Conservative and Labour Parties. Within the Conservative Party, concerns continued to be voiced over transfers of sovereignty and the fate of the Commonwealth. Conservative opponents of membership organised through the Anti-Common Market League, which campaigned actively following Macmillan's application.⁴⁵⁶ While there were clear concerns about the characteristics of the common market and the consequences of membership for national sovereignty and relations with the Commonwealth, on-going Euroscepticism could be explained, to a certain extent, by the aloofness or delusions of grandeur of its politicians.⁴⁵⁷ As former US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, said in 1962, the UK had "lost an Empire" but had "not yet found a role".⁴⁵⁸ Macmillan could, however, ignore these concerns within his own Party as he was confident of securing majority support for his proposal, and had prepared in advance by appointing pro-EC politicians to key positions in government. Just one junior government minister resigned in protest at the application, and only one of Conservative's 365

⁴⁵³ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans. Britain and European Integration, 1945-1998*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁴⁵⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁷ Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism", *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

⁴⁵⁸ Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*, Macmillan, London, 1998, p. 171.

MPs voted against the government at a Commons vote to oppose the application, while twenty Conservative MPs abstained.⁴⁵⁹ Further, by having merely applied to discuss the *possibility* of UK accession, Macmillan deflected criticism and forced opponents to focus on the terms of any future membership. This served, successfully, to divide critics, notably the opposition Labour Party.⁴⁶⁰

The Labour Party had been led since 1955 by Hugh Gaitskell, who Young refers to as the UK's "first Eurosceptic".⁴⁶¹ Yet the party was highly divided over the question of accession, and Gaitskell sought to avoid the deepening of intra-party divisions. This was particularly important given the heavy defeat of the Labour Party at the 1959 general election and Gaitskell's aim to make the party more electable. On the right of the party key figures, including the Deputy leader George Brown and Roy Jenkins, were vocal supporters of European integration and UK membership of the Communities. Opponents were mostly, although not exclusively, on the left of the party.⁴⁶² Their concerns echoed those of Conservative opponents, most notably on loss of sovereignty, particularly, in the case of Labour opponents, over economic policy, and the consequences for UK-Commonwealth relations.⁴⁶³ Yet, perhaps surprisingly, given the similar bases of their opposition to EC membership, Labour and Conservative opponents did not collaborate to oppose membership.⁴⁶⁴ Faced with the need to appeal to both sides of his party, Gaitskell chose to adopt an ambiguous position, claiming to support UK membership of the EC in principle, while calling for the negotiation of terms that would be impossible for the government to achieve.⁴⁶⁵ At the August 1961 Parliament vote, Labour MPs abstained, reflecting this ambiguity. However, as the terms of the UK's membership became clearer, Gaitskell's position shifted to one of opposition. During his speech at the 1962 Labour Party Conference, Gaitskell set out a long list of reasons underpinning his opposition and argued that EC membership would mean "the end of a thousand years of history".⁴⁶⁶ This shift also took place at a time when polls suggested public opinion was starting to turn against membership.⁴⁶⁷ This would indicate that increasing negative public opinion assisted Gaitskell in adopting an unambiguous position in opposition to membership. The shift

⁴⁵⁹ David Baker, Andrew Gamble, Nick Randall, and David Seawright, "Euroscepticism in the British Party System: 'A Source of Fascination, Perplexity, and Sometimes Frustration'", *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁴⁶⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁴⁶¹ Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁴⁶² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴⁶³ David Baker, Andrew Gamble, Nick Randall, and David Seawright, "Euroscepticism in the British Party System: 'A Source of Fascination, Perplexity, and Sometimes Frustration'", *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴⁶⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴⁶⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴⁶⁶ Hugh Gaitskell, *Speech to Labour Party Conference 1962*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶⁷ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

in the Labour leadership's position mirrored that of a proportion of Conservative MPs as some, including members of Cabinet, began to doubt the benefits for the UK of membership.

The UK's decision to apply for membership was not met with enthusiasm by all member states. Charles de Gaulle, who had become France's President in 1958, feared that enlargement would reduce the cohesion of the EC, especially given the UK's closeness to non-European states. He also considered the UK to have a competing vision of European integration and was particularly concerned about the UK's criticism of the CAP. Negotiations nonetheless began in October 1961, led, for the UK, by convinced Europhile, Edward Heath. However, negotiations were brought to an end in January 1963 by a veto by de Gaulle.⁴⁶⁸ De Gaulle's veto, as opposed to parliamentary or public opposition, brought the UK's bid for membership of the Communities to a halt.

Both the Conservative and Labour Parties changed leader in 1963. Macmillan was succeeded as leader and Prime Minister by Alec Douglas-Home. In opposition, Gaitskell was succeeded by Harold Wilson. The general election of 1964 took place not long after negotiations had ended. The Conservative Party's manifesto stated quite clearly that "no question of fresh negotiations can arise at present" and set out the government's intention to work, through the intergovernmental Council of Europe and WEU to establish close relations with the EC6.⁴⁶⁹ The Labour Party's manifesto was less clear as to a future government's policy on EC membership. On the one hand, the manifesto claimed that if the UK had joined other states in the process of European integration in 1951, "our national income in 1964 would be one-third more than it is". On the other hand, it is stated that "the Labour Party is convinced that the first responsibility of a British Government is still to the Commonwealth."⁴⁷⁰

The Labour Party won the general election, but held a very narrow majority of the seats. Wilson had previously opposed accession and announced that he had no intention to re-apply for EC membership. In any case, a majority of Labour MPs opposed membership,⁴⁷¹ meaning pursuing negotiations at that time would not have been an option. It was not until after the general election of 1966, which Wilson called in an attempt to increase his Parliamentary majority, that re-opening negotiations became a possibility. With the Conservative Party under the leadership of the pro-European Edward Heath since 1965, the Europe issue was a feature of

⁴⁶⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁴⁶⁹ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1964" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1964/1964-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁴⁷⁰ Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 1964" <<http://labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1964/1964-labour-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁴⁷¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

the general election. During the election campaign, Heath made clear his commitment to apply for membership a second time if elected. In response, Wilson sought to satisfy supporters and opponents both among the electorate and within the Labour Party by adopting an ambiguous position. The Labour Party won the election, increasing considerably its Parliamentary majority.⁴⁷²

While the economies of the EC6 had continued to grow since the UK's first application in 1961, the importance of the UK's trade with the Commonwealth countries had declined.⁴⁷³ EC membership was therefore a more attractive possibility than it had been just a few years earlier and, with that, the public had become more supportive of accession. Faced with these realities, and bolstered by the election outcome that gave the government a solid majority, Wilson's position shifted. In a speech to Parliament he set out his concerns about the UK economy and his desire to see the UK, and British industry, take advantage of the "long-term benefits" of being part of a large Single Market.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, in 1967, the Wilson government made a second application for membership. Yet, while the Labour leadership favoured EC accession, the party, including the Cabinet, remained divided on the question. A Cabinet vote on membership, held on 30 April 1967, resulted in thirteen votes in favour and eight against.⁴⁷⁵ A leading Cabinet opponent was the Defence Secretary Denis Healey, while Peter Shore led backbench opposition. Yet, with his authority within the party boosted by the gains of the general election and sure of a Parliamentary majority in support of the application, Wilson pushed ahead. The shift in position was also strategic as Wilson saw the issue as a means of making political gains, which provides an early illustration of Bourdieu's claim that strategy shapes ideology. Forster contends that the application allowed Wilson to undermine the Conservative opposition by appropriating its pro-Europe policy, unite the divided Labour Party, and deflect attention away from other policy failures.⁴⁷⁶ In terms of undermining the opposition, Wilson was successful as the Conservative Party was strongly supportive of the second application. He was also successful in uniting the Labour Party around him, with a large majority of the party's MPs voting to re-open negotiations. Contrary to 1961, an inter-party consensus existed in support of membership. Parliament approved the decision to re-apply for membership by 488 votes to 62. Yet, beneath Labour support for re-opening negotiations were

⁴⁷² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

⁴⁷³ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁴ Harold Wilson, *Speech to Parliament*, 2 May 1967 < https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1967/may/02/european-economic-community-application#S5CV0746P0_19670502_HOC_256>.

⁴⁷⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁴⁷⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

deep intra-party divides over the terms of any future membership. This was manifested by the 35 Labour MPs who voted against the government and the further 51 who abstained.⁴⁷⁷

De Gaulle's second veto of UK membership came much more quickly than had his first, and was based on a perception that the UK was still not ready for accession and that the EC would be fundamentally changed by its membership.⁴⁷⁸ The impact of the two vetoes of the UK's application for membership should not be underestimated. Not only did the vetoes delay the UK's accession, affecting its ability to shape the development of the EC, the rejections bred a sense of resentment among some UK politicians towards the EC as a whole, and France in particular, resentment which can be observed to this day.

1.1.3. Towards accession

Charles de Gaulle resigned as President in 1969, two years after his second veto of UK membership, and was succeeded by Georges Pompidou. Also that year, Willy Brandt came to power as Chancellor of West Germany. Both Pompidou and Brandt were supportive of UK accession allowing the negotiation of the UK's membership to recommence.⁴⁷⁹ Nonetheless, negotiations were not re-opened before the June 1970 general election, which resulted in a victory for the Conservative Party, under the leadership of Heath. As in 1966, Heath had promised during the election campaign to make membership of the EC a priority, despite a considerable decline in public support since the second veto.⁴⁸⁰ The Europe issue clearly was not of great importance to the public as the Conservatives won a sizeable majority.

With negotiations opening shortly after his election as Prime Minister, Heath's long-standing, ideological support for European integration was evident. He was committed to ensuring UK membership and he accepted that the EC could not be changed.⁴⁸¹ For the majority of the Conservative Party, however, support was based, mostly, on pragmatic and utilitarian considerations.⁴⁸² In opposition, Wilson's position on accession became less supportive. Although he continued to support the UK's membership of the EC, he led a party that had become increasingly opposed to membership. Hostility had increased due, partly, to the heavy influence of trade unions. Notably, the number of Labour MPs sponsored by trade unions had

⁴⁷⁷ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁴⁷⁸ Jeffrey Vanke, "Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Idea of Europe", in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷⁹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁸⁰ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴⁸¹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

⁴⁸² Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

increased and James Callaghan, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, had strong union ties.⁴⁸³ Further, membership negotiations provided the opposition with a basis to criticise the government. For these strategic reasons, Wilson turned his focus to the terms of the UK's accession. Heath's determination to have the UK join the EC made him an easy target of accusations that he was accepting terms that went against the national interest. Wilson sought to contain intra-party divisions on EC membership, and appeal to public opinion, by promising the renegotiation of the terms of accession and a referendum on continued membership under a future Labour government. Michael Foot and Peter Shore, both vocal opponents of EC membership, were given the responsibility of leading Labour opposition to the Treaty of Accession, reflecting the strength and influence of anti-EC actors within the party. The role allowed Foot, in particular, to increase his prominence within the party. Further, Wilson's strategy met with opposition from high-ranking Europhiles, most notably Roy Jenkins, the Deputy Leader of the party.⁴⁸⁴ It seems clear that Wilson's position was shaped to a great extent by party political considerations as evidence indicates that, had he been re-elected in 1970, his government would have accepted membership on the same terms as did Heath's government.⁴⁸⁵

Membership was put to a vote in the House of Commons on 28 October 1971. By this time, many of those who had been supporters of accession in the early 1960s had become opponents. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that the terms of the UK's membership were less favourable than had been hoped for or expected. Those who supported membership still tended to do so for utilitarian, rather than affective, reasons. The Conservative government, calling for a vote in favour of accession, allowed its MPs a free vote. In contrast, the Labour Party imposed a three-line whip to oppose membership. MPs voted 356 to 244 in favour of accession. While support for membership was not overwhelming, the result of the vote did not differ greatly from the votes of the French National Assembly in July 1957. Although 41 Conservative MPs opposed accession, the party as a whole was pragmatically supportive.⁴⁸⁶ In contrast, the majority of the Labour Party was opposed. There was a clear inter-party divide, meaning the UK would enter the EC without a supportive consensus among its two main parties. However, although almost 90 per cent of Conservative MPs voted in favour of membership, the opposition of 43 of the party's MPs meant that the government, which had just a 14-seat majority, depended on the support of the 69 pro-Europe Labour MPs who

⁴⁸³ Andrew Thorpe, "The Labour Party and the Trade Unions", in John McIlroy, Nina Fishman, Alan Campbell (eds.), *British Trade Unions and Industrial Politics*, Routledge, London, 1999.

⁴⁸⁴ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁴⁸⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

⁴⁸⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

disobeyed the Labour whip.⁴⁸⁷ Those 69 MPs constituted more than one-third of the Parliamentary Party and they had prioritised their support for EC membership over loyalty to the party.⁴⁸⁸ Although the majority of the Labour Party opposed membership, this show of support laid bare a profound intra-party divide and put Wilson in a difficult position. Further, among those in the Labour Party who voted against accession, there were some who recognised the merits for the UK of EC membership, most notably Wilson himself, but claimed a Labour government could have negotiated better terms. It seems clear that the potential for political gain influenced the positions of some in the Labour Party. Opposing the UK's membership of the EC allowed the Labour Party to make the issue an important basis of inter-party competition at the next general election. In its 1974 election manifesto, the Labour Party promised that, if elected, it would re-negotiate the terms of the UK's EC membership and put the question of continued membership to referendum.⁴⁸⁹ Opposition also allowed certain individuals, such as Wilson and Foot, to secure or boost their position within the party.

1.1.4. Renegotiation and the 1975 referendum

The Labour Party won the February 1974 general election but did not win a majority of the seats. Nonetheless, true to his promise while in opposition, on returning to government in March 1974, Wilson sought to renegotiate the terms of the UK's membership. Without a Parliamentary majority, the Labour government was in a weak position. New elections were held in October 1974, at which the Labour Party secured a one-seat majority.⁴⁹⁰ Although the election result strengthened the government's position somewhat, the holding of a referendum presented great risks. There was limited public enthusiasm for the UK's recent accession to the EC. Although 57 per cent of the public believed problems were more likely to be solved through joint action with fellow EC member states, this rate was well below the EC average of 73 per cent. Levels of public support for the Common Market were particularly low at 33 per cent, meaning a greater proportion of the public opposed the Common Market than supported it.⁴⁹¹ Wilson appointed his Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, to lead the negotiating team. Callaghan had long lacked enthusiasm for the EC and could be considered a Eurosceptic. He was adamant that if the UK were to remain a member, the terms of that membership would have to change. The

⁴⁸⁷ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁴⁸⁸ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁴⁸⁹ Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 1974" <<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1974/Feb/1974-feb-labour-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁴⁹⁰ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections", *op. cit.*, p.13.

⁴⁹¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 1*, *op. cit.*

detailed negotiations were carried out by the pro-European Roy Hattersley and the Eurosceptic Peter Shore, who had been promoted to Cabinet as Trade Secretary.⁴⁹² This choice of individuals reflects the need for Wilson to satisfy the both sides of the divide within his party, but was not conducive to having the UK ‘speak with one voice’.

The focus of the renegotiations was the UK’s contribution to the EC budget, as it was clear that the UK was contributing proportionately more than its share of the wealth of EC member states. The talks secured a financial mechanism, which would, it was claimed, result in a reduction in the UK’s contributions. Yet the UK’s contribution to the EC budget rose by 10 percentage points between 1973 (8.64 per cent) and 1977 (18.72 per cent), making it the second biggest contributor after West Germany despite it being the third poorest member state. The negotiations therefore did not achieve their key objective, rather they served to damage UK relations with other EC member states for a number of years to come.⁴⁹³ Renegotiating the terms of membership, did, however, allow Wilson to present himself to his party and to the public as a defender of the national interest.⁴⁹⁴

The revised Treaty of Accession was put to a vote in the House of Commons on 9 April 1975 and was passed by 396 votes to 170.⁴⁹⁵ Naturally, the Labour leadership, including Callaghan, called for a vote in support of the revised Treaty. Nonetheless, deep divisions within the Labour Party were again revealed, with 137 Labour MPs voting in favour of the terms in the free vote, and 145 against.⁴⁹⁶ The Parliamentary Labour Party remained majoritarily opposed to membership. Further, seven members of Cabinet opposed the terms.⁴⁹⁷ As a result of on-going opposition within the Labour Party, the government was dependent on the support of Conservative MPs, who voted overwhelmingly in support of the terms. Of the 275 Conservative MPs, only eight voted against the terms of accession.⁴⁹⁸ Labour opposition to the accession was reiterated later that month at a special Labour Party conference on the matter. Party members voted to leave the EC by 3.7 million votes to 1.9 million, again despite the support of Wilson and Callaghan.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹² Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁹⁴ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁹⁵ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁴⁹⁶ Anthony King, *Britain Says Yes: The 1975 Referendum on the Common Market*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington DC, 1977, p. 86, cited in Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁹⁷ David Butler and Uwe Kitzinger, *The 1975 Referendum*, Macmillan, London, 1976, p. 53, cited in Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁹⁸ Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹⁹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

As promised, the Treaty was put to referendum in June 1975. Having renegotiated the terms of membership, the government called on the public to vote to remain in the EC. Unlike Ireland and Denmark who had also joined the EC in 1973, the UK had not held a referendum prior to accession. To hold a referendum in 1975 could therefore be justified. However, Wilson's motivations in organising a referendum were party political. It was hoped that by holding a referendum and suspending the collective responsibility of Cabinet for the duration of the referendum campaign, the result would be accepted by all within the party and divisions would be healed.⁵⁰⁰ The 'yes' campaign had the support of prominent centrist politicians from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Parties. The majority of Wilson's cabinet campaigned in support of accession, including Callaghan, Jenkins, and Denis Healey, who had opposed membership in 1967. Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative Party since February 1975, like her predecessor and the majority of her party supported a 'yes' vote. Further, the 'yes' campaign enjoyed the support of much of the print media and business leaders, and donations from the latter meant the campaign in support of continued membership had considerable financial means. The 'no' campaign brought together a diverse range of politicians from the farthest reaches of the UK political spectrum. Labour opponents were led by Michael Foot, Peter Shore, and Tony Benn. Of course, they had the support of Labour Party members two-thirds of whom had voted to leave the EC at the special conference two months earlier. Labour opponents were joined by MPs from the right-wing of the Conservative Party, most notably Enoch Powell,⁵⁰¹ and by MPs from both the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru.⁵⁰² With a budget a fraction of that of the 'yes' campaign, the 'no' campaign lacked financial means.

In the months preceding the referendum, the percentage of the public perceiving EC membership as a bad thing fell considerably. Whereas 35 per cent of the public opposed membership in October 1974, just 22 per cent considered it to be a bad thing by May 1975.⁵⁰³ At the referendum, 67 per cent of voters supported continued membership of the EC, with a turnout of 64 per cent of the electorate.⁵⁰⁴ This rather low turnout could indicate a lack of public interest in the EC or perhaps a lack of awareness of the implications of membership. Further, that the two campaigns, especially that against membership, brought together such diverse politicians undoubtedly served to distance the public.

⁵⁰⁰ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁵⁰¹ *Idem.*

⁵⁰² Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism", *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

⁵⁰³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 1*, *op. cit.*; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 3*, June-July 1975.

⁵⁰⁴ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

A number of similarities can be identified between the 1975 referendum and that held in 2016 on the UK's continued membership of the EU, which will be briefly studied in Chapter 4. Just as Wilson promised a referendum on continued EC membership if elected at the next general election, David Cameron made such a promise in 2013. Both Wilson and Cameron made the commitment in the context of, and in an attempt to quell, serious divisions within their respective parties on the question of the UK's EC/EU membership. Both had been ambiguous on the Europe issue in attempt to please both sides of the divide within their parties. As such, both Wilson and Cameron supported the UK's membership of the EC/EU in principle but sought to modify the terms. Cameron, like Wilson, carried out negotiations in an attempt to modify these terms in advance of the referendum, and, in both instances, negotiations achieved very little of substance. Cameron, like Wilson, suspended the convention of collective cabinet responsibility during the referendum campaign so as to allow ministers to freely express their positions on membership, again likely in an attempt to soothe tensions within the party. Finally, both in 1975 and 2016, the 'leave' campaign brought together supporters from both sides of the political spectrum, in particular the far-left and the far-right. The notable difference is, of course, that whereas the government's call to remain prevailed in 1975, it did not in 2016.

1.2. The French model of European integration: a heartfelt and unanimous choice?

Whereas the UK took the lead in the founding of the Council of Europe, it was France that was at the forefront in the establishment of the European Communities. Conscious of the need to move beyond mere intergovernmental cooperation, but unwilling to go down the path of federalism, France's leading politicians, most notably Robert Schuman, Foreign Minister, along with Jean Monnet, economic advisor, advocated a compromise approach. France filled the leadership void left by the UK's absence and was successful in overcoming discord and opposition among Western European states to garner the necessary support for its preferred model of European integration. In contrast to the UK, where there was a consensus between mainstream parties that membership of the Communities was not in the national interest, divisions were present both between and within French mainstream parties on the question of integration. French governing elites were, however, successful in overcoming these divisions so as to ratify the treaties founding the three European Communities. As the process of integration advanced, trust in West Germany grew and the economic benefits became very clear. A mainstream consensus in support of membership between and within the main political parties emerged.

1.2.1. *In search of peace*

In the post-war period, an initial consensus existed among French politicians as to the core national objectives: ensuring long-lasting peace and guaranteeing national security, fostering economic growth, and securing an on-going role for France on the international stage. Most French political actors considered European cooperation to be a means to attain these goals.⁵⁰⁵ The World Wars had a heavier physical and psychological impact on France than they did on the UK. The desire to ensure a long-lasting peace was therefore more important to France in shaping its attitude towards European cooperation and integration in the post-war period. Further, there was a recognition that ensuring such a long-lasting peace would necessitate some form of cooperation, even integration, with neighbouring states, including West Germany. In fact, in France, unlike in other member states, integration was viewed by politicians as an “imperative.”⁵⁰⁶

The memory of war and the recognition of the role played by European integration in guaranteeing peace have continued to shape attitudes towards integration to the current day. All except one of the sixty-eight French deputies who responded to the survey question considered France to have benefited from integration in terms of building peace among member states. Further, the vast majority of both PS and LR respondents considered integration to have brought only benefits in terms of peace-building. This stands in contrast to the UK, where Conservative respondents tended very much to deny the benefits to the UK in terms of peace-building. In contrast to the UK again, French *députés* who were interviewed often cited peace as a key basis of their support for European integration. Integration was believed to have “*apporté et maintenu la paix en Europe*”⁵⁰⁷ and was viewed as “*la garantie de la paix*”.⁵⁰⁸ *Députés* from the Grand-Est region were more likely to evoke the memory of the post-war period. Reference was regularly made to the destruction of towns,⁵⁰⁹ the long-term trauma of families in the region,⁵¹⁰ and the presence of military cemeteries.⁵¹¹ In referring to his support for integration, LR *député*, André Schneider, said that “*quand on est alsacien on est presque obligé.*”⁵¹² That politicians from across the political spectrum associate integration so closely with war and the

⁵⁰⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁵⁰⁶ Helen Drake, “Perspectives on French relations with the European Union: an introduction”, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵⁰⁷ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

⁵⁰⁸ Stéphane Saint-André, interview by telephone, 3 June 2016.

⁵⁰⁹ André Schneider, interview in person, 27 April 2016.

⁵¹⁰ Denis Jacquat, interview by telephone.

⁵¹¹ Frédéric Reiss, interview in person.

⁵¹² André Schneider, interview in person.

building of peace can help explain the eventual emergence of a consensus in support of integration between and within mainstream parties.

While there was acceptance that European reconstruction must involve West Germany, the predominant view among French politicians was that West Germany should remain politically and economically weak. This can be seen in the Monnet Plan for economic reconstruction, a feature of which was French control of West German coal and steel production in the Saarland and Ruhr valley. This allowed France access to the materials needed for economic revival, while monitoring and limiting West German recovery. However, as relations between the West and the Soviet Union evolved, France found itself under mounting pressure from the United States, which insisted on West Germany's involvement in economic recovery efforts. With the outbreak of war in Korea, and the increase in the external security threat, the US further insisted that France accept West German rearmament.⁵¹³ In view of the UK's opposition to any form of supranationalism, France was called on to lead the process of European integration. The absence of the UK provided France not only with the opportunity to shape the process of integration, but also to regain its standing on the international stage. Despite emerging from World War II as a victor, the status of France was in decline, as evidenced by its absence from the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences of 1945, and there was a desire to reverse this trend. However, France's advocates of integration had to strike a difficult balance between reassuring their compatriots and satisfying US demands. This was made all the more difficult by the political situation in post-war France.

The post-war political context in France was characterised by instability. The 4th Republic was instated in 1946 and, over the course of the twelve years of its duration, France was governed by a series of coalitions, with no less than twenty-one governments. The Third Force coalition, which governed from 1947 to 1952, brought together parties from the left and the right that supported the institutions of the 4th Republic, most notably the '*Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière*' (SFIO), which would later become the *Parti socialiste* (PS), and the *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP), the centrist, Christian-Democrat party of Robert Schuman. The coalition sought to counter the perceived threat of the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) and the *Rassemblement du peuple français* (RPF), launched by Charles de Gaulle in 1947, both of which opposed the institutional status quo.⁵¹⁴ Despite being one of the biggest, if not *the* biggest, party in parliament throughout the 4th Republic, members of the PCF were

⁵¹³ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, *op. cit.*

⁵¹⁴ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

prohibited, under the Truman Doctrine, from occupying ministerial positions. De Gaulle's movement gained strong popular support and became the largest parliamentary party at the 1951 legislative elections, but it, too, was kept out of power by the parties of the Third Force coalition. The absence of political unity meant that France was slow in assuming the leadership of the European project.⁵¹⁵

1.2.2. Competing visions of European integration

As discussions got underway, a new political fault line emerged around the extent to which France should cooperate with its western European neighbours, and in particular with West Germany. Three competing models of European cooperation were advanced: the 'traditionalist', 'confederal', and 'community' models.⁵¹⁶ Each model garnered support from across the political spectrum, quite independent of the left-right cleavage, thus revealing intra-party divisions. The 'traditional' model, which stemmed from the realist school, favoured independent nation states over international organisations. This model advocated the preservation of the post-war balance of power in Europe to the advantage of France, in particular the maintenance of the occupation agreements and French dominance over West Germany. Proponents of this model supported the forging of alliances with states considered to be France's equals – the UK, the US, the USSR – while allowing only for ad hoc bilateral cooperation with West Germany. The 'confederal' model, which stemmed from the liberal school, saw the nation state as the key actor of international relations. While confederalists opposed transfers of sovereignty, they supported cooperation in specific domains and the creation of intergovernmental international organisations. The concerns of confederalists reflected those of UK opponents of European integration. Supporters of this model had a preference for Franco-British leadership based on close, pragmatic cooperation and opposed Franco-German cooperation. De Gaulle and his supporters in the RPF were key proponents of this confederal vision, along with some members of the SFIO and the 'Radicaux'. Jean Monnet, with Robert Schuman, advanced the 'community' or 'integrationist' model. Based on the functionalist approach, they contended that European welfare could not be provided for by nation states alone or by intergovernmental cooperation. They advocated that states should pursue their common interests through semi-autonomous supranational institutions with a view to establishing a single economy and currency, and a single foreign policy and army.⁵¹⁷ The

⁵¹⁵ David A. Messenger, "Dividing Europe: The Cold War and European Integration" *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵¹⁶ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵¹⁷ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

situation in France stood in contrast to the UK, where an inter- and intra-party consensus existed in opposition to any form of cooperation that entailed transfers of sovereignty or supranationalism.

Many within Schuman's MRP shared the view that the community model of European integration was the best way to serve France's political and economic interests, suppress dangerous nationalisms, and hold back Communism.⁵¹⁸ The community model also received the broad support of members of the SFIO. The MRP was the largest party of the Third Force coalition for the duration of the 1946-51 legislature, and Schuman was Foreign Minister from 1948 to 1953. Supporters of the community model attained positions of power periodically during the formative years of European cooperation, enabling Schuman to build a consensus in support of his vision at the heart of government. Supporters of the community model utilised those times of increased power and influence to advance their vision of European integration. They were aided in this by the fact that the PCF and RPF, whose politicians were outspoken opponents of the community model, were excluded from government, despite their popular support. Ultimately, 'Community Europe' prevailed over the alternative 'confederal' and 'traditionalist' models. Dissatisfied with earlier cooperation efforts, community advocates took a novel approach, which they hoped would help achieve France's post-war objectives while both reassuring their compatriots and satisfying US demands. In his Schuman Plan, presented on 9 May 1950, Schuman proposed the pooling of the coal and steel resources of France, West Germany and other willing European states under the supervision of supranational institutions in a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).⁵¹⁹ As Georges Bidault, the President of the Council of Ministers, showed little interest, Schuman had been able to develop his plan quite secretly, out of view of likely opponents.⁵²⁰

Despite considerable support for the community model from within Schuman's MRP, the Schuman Plan lacked wider support within the governing coalition.⁵²¹ However, the Plan did have the support of a number of key political actors from within the coalition, including future Prime Ministers René Pleven of the *Union démocratique et socialiste de la Résistance* (UDSR), Antoine Pinay of the *Centre national des indépendents et paysans* (CNIP), René Mayer of the *Radicaux*, and Pierre Pflimlin of the MRP. While approximately one-third of the coalition supported the Schuman Plan, the other two-thirds of the coalition and opposition

⁵¹⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵¹⁹ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵²⁰ Frédéric Bozo, *La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945*, Flamarrion, Paris, 2019, p. 33.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

parties were hostile, expressing either traditionalist or confederal concerns. Traditionalists, who constituted approximately one-third of the coalition and included the Defence Minister, Jules Moch, and the President, Vincent Auriol, both of the SFIO, sought to retain French dominance over West Germany. Confederalists, who also constituted approximately one-third of the coalition and included the Prime Minister, Georges Bidault (MRP), and the Finance Minister, Maurice Petsche (CNIP), expressed similar concerns to traditionalists and were particularly suspicious of supranationalism.⁵²² The governing coalition was heavily divided, with division between and within its composite parties.

Opposition to the Schuman Plan from outwith the governing coalition came principally from the PCF and the RPF. The former opposed the creation of any international organisation that would consolidate the division of Europe into two opposing blocs, and emphasized the capitalist nature of the proposed ECSC and the transfers of sovereignty its creation would entail. Communists, who had played a fundamental role in the Resistance, also displayed anti-German sentiment. De Gaulle's RPF opposed the creation of the ECSC on the basis that it ran counter to the Gaullist vision of France as a strong nation state, independent on the world stage. The criticisms of Gaullists targeted principally the transfers of sovereignty that the ECSC would entail.⁵²³ De Gaulle believed in '*l'Europe des Etats*' and warned that any attempt to limit state sovereignty through the creation of supranational institutions would end in failure.⁵²⁴ Whereas intra-party divisions could be observed within the governing coalition, both the PCF and RPF were relatively unified in their opposition to the ECSC.

Although, on the whole, the governments of West Germany, the Benelux states and Italy reacted positively to the Schuman Plan, there were concerns voiced by France's partners. As has been seen, the UK opposed any model that entailed a transfer or loss of sovereignty, and sought cooperation within the intergovernmental OEEC or the Council of Europe. The governments of Belgium, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands also expressed some concerns about supranationalism. Despite the fact that the West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had made friendship with France a key priority,⁵²⁵ the Plan was met with some scepticism in West Germany too. Nonetheless, Franco-German rapprochement drove the community ideal, with the Benelux states and Italy keen to join this venture. While France's partners would have

⁵²² Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵²³ Marion Gaillard, *France-Europe. Politique européenne de la France de 1950 à nos jours*, De Boeck Université, Bruxelles, 2010, p. 45.

⁵²⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵²⁵ David Reynolds, "Europe Divided and Reunited, 1945-1995", in T.C.W. Blanning (eds.), *The Oxford History of Modern Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.

preferred to pursue a model of cooperation that could include the UK, they had grown frustrated with the UK's opposition to supranationalism.⁵²⁶

French political support for the ECSC did not increase during the European-level negotiation process, with Gaullists and the PCF continuing to voice strong opposition. Schuman exploited fully his ministerial powers to advance negotiations independently, at a distance from parliamentary opponents, before presenting the final agreement for parliamentary ratification. The context was one of shifting balances of power within the Third Force coalition in advance of the June 1951 legislative elections. In the period between the Schuman Declaration and the final parliamentary vote on the Treaty of Paris, establishing the ECSC, there were five changes of government. Schuman took advantage of this situation to ensure adequate support for the Treaty from within the coalition by emphasizing these coalition pressures and creating issue linkages. Nonetheless, in order to ensure the necessary support, the government was forced to negotiate concessions from their state partners and make promises concerning the protection of national industry. In December 1951, the French Parliament voted in favour of ratification of the Treaty of Paris by 377 votes to 233.⁵²⁷

Alongside the establishment of the ECSC, the French government also proposed the creation of the EDC. However, as early as February 1952, it was clear that it would be difficult to gather the necessary Parliamentary support for the Treaty.⁵²⁸ Opinions among French politicians on the proposed EDC and the rearmament of West Germany diverged along the same lines as for the establishment of the ECSC, and were, again, quite independent of positions on the left-right spectrum. The EDC, promoted by supporters of the community model, called for the integration of West German military units into a supranational European army. Traditionalists either opposed any form of West German rearmament or advocated an alliance approach, while confederalists called for assimilation into a weaker, intergovernmental organization under Franco-British control.⁵²⁹ Certain factors were present that ought to have boosted the arguments of opponents. On the one hand, the UK's decision not to join the EDC and French involvement in Indochina increased concerns about West German dominance of the Community. On the other hand, the recent death of Josef Stalin reduced concerns about the

⁵²⁶ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁵²⁷ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵²⁸ Frédéric Bozo, *La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵²⁹ John R. Gillingham, "The German Problem and European Integration", in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, *op. cit.*

Cold War context. Also, the US, had become forceful in its support for the EDC and was perceived by some as interfering.⁵³⁰

Despite these factors, the proposal for EDC was driven forward by its supporters within the governing coalition who maximised their leverage within the coalition. However, when it came to the ratification of the founding Treaty of the EDC, supporters of the community model no longer enjoyed the same leverage and, further, the ECSC had proven to be, for some, a disappointment. Proponents' insistence on the unpopular community approach had cost them considerable political capital and resulted in a loss of support for Schuman within the governing coalition. Schuman had left office as Foreign Minister by the time the Treaty was put to a vote in Parliament.⁵³¹ Shortly before the vote, three Gaullist ministers resigned from the government. The Treaty failed at the final hurdle of ratification when, in August 1954, the National Assembly voted to postpone further discussion of the text, effectively putting an end to the EDC.⁵³²

The failure of the EDC highlighted the fact that community advocates, although present in parties across the left-right spectrum, had become a minority and were overly dependent on the use of issue linkages to advance their project. The failure also confirmed that, for the time-being, European integration would be limited to economic functionalism.⁵³³ With the fall of the EDC, a concurrent proposal for the creation of a European Political Community was automatically suspended. The non-ratification of the EDC Treaty also caused great concern among other signatory states and the USA, and negatively impacted France's reputation as the leader of the process of European integration. The question of West German rearmament was subsequently addressed by the successful proposal for a Franco-British led intergovernmental Western European Union (WEU), which was established in October 1954. Perhaps surprisingly, some traditionalists supported the WEU. In contrast, de Gaulle viewed it as an attempt by the UK to impede French efforts to assert itself as a global power.⁵³⁴

1.2.3. *Towards a Common Market*

France, along with its EC partners, enjoyed unprecedented economic growth during the 1950s. This was fostered by growing consumer demand and the availability of labour, but also the

⁵³⁰ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵³¹ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵³² Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁵³³ Robert Frank, "Les contretemps de l'aventure européenne", *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 60, October – December 1998, p. 93.

⁵³⁴ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

inflow of capital investment from the US.⁵³⁵ Although growth slowed after the 1950s, between 1950 and 1973 Community member states, enjoyed considerably higher economic growth than that of the UK.⁵³⁶ No doubt the strong economic situation in the EC6 was due, at least in part, to the free trade of coal and steel provided for by the ECSC. Further, European integration encouraged closer contact between national politicians and boosted confidence. Buoyed by these positive outcomes, Community advocates pursued their ambitions to expand supranational integration and interdependence, and it seemed as though the economic and atomic energy domains would be most suited for this. These efforts were led by Monnet, who had been made President of the supranational High Authority of the ECSC. However, the ECSC was not viewed as a success by all French politicians, and traditionalist and confederalist visions of further integration received wider support.

As a result, Monnet's proposal to extend sectoral integration through the creation of a supranational European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) was met with limited enthusiasm. Opposition to the proposed European Economic Community (EEC) was even greater. The creation of a community with a free trade dynamic ran counter to France's tendency towards protectionism. The proposal was opposed by much of the governing coalition, who expressed grave concerns about the lowering of protectionist barriers, which they feared would have both economic and social consequences. Traditionalists continued to reject any measure that they perceived to weaken the independence of the state and advocated ad hoc bilateral agreements instead. Confederalists maintained their preference for non-automatic intergovernmental arrangements, supporting the furthering of cooperation within the OEEC. That Gaullists opposed both Euratom and the EEC was highly significant as the RPF was, by then, the largest party in parliament. Further, both the business and farming communities voiced concerns about the EEC, with the former, like confederalists, expressing a preference for holding talks within the OEEC framework and the latter, like traditionalists, a preference for continued bilateral arrangements.⁵³⁷

The six ECSC foreign ministers met in Messina, Italy, in June 1955 to discuss future integration. This initiative to relaunch European integration was led by the Belgian and Dutch Foreign Ministers, Paul-Henri Spaak and Johan Willem Beyen, respectively. While there was a desire expressed by all six foreign ministers to pursue integration, governments showed a

⁵³⁵ Harold James, "The Fall and Rise of the European Economy in the Twentieth Century", in T.C.W. Blanning (eds.), *The Oxford History of Modern Europe*, *op. cit.*

⁵³⁶ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵³⁷ Marion Gaillard, *France-Europe. Politique européenne de la France de 1950 à nos jours*, *op. cit.*, pp.72-74; Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

preference for traditional or confederalist approaches. The OEEC was viewed by most as the appropriate forum in which to discuss economic cooperation, and an atomic energy committee was established within the organisation in June 1955. The WEU, considered the European branch of NATO, was seen by West Germany, which had recently become a member, as the correct forum in which to discuss political and armaments cooperation. Further, all of France's partners were keen to include the UK in cooperation on atomic energy.⁵³⁸

Yet, despite opposition and reluctance among both French politicians and some of France's partner states, pro-community actors within the governing coalition were again successful in advancing their proposals for Euratom and the EEC. This success was due to the coexistence of a number of factors. Although Prime Minister Edgar Faure of the *Parti radical* took a more cautious approach towards European integration, the pro-Community Foreign Minister, Antoine Pinay of the CNIP, forged ahead with talks and negotiated beyond his mandate in pursuit of community objectives. The legislative elections of January 1956 resulted in the appointment of Guy Mollet, the pro-Community leader of the SFIO, as Prime Minister. Further, the Gaullist *Républicains sociaux* suffered a heavy defeat. Although the PCF increased its seats in Parliament, unified opposition to the community model of integration was reduced. The strength and effectiveness of political opposition to further integration was therefore reduced. Mollet, along with his Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, also of the SFIO, used the full extent of their political powers to advance negotiations. Mollet sought to garner support for further integration within the divided SFIO by arguing that it would aid in the development of socialism in France.⁵³⁹ Although the Suez Crisis of October 1956 served to weaken Mollet's government, it gave negotiations a sense of urgency both at the national and European levels.⁵⁴⁰ The government set about alleviating the concerns of French farmers so as to gain their endorsement of the EEC. Most notably, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was introduced in return for French acceptance of West Germany's more prominent political and economic role.⁵⁴¹ Pineau was also successful in securing measures to protect against the consequences of trade liberalisation, although he was forced to reach a compromise with France's partners on automatic liberalisation. Further, the Euratom Community finally established was much weaker

⁵³⁸ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

⁵³⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵⁴⁰ Wendy Asbeek Brusse, "Liberalization, Convertibility, and the Common Market", in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴¹ John R. Gillingham, "The German Problem and European Integration », *op. cit.*

than that initially proposed by Monnet. As in the UK, the Suez crisis provoked a fundamental change in French foreign policy.⁵⁴²

Notwithstanding continued dissent within his own party, the governing coalition and opposition parties, Mollet was successful in securing the ratification by Parliament of the two Treaties of Rome. That pro-Community actors had been successful in ensuring the active support of the farming community was a key factor. Of great importance, too, was Mollet's opposition to Algerian independence, in a context of the declining international prestige of France following its 1954 defeat in Indo-China. The fragile balance of power in Parliament meant pro-Community leaders could link support for the Treaties of Rome to the Algerian crisis to achieve a majority. In July 1957, the National Assembly ratified the EEC Treaty by 342 votes to 234, and the Euratom Treaty by 332 votes to 240, with only 30 *députés* voting in person.⁵⁴³

In studying the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians on European integration in the aftermath of World War II, this first sub-chapter has shown that attitudes towards European cooperation were very different from the outset. As six of its western European neighbours established the European Communities in the 1950s, there was a consensus both between and within the UK's Conservative and Labour Parties in opposition to any form of cooperation that would entail transfers of sovereignty. Rare were individual politicians who supported ECSC membership from the outset. Whereas there was consensus in the UK, deep divisions were present between and within French political parties, including the governing coalition, over the question of membership. Despite these divisions, French pro-Community politicians held strong to their belief that integration, entailing transfers of sovereignty, supranationalism, and the full involvement of West Germany, would enable states to move beyond their violent pasts and best advance French national interests. These actors took advantage of the political instability of the 4th Republic – the shifting power balance within the coalition and frequent changes of leadership – and created linkages with unrelated issues to mitigate inter- and intra-party divisions and achieve the parliamentary support necessary to advance their preferred model of integration. Whereas the memory of war was, and remains, a source of great sorrow among French politicians, it was, and is, a source of national pride among their UK counterparts. As a result, the key achievement of European integration, long-lasting peace, was, and is, less valued among UK politicians than among their French counterparts.

⁵⁴² Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁵⁴³ Craig Parsons, "The Triumph of Community Europe", *op. cit.*

The achievements of European integration caused positions on Community membership to shift. In France, most parties, including the Gaullists, came to support membership meaning a supportive consensus emerged. The achievements, particularly in terms of economic growth, contributed to a shift in positions in the UK. A cross-party majority emerged in favour of the UK's accession, with applications for membership made by both Conservative and Labour governments. It cannot, however, be said that a consensus in support of membership emerged. Whereas the Conservative Party was quite united in its support for the 1961 application, the Labour opposition adopted an ambiguous position so as to contain divisions. Labour's 1967 application suggested inter-party consensus in support of membership, but the governing party was highly divided on the issue. By 1971, Labour Eurosceptics had pushed the leadership's position to one of opposition, causing the Europe issue to become a basis of political competition and the renegotiation of the terms of accession. The 1975 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the Communities revealed the full extent of divisions within the Labour Party, and bore a number of similarities with the referendum held on the same question in 2016.

Whereas a supportive consensus emerged in France in the wake of accession, this was not the case in the UK. The second part of this chapter will study and seek to explain the evolution of these positions.

2. From Community towards Union

Having joined the European Communities, member states developed common policies through intergovernmental and supranational institutions. European integration proved to be a success in terms of peace-building and economic growth. Expanding membership in the 1970s and 80s created new policy needs. A 'spillover' effect could be seen as member states agreed to widen the scope of their cooperation. The context of economic downturn in the 1970s and the competitive threat posed by non-European states from the 1980s were important drivers of further integration. However, while member states were generally willing to increase the scope of their cooperation, there was some resistance to proposed deepening of integration. Domestic political debate around the question revealed divisions between and within certain political parties. From the early 1970s, Eurobarometer began regularly collating data on public opinion on European integration in all member states, which allowed for the comparison of public opinion in different member states and over time.

The following sections present and analyse positions on European integration in the UK and France during decades following their accession to the Communities. They study how parties and individual politicians positioned themselves on membership in the period leading up to the opening of negotiations of the Treaty on European Union in December 1990. In doing so, these sections trace the evolution of and the place of the Europe issue in political debate and the positions of parties and individual politicians.

2.1. The switching positions of the Conservative and Labour Parties

With the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party and its members opposed to the terms of the UK's membership, it had been hoped that a positive referendum result would heal intra-party divisions, but this was not the case. The Conservative Party, in contrast, was relatively united in its support for membership, marking a clear inter-party divide on the issue. Thatcher's election as Prime Minister in 1979 opened a new era in UK politics. In opposition, the position of the Labour Party shifted considerably, both in terms of domestic policy and on EC membership. Whereas the Conservative Party became increasingly critical of the EC, the Labour Party became more supportive. This switch marked the beginning of what could be considered a third period in the UK's relationship with the European Communities.

The Europe issue was of limited salience and the permissive consensus in support of integration continued well beyond the 1975 referendum. After falling in the second half of the 1970s, the support of the UK public for membership increased throughout the 1980s. Whereas just 23 per cent of the UK public considered EC membership to be a good thing in 1980, 53 per cent of the public considered this to be the case by 1990. Nonetheless, support for membership in the UK remained considerably lower than the EC average.⁵⁴⁴

2.1.1. Thatcher's disappointment with Europe

The year following the referendum, James Callaghan succeeded Harold Wilson as Prime Minister. His Premiership was dominated by the context of economic recession and the ongoing divisions within the Labour Party. Despite Callaghan having campaigned in support of continued membership in 1975, he had damaged relations with the EC and its member states through his ardent defence of the national interest during the renegotiation of the Accession Treaty. Further, although he was determined, despite opposition within his party, to have the UK remain a member of the EC, he did not consider the EC as the forum in which to address

⁵⁴⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 13*, June 1980; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 34*, November 1990.

the UK's economic recession. Rather, with his strong 'Atlanticist' leaning, Callaghan tended to look to the US.⁵⁴⁵

Divisions within the Labour Party over EC membership placed limits on the government's policy, as was made abundantly clear during the UK's Presidency of the EC in the first half of 1977.⁵⁴⁶ The government sought to revisit the budgetary settlement and opposed the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament. On this second point, at the 1976 party conference, members opposed the introduction of direct elections by two votes to one.⁵⁴⁷ This forced Callaghan to rely on the support of Conservative MPs to pass the legislation necessary to allow elections to go ahead.⁵⁴⁸ In addition to strong opposition from within the Labour Party, public opinion on membership turned. Having peaked at just over 50 per cent in late 1975, public perception of membership as a good thing fell drastically in the years following the referendum.⁵⁴⁹ The EC policy of Callaghan's government reflected these party political and public opinion considerations. This was particularly important given the context of the up-coming 1979 general election.

The Conservative Party won the 1979 general election, bringing Margaret Thatcher to power. Like Heath, Wilson and Callaghan, Thatcher had campaigned for a 'yes' vote at the 1975 referendum. The Conservative Party's 1979 general election manifesto stated that "There is much that we can achieve together, much more than we can achieve alone" and directly criticised the Labour Party's claim that "Europe has failed us".⁵⁵⁰ On returning to government, the Conservative Party was considered to be pro-EC and it was generally believed that Thatcher would improve UK relations with the EC and its member states.⁵⁵¹ However, unlike Edward Heath, her predecessor as leader of the party, Thatcher's support for European integration was based predominantly on a pragmatic assessment of how the UK's economic and commercial interests would be best served, and how to best address the Soviet threat, and she shared Callaghan's concerns regarding supranationalism and the UK's contribution to the EC budget.⁵⁵² This was also made clear in the party's election manifesto, which stated that "There are some Community policies which need to be changed since they do not suit Britain's - or

⁵⁴⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-217.

⁵⁴⁶ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁵⁴⁷ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁵⁴⁸ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁵⁴⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 8*, January 1978; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 13*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵⁰ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1979" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1979/1979-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁵⁵¹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

⁵⁵² Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Europe's - best interests.” Thatcher’s less enthusiastic approach to integration can be explained, not so much by concerns about national sovereignty, but by her determination to bring about fundamental change to the UK economy by introducing liberal economic policies. Further, and also in contrast to Heath, Thatcher regarded a close bilateral relationship with the US as a key foreign policy priority.⁵⁵³ This inevitably meant that relations with other states, including EC member states, were secondary.

The more Europhile Conservative Party won an outright victory over the more Eurosceptic Labour Party at the first elections to the European Parliament in June 1979, winning 51 per cent of the vote and 60 seats to Labour’s 33 per cent of the vote and 17 seats.⁵⁵⁴ While Conservative MEPs sat in the centre-right Europhile ‘European Democratic Group’, Labour MEPs sat in the ‘Socialist Group’.⁵⁵⁵ However, support for membership had continued to fall during the second half of the 1970s and, by 1980, 71 per cent of respondents said they would vote to leave the EC.⁵⁵⁶ Given her radical ideology and the context of falling public opinion, Thatcher took a cautious approach to the EC and her support for integration was conditional upon its compatibility with her domestic policies. As a result, in terms of relations with the EC, Thatcher’s time in office can be divided into two periods, that before the signing of the Single European Act and the period thereafter.⁵⁵⁷

In her attempts to bring about the change she considered necessary, Thatcher’s approach soon became more confrontational and, at times, alienating. This was particularly the case in so far as concerns the negotiation of the UK’s budgetary contribution.⁵⁵⁸ In his memoirs, the British President of the European Commission, Roy Jenkins, recalls that Thatcher lost the support of fellow leaders on the budgetary question, in part because of the style, and not just the substance, of her argument.⁵⁵⁹ In 1982, Thatcher delayed agreement on the fixing of agricultural prices in an attempt to force reform of the CAP, which was heavily criticised in the UK, and also to induce fellow member states to agree to a budgetary rebate for the UK. The UK went so far as to invoke the Luxembourg Compromise, which, it was expected, would force states to reconsider their position. This tactic failed, however, as a vote went ahead regardless.

⁵⁵³ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁵⁵⁴ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, “European Parliament Elections – 1979 to 1994”, *Research Paper 99/57*, House of Commons Library, 2 June 1999, pp. 10-11 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp99-57/>>.

⁵⁵⁵ European Parliament, “Results of the 1979 European elections” <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/national-results/united-kingdom/1979-1984/constitutive-session/>>.

⁵⁵⁶ Menno Spiering, “British Euroscepticism”, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.

⁵⁵⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁵⁸ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁵⁵⁹ Roy Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, Macmillan, London, 1991, p. 495.

That a vote was held, according to Stephen Wall, a former UK diplomat, had a lasting impact on the institutional memory of Whitehall.⁵⁶⁰ Yet, despite the confrontational stance she often adopted in the first years of her Premiership, Thatcher gave an important positive endorsement of the European Community in 1983. In the foreword to the programme for the dinner organised by the Conservative Group for Europe to mark ten years of EC membership, Thatcher wrote:

“It is a matter of profound regret to me that much political energy in our country is still devoted to the hoary question of whether we should be in or out. That question was settled by Parliament in 1972 and ratified by an overwhelming majority in the 1975 referendum. [...] The unity of Europe as a force for peace, freedom and democracy is a goal for which I pledge my Government to work.”⁵⁶¹

Thatcher’s positive tone seemed to confirm that, while she sought reform of certain EC policies, she fundamentally supported the process of European integration.

The Conservative Party manifesto published in advance of the June 1983 general election emphasized the fundamental role of European integration in securing peace in Europe and the importance of intra-EC trade for the UK economy. However, the manifesto also made much of the need for budgetary reform and a reduction in unnecessary bureaucracy, and notes that a number of achievements, such as increased CAP payments for UK farmers, were due to the government’s “tough negotiating stance”.⁵⁶² The government’s message on Europe was therefore somewhat mixed and the use of bellicose rhetoric to suggest that the government had to ‘defend’ the UK in a ‘battle’ against the EC would become increasingly commonplace.

In opposition, the Labour Party had been led since 1980 by Michael Foot, an active campaigner against the UK’s EC membership, as seen above. Although his position on EC membership was not the only reason for Foot’s successful ascension to the leadership of the Party, it certainly played a role given the drastic fall in public support for EC membership after the 1975 referendum. Under Foot’s leadership, the Labour Party and its membership moved further to the left. However, this shift caused divisions in the party to deepen further and, as a result, members of the right-wing of the party broke away in 1981 to form the Social Democrat Party (SDP). Later that year, the SDP formed an electoral alliance with the Liberal Party. The Labour Party fought the 1983 general election on a promise to leave the EC, with its manifesto

⁵⁶⁰ Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe. Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.

⁵⁶¹ Margaret Thatcher, *Foreword to Conservative Group for Europe dinner programme*, January 1983, cited by Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe. Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵⁶² Conservative Party, “General Election Manifesto 1983” <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1983/1983-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

stating the EEC “was never devised to suit us” and membership “has made it more difficult for us to deal with our economic and industrial problems.”⁵⁶³

Public support for EC membership had reached a low in 1980 and, although the trend had begun to reverse, by the time of the general election negative sentiment remained more prevalent than positive sentiment. While just 32 per cent of the UK public felt their country had benefitted from EC membership, 57 per cent believed the UK had not benefitted.⁵⁶⁴ However, whereas the Conservative Party won the election, increasing considerably the number of seats held, the Labour Party lost a large proportion of seats and secured its lowest share of the popular vote since 1918. A considerable proportion of Labour support was transferred to the SDP-Liberal alliance.⁵⁶⁵ The electorate punished Labour for its radical left programme, including withdrawal from the EC, and its on-going disunity. Although the extent to which Labour’s heavy defeat can be attributed to its hard-line position on EC membership is not clear, it certainly had an impact on the party’s future stance on integration. Foot was succeeded as party leader by Neil Kinnock in October 1983. Kinnock had initially opposed the UK’s continued membership of the EC in 1975, but his attitude had evolved thereafter. Although he had not spoken out during Foot’s leadership, once he was appointed leader Kinnock became increasingly enthusiastic about European integration. The reform of the Labour Party’s EC policy was part of a wider effort to direct the party away from the hard left and make it more electable. Gradually, so as to manage the objections of Labour anti-marketiers, Kinnock steered the party away from its hard-line policy on EC membership.⁵⁶⁶ Kinnock’s objective of making Labour more electable appeared to be working as the party increased its share of the vote and markedly increased its seats at the 1984 European Parliament elections.⁵⁶⁷

In June 1984, after five years of discussions, Thatcher won her first ‘battle’ with the EC. The dispute over the UK’s contribution to the EC budget was finally resolved at the Fontainebleau European Council summit meeting, at which it was agreed that the UK would receive a ‘rebate’ of 66 per cent of its annual net contribution.⁵⁶⁸ This outcome was undoubtedly a success in terms of the UK interest. Further, Thatcher was happy to have finally resolved the issue and thus allow attention to turn to the completion of the Single Market and enlargement

⁵⁶³ Labour Party, “General Election Manifesto 1983” <<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1983/1983-labour-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁵⁶⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 19*, June 1983.

⁵⁶⁵ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, pp.12-13.

⁵⁶⁶ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-239.

⁵⁶⁷ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, “European Parliament Elections – 1979 to 1994”, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶⁸ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

negotiations with Spain and Portugal, which she supported. However, Thatcher's approach to negotiations had served to damage relations with her EC partners. Also, the outcome was not viewed as a success by all in the UK, with the Prime Minister coming under criticism in Parliament and even her Treasury advisers considered that she had settled for an inadequate amount and ought to have pursued negotiations.⁵⁶⁹ Given that the support of Conservatives for EC membership was mostly based on pragmatic, utilitarian considerations, it was essential that membership bore clear benefits. Although a budgetary rebate was agreed, it followed a long struggle that highlighted the extent to which Thatcher's attitude towards integration differed to that of her EC partners. For Conservative MPs, such as Teddy Taylor and Bill Cash, who opposed EC membership, the budget dispute served to confirm their position. For free-Marketees, such as Michael Spicer and Teresa Gorman, the budget episode provided a first hint that EC membership might not assist them in achieving their free market and trade liberalisation goals.⁵⁷⁰ It was in this context that the No Turning Back Group was established in 1985 in order to ensure the pursuit of Thatcher's radical economic liberalism.

2.1.2. The completion of the Single Market

The resolution of the budget issue brought an improvement in the UK's relations with its EC partners and allowed the EC to focus on the completion of the Single Market, a project that, in principle, had the strong support of the Conservative government as it built on the policies of market deregulation and liberalisation that had been pursued at the national level. Moreover, the Commissioner responsible for leading the project, Arthur Cockfield, was formerly Trade Secretary in Thatcher's government. However, the completion of the Single Market became part of a wider project that included institutional reform. The Dooge Committee, also a product of the June 1984 Fontainebleau European Council summit meeting, advanced proposals for the strengthening of the Commission and the European Parliament, and the use of qualified majority voting.⁵⁷¹ Whereas Thatcher considered the completion of the Single Market to be merely a matter of fulfilling the objectives that had been set out in the Treaty of Rome and not yet met, other member states sought to launch an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) with a view to revising the Treaty.⁵⁷² Thatcher was aware that opening the Treaty could lead to unwanted reforms, but she was outnumbered at a vote on the matter at the Milan European

⁵⁶⁹ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁷⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

⁵⁷¹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-260.

⁵⁷² Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Council summit meeting of July 1985. The key objective of the IGC was to complete the Single Market and the UK fully supported measures to bring down barriers to the movement of goods, services, people, and capital. However, the UK found itself in opposition to member states that argued that the strengthening of the supranational institutions was necessary in order to ensure decision-making efficiency. The UK also opposed the strengthening of the EC's policy-making powers in the domain of economic and social cohesion.⁵⁷³ Further, the Single European Act (SEA) that would amend the Treaty of Rome referred to the eventual unity of Europe and further development of the European Monetary System with a view to introducing a single currency.⁵⁷⁴

Despite the fact that Thatcher opposed many of the reforms to be introduced by the SEA, she signed the Treaty in February 1986. At the time, Thatcher perhaps felt that the transfers of sovereignty that would result could be justified by the benefits of completing the Single Market. However, it also seems that she either underestimated the impact that the reforms would have, or overestimated her ability to later limit that impact.⁵⁷⁵ Thatcher also wrote in her memoirs of the immense pressure she was under from EC leaders and institutions.⁵⁷⁶ This also serves to further highlight how the UK's vision of European integration differed from that of its EC partners.

It was Thatcher herself who sponsored the legislation ratifying the SEA. As such, Conservative critics were far less likely to oppose the Treaty. In any case, the Conservative Party enjoyed such a large majority in Parliament that to successfully oppose the Treaty would require coordination within the Conservative Party and with the opposition Labour Party. Given the unlikely success of any rebellion and that a general election was due to take place the following year, Conservatives were more eager to highlight divisions within the opposition.⁵⁷⁷ The party united in support of the legislation, with just seventeen of 397 Conservative MPs voting against ratification. Even the long-standing hard Eurosceptic, Bill Cash, voted with the government. The Labour Opposition voted against ratification.⁵⁷⁸ Although the party was moving away from its hard Eurosceptic position, it nonetheless remained divided.⁵⁷⁹ Opposing the Treaty, in the knowledge that this would not prevent ratification, allowed for those divisions to be concealed.

⁵⁷³ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁵⁷⁴ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁵⁷⁵ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷⁶ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, Harper Collins, London, 1993, pp. 547-548.

⁵⁷⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁵⁷⁸ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁵⁷⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

However, that such a small proportion of Conservative MPs rebelled at the vote does not mean that the SEA was not more widely opposed within the Parliamentary Party. Opponents were diverse and lacked coordination,⁵⁸⁰ and the timing was not propitious. Among Conservative opponents of the SEA was John Redwood, who was Director of Thatcher's Policy Unit at the time. Redwood recounted during interview that he sought, but was unable, to persuade Thatcher not to sign the SEA. Thatcher also opposed his efforts to have her ensure that the loss of veto rights would be only temporary. The signing of the SEA, and the government's EC policy in general, became "a source of major disagreement" between Redwood and the Prime Minister.⁵⁸¹ This indicated Thatcher's determination to pursue her course of action and foretold of the problems that the EC issue would cause for her leadership of the Conservative Party. Redwood went on to be a key opponent of the Treaty on European Union. Once the SEA had been ratified by the UK and other Parliaments, hard-line Eurosceptics were joined by a growing number of the party's pragmatists. Pragmatists, whose support for European integration was dependent on it facilitating the achievement of their liberal economic objectives, had come to question whether membership might actually serve as an impediment. With this, the party's Eurosceptics began to present a more unified analysis of the consequences of EC membership.⁵⁸²

2.1.3. *Labour's changed position*

The Conservative Party manifesto published in advance of the June 1987 general election included rather limited information on the government's EC policy. As in 1983, the manifesto used the rhetoric of 'defence', recalling the government's successes in "standing up for British interests", such as by renegotiating the UK's contribution to the EC budget. The manifesto also alluded to further changes to EC policies that the government hoped to bring about.⁵⁸³ That the Conservative Party's manifesto was so light and ambiguous on its EC policy reflected a desire to contain emerging intra-party divisions on the issue, and this despite the fact that public support for EC membership had increased consistently since the previous general election.⁵⁸⁴

Subsequent to Kinnock's assumption of the leadership in 1983, the Labour Party's EC policy evolved markedly. By 1987, the party's general election manifesto stated that a Labour

⁵⁸⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

⁵⁸¹ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁵⁸² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

⁵⁸³ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 1987" <<http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1987/1987-conservative-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁵⁸⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 27*, June 1987.

government would seek “to work constructively with our EEC partners.”⁵⁸⁵ While the Labour manifesto pledged, like that of the Conservative Party, to “stand up for British interests”, the party had, in just four years, abandoned its policy of leaving the EC. This change in Labour’s position can be explained by changes in the EC itself. Efforts at the EC level to foster the economic development of poorer regions, notably with the introduction of the European Regional Development Fund in 1975, had helped convince Kinnock that membership was a good thing for the UK. With the SEA, the EC further increased its social dimension, easing lingering concerns within the Labour Party that the EC was principally a force for liberalisation. During interview Alan Meale, confirmed that the shift in the party’s EC policy was due to the introduction of social protections at the EC level. “Laws were being passed at the EC level that Labour had been unable to have passed in Westminster.”⁵⁸⁶ However, the shift in Labour’s EC policy was part of a wider move towards the centre in an attempt to recapture public support. This shift, Avril shows, was successful in meeting the demand of the party’s ‘client.’⁵⁸⁷ According to former Labour MP and government minister, Lewis Moonie, the change in position “was part of a broader re-positioning of the party” with the aim of making the party “more electable.”⁵⁸⁸ Labour MP, Kelvin Hopkins, recounted that as the influence of the pro-EC group, and Peter Mandelson in particular, grew it was successfully argued that “elections were being lost due to the party’s anti-EC stance.”⁵⁸⁹ This was not the first time the Labour Party had allowed its EC policy to be shaped by strategic considerations. Wilson’s application for membership in 1967 was motivated, at least in part by a desire for political gain, as was his withdrawal of support for membership in advance of accession. However, the Labour Party’s policy reversal of the late-1980s, which saw it go from opposing membership to being the more supportive of the two main parties in the space of just four years, serves as a further and notable illustration of strategy shaping ideology.

Thatcher was re-elected for a third term with a solid, albeit reduced, majority of seats. While the Labour Party suffered its third successive defeat, it increased its seats where the Conservative Party had lost them. Also, it seems Labour succeeded in attracting the support of some of the voters it had lost to the SDP-Liberal alliance in 1983.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁵ Labour Party, “General Election Manifesto 1987” <<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1987/1987-labour-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁵⁸⁶ Alan Meale, interview in person.

⁵⁸⁷ Emmanuelle Avril, *Du Labour au New Labour de Tony Blair. Le changement vu de l’intérieur*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸⁸ Lewis Moonie, interview by telephone.

⁵⁸⁹ Kelvin Hopkins, interview by telephone.

⁵⁹⁰ Audickas, Lukas and Cracknell, Richard, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.* pp.12-13.

2.1.4. *Towards Economic and Monetary Union and growing Conservative Euroscepticism*

The period following the signature and entry into force of the SEA saw a clear shift in Thatcher's position on European integration. Whereas the Labour Party's position on EC membership evolved in a positive sense, the Conservative Party's support for membership became markedly less enthusiastic. And, just as the Labour Party's position shifted due to changes in EC policies, so too did the Conservative Party's position. David Nuttall spoke of a feeling within the party that "over time the EC had changed."⁵⁹¹ However, there was also a feeling of deception within the Conservative Party. Peter Lilley recounted that there was a strong sense within the Conservative Party at the time that the UK had been "deceived" by its EC partners. He told of how, having voted 'yes' in the 1975 referendum, the "real nature" of the EC subsequently revealed itself to him.⁵⁹² Likewise, Nigel Evans spoke of his belief that the British people were "lied to" in 1975 about the consequences of their membership of the EC.⁵⁹³ Both Lilley and Evans supported the UK leaving the EU in 2016. However, it was not only hard Eurosceptics who had the impression that the UK had been misled. Roger Gale, who campaigned for 'Remain' in 2016, claimed during interview that the UK "joined what we thought was a Common Market" but was "misled about the reality of EC membership".⁵⁹⁴ While the claim that the true nature of the EC had been intentionally concealed can be disputed, it is certainly true that the nature of the project provided for by the SEA was very different from that which the UK first applied to join in 1961.

At the Hanover European Council summit meeting of June 1988, on the initiative of the Socialist French President, François Mitterrand, and West Germany's centre-right Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, member states agreed to confirm Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) as a goal of European integration. Leaders also agreed to establish a committee, to be chaired by Commission President Jacques Delors, to consider how EMU should be introduced.⁵⁹⁵ When the EC's Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), designed to provide greater exchange rate stability, was introduced in 1979 the UK, along with Greece, opted to remain outside. The idea of fixing exchange rates conflicted with Thatcher's attachment to free-market principles. She also viewed ERM as a step towards full monetary union, with the introduction of a single currency and an EC-level central bank. While Thatcher's opposition to ERM held steady, by the mid-1980s she was under considerable pressure from within her Cabinet to join the

⁵⁹¹ David Nuttall, interview by telephone.

⁵⁹² Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

⁵⁹³ Nigel Evans, interview in person.

⁵⁹⁴ Roger Gale, interview in person, 12 October 2016.

⁵⁹⁵ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

mechanism. Supporters viewed it as the best means to control inflation and ensure economic stability. The Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, and the Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, advocated ERM membership, as did the Conservative Party Chairman, Norman Tebbit.⁵⁹⁶ Thatcher's position also seemed somewhat out of touch with public opinion, which, in the late 1980s, was markedly more supportive of integration than when she had come into office. By the end of 1988, support for EC membership stood at 48 per cent, more than twice the rate of opposition.⁵⁹⁷

Seeking to boost support for European integration among British trade unionists, Delors addressed the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in September 1988. Delors' efforts were successful and his vision of Europe was referenced by Kinnock in his speech to the Labour Party conference the following month. In his speech, Kinnock called for Europe "to be a community as well as a market."⁵⁹⁸ In contrast, Delors' speech served to anger and provoke Thatcher.⁵⁹⁹ Just weeks later, Thatcher gave her well-known speech at the College of Europe in Bruges. During this speech, she repeatedly referred to the "nation" (and "nationhood", "national pride", "national identity"), spoke of the EC as but one manifestation of Europe, and argued that the UK government had not "rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state."⁶⁰⁰ Thatcher's speech revealed yet again the extent to which her vision of integration diverged with that of other member states. However, while the speech was met with considerable hostility by other EC member states, it was well received by many within the Conservative Party.

The Eurosceptic vision set out by Thatcher in her Bruges speech was, however, more a matter of style than substance. Her rhetoric suggested greater opposition than her actions.⁶⁰¹ Nonetheless, Thatcher's words served to legitimise Euroscepticism that had been marginalised in the party throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and much of the 1980s, and validated the positions of those who had opposed, openly or privately, the SEA. As a result, concerns, as well as divisions, within the Conservative Party over the Europe issue began to manifest themselves much more openly from this point.⁶⁰² Eurosceptics organised themselves through the establishment, in February 1989, of the Bruges Group, an "independent all-party think tank,"⁶⁰³ and the

⁵⁹⁶ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁵⁹⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 30*, December 1988.

⁵⁹⁸ Neil Kinnock, *Speech to Labour Party Conference*, October 1988 <<http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=194>>.

⁵⁹⁹ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰⁰ Margaret Thatcher, *Speech at College of Europe in Bruges*, 20 September 1988 <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332>>.

⁶⁰¹ Agnès Alexandre-Collier and Emmanuelle Avril, *Les Partis Politiques en Grand-Bretagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶⁰² Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism", *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁶⁰³ Bruges Group <<https://www.brugesgroup.com/about/the-bruges-group>>.

Parliamentary Friends of Bruges Group. Alan Sked, Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and future founder of the UK Independence Party, was closely involved with the establishment of the group. Most members of the No Turning Back Group, which had been established four years earlier with the objective of ensuring the pursuit of Thatcherite economic policies, joined the Bruges Group at its founding, reflecting the overlap between Euroscepticism and Thatcherism. For many Thatcherites, integration was incompatible with the pursuit of Thatcherite economic policies. Over the years, a great number of high-profile Conservative MPs were associated with the activities of the group, including future party leaders, Iain Duncan Smith and Michael Howard, Norman Tebbit, Peter Lilley, John Redwood, and Margaret Thatcher herself. The group also attracted politicians from outside the Conservative Party, including Labour MPs Peter Shore and Frank Field.

Delors presented his report on EMU in April 1989. It quickly became clear that all member states except the UK supported his proposal for EMU based on a single currency, with fixed exchange rates and a single monetary authority. Thatcher considered EMU to be “the back door to a federal Europe, which we totally and utterly reject.”⁶⁰⁴ Yet, her refusal to consider the possibility of adopting a single currency angered Foreign Secretary Howe. Tensions within the Cabinet developed to such an extent that in June 1989, on the eve of the Madrid European Council summit meeting, both Howe and Chancellor Lawson threatened to resign if the Prime Minister did not soften her opposition, notably on ERM membership. Faced with the prospect of the resignation of her two most senior Cabinet members, Thatcher did soften her position.⁶⁰⁵ Her opposition to EMU nonetheless remained.

Delors’ report was released shortly before the 1989 European Parliament elections. Despite Thatcher’s and Conservative Eurosceptics’ more vocal criticism of EC policies, public support for membership had continued to grow. The Conservative Party again lost public support in terms of both share of the vote and seats. The Labour Party achieved its first European Parliament election victory.⁶⁰⁶ As was noted in the previous Chapter, European Parliament elections tend to be viewed as second-order elections, contests that the electorate view as less important.⁶⁰⁷ The outcome of the 1989 European Parliament election cannot, therefore, be viewed as a sign of public approval of the Labour Party’s EC policy, but rather as

⁶⁰⁴ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 106

⁶⁰⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-272.

⁶⁰⁶ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, “European Parliament Elections – 1979 to 1994”, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰⁷ Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt, “Nine Second-Order National Elections – A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results”, *op. cit.*

a sign of growing support for the Labour Party in general or declining support for the governing Conservative Party.

The hardening of the Conservative government's stance on the EC took place in the context of a wider move to the right by the party, which coincided with the Labour Party's move towards the centre. The toughening of the government's EC policy did not, however, serve to heal divisions. These divisions weakened Thatcher's leadership and precipitated the end of her Premiership. While some in the party continued to resent that Thatcher had allowed EMU to become a possibility by agreeing to the terms of the SEA, others, notably the Chancellor, continued to seek ERM membership. The extent to which the government's EC policy had become a source of intra-party and intra-Cabinet divisions was revealed by Lawson's resignation in October 1989, which was prompted, to a great extent, by the Prime Minister's on-going, and vocal opposition, to ERM membership. Lawson succeeded as Chancellor by John Major, who was close to the Prime Minister. Perhaps because of this, Major was successful in convincing Thatcher to allow the UK to join ERM.⁶⁰⁸ The resignation of Howe in November 1990 proved fatal for Thatcher's leadership. His decision to resign was motivated mostly by differences over the substance and style of Thatcher's EC policy, and came shortly after a statement made by the Prime Minister to Parliament in which she was highly critical of the EC.⁶⁰⁹

Howe's resignation brought about a leadership challenge, initiated by the Europhile Michael Heseltine. Heseltine served as Defence Secretary in Thatcher's Cabinet from 1983 to 1986 before resigning over a policy disagreement with Thatcher. During the leadership campaign Heseltine advanced his pro-Europe credentials as a means of distinguishing himself from Thatcher, a risk in such a divided party. Unable to secure an outright victory, Thatcher withdrew from the contest after the first round. John Major, who was Chancellor at the time, and Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary, entered the race against Heseltine following Thatcher's withdrawal. Major had risen quickly in Thatcher's government and she considered him to be "her most loyal lieutenant".⁶¹⁰ Major was Thatcher's preferred successor and he sought to reassure the party that he would pursue her policies, including her approach towards European integration.⁶¹¹ Hurd, like Heseltine, presented Europhile positions and used this fact to differentiate himself from Thatcher. Major won the leadership contest, securing almost 50 per

⁶⁰⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

⁶⁰⁹ Stephen Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶¹¹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

cent of the vote at the second ballot. Heseltine came second, winning the support of 35 per cent of Conservative MPs. Whereas the party's Europhiles tended to support Heseltine, Thatcherites and Eurosceptics tended to support Major.

Manifest divisions within the Conservative Party over Europe contributed to Thatcher's departure from office. There was a feeling among some of Thatcher's supporters that she had been removed from power by Europhile members of her Cabinet.⁶¹² Peter Lilley, who was a member of Cabinet at that time, confirmed that the Europe issue had "played an important role" in Thatcher's downfall. He reasoned that, although the unpopular poll tax and the fact that she had been in office for eleven years could not be discounted, the Europe issue, and the divisions it had caused within the Conservative Party, were key.⁶¹³ Thatcher's resignation took place shortly before the launching of IGCs on political and economic union at the December 1990 Rome European Council summit meeting, meaning Major entered office just a matter of weeks before negotiations began.

2.2. A single French vision of ever closer union?

Once the EEC was established, there was a tacit acceptance among all political parties, except the PCF, that membership was in the national interest.⁶¹⁴ This is not to say that there were no differences between and within parties as to the form European integration should take. Rather, the issue became less salient in political debate. The return to office of Charles de Gaulle, and the establishment of the 5th Republic, brought greater political stability. However, de Gaulle's vision of integration differed considerably to that of previous leaders. The strengthening of the office of President meant that de Gaulle's vision of integration was instrumental in shaping that of his contemporary and future domestic allies and opponents. Further, the relative stability of the 5th Republic impacted inter- and intra-party dynamics, including on questions of European integration.

The permissive consensus among the public in support of European integration remained intact following the establishment of the Communities and well into the 1980s. Although, as in the UK, perceptions of EC membership as a good thing fell during the 1970s to reach a low of 48 per cent in 1980, support grew again in the 1980s, reaching a peak of 75

⁶¹² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁶¹³ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

⁶¹⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

per cent in 1987. Until the end of the 1980s, support for membership among the French public was consistently above the EC average.⁶¹⁵

2.2.1. *De Gaulle's Europe*

Charles de Gaulle returned to office as Prime Minister in June 1958 and established the 5th Republic in October of the same year. He was elected President in December 1958, enjoying the support of 78.5 per cent of the members of the electoral college.⁶¹⁶ Key to de Gaulle's vision for France was national independence. As such, while he had come to support French membership of the Communities, he wanted to limit US influence in Europe.⁶¹⁷ He conceived of a "European Europe", with a distinct identity or "personality", as he called it.⁶¹⁸ However, de Gaulle's attachment to national independence caused him to oppose transfers of sovereignty. His support for integration was therefore conditional upon states taking an intergovernmental approach. In particular, de Gaulle sought to limit the powers of the Commission.⁶¹⁹ In terms of his attachment to national sovereignty, de Gaulle's vision bore certain similarities to that of UK politicians. There were inherent contradictions in the Gaullist position of supporting membership of the EC while opposing transfers of sovereignty. Over time, these contradictions would become increasingly apparent.⁶²⁰

De Gaulle presented his vision to his European counterparts in the 1961 Fouchet Plan. This vision diverged from that set out in the Treaty of Rome, advocating a union of independent states – a European Political Community – which would supersede the EEC and operate on an intergovernmental basis. The Fouchet Plan was not received with enthusiasm, and neither was a revised version, presented the following year. De Gaulle instead turned his focus to the pursuit of stronger Franco-German cooperation, outwith the EEC framework, with Chancellor Adenauer of West Germany agreeing to the Treaty of Franco-German Friendship in January 1963.⁶²¹ Also in 1963, de Gaulle vetoed UK accession for a first time. France was alone in opposing UK membership, citing concerns about the sincerity of the UK's commitment to

⁶¹⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 13*, *op. cit.*; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 28*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹⁶ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁶¹⁷ Robert Frank, "La France et son rapport au monde au XXe siècle", *Politique étrangère*, vol. 65, no.3/4, automne/hiver 2000, p.833.

⁶¹⁸ Georges-Henri Soutou, "Les Présidents Charles de Gaulle et Georges Pompidou et les débuts de la coopération politique européenne: du Plan Fouchet au Plan Fouchet Light", *Relations internationales*, vol. 4, no. 140, 2009, p. 3.

⁶¹⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁶²⁰ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, "Defending the Nation: The Politics of Euroscepticism on the French Right", *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁶²¹ Jeffrey Vanke, "Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Idea of Europe", *op. cit.*

Europe and its attachment to its Commonwealth, and most especially, its ‘special relationship’ with the US. Had the UK joined the EC, de Gaulle would likely have had an ally in pursuing his preferred model of intergovernmental cooperation.

France, again, found itself isolated when, from the mid-1960s, and in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, moves were made towards the introduction of qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers. France also opposed the European Commission’s proposal that it play a stronger role in the administration of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. Negotiations broke down over the issue of the financing of the CAP.⁶²² France refused to send government representatives to attend meetings of the Council of Ministers from June 1965, causing the so-called ‘Empty Chair’ crisis.⁶²³ The dispute was resolved with the agreement of the Luxembourg Compromise, which created a de facto veto right for states that convincingly argued their vital national interests were compromised. This solution meant that de Gaulle was successful, to some extent, in imposing his intergovernmental vision of integration.⁶²⁴

Although de Gaulle’s policy on European integration was not unopposed domestically, it was not until the end of the Algerian War in 1962, and the need for national unity diminished, that tensions began to manifest themselves more openly. In reaction to the controversial press conference given by de Gaulle in May 1962, during which he was highly critical of the EEC, the five Europhile MRP members of the government resigned.⁶²⁵ The first Presidential elections using direct universal suffrage were held in 1965 and the Europe issue was a feature of the campaign. De Gaulle’s two main opponents, François Mitterrand and Jean Lecanuet of the MRP were critical of his isolationist position on integration.⁶²⁶ Although de Gaulle went on to win re-election at the second round, his victory was by a smaller margin than expected and Lecanuet attracted more support than expected. The outcome caused de Gaulle to seek a quick resolution of the Empty Chair crisis.⁶²⁷ However, Lecanuet’s relative success was not repeated at the 1967 legislative elections, leaving the way open for de Gaulle to veto the UK’s application for membership for a second time.⁶²⁸

⁶²² Françoise de la Serre, “La Communauté économique européenne et la crise de 1965”, *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 21, no. 2, avril 1971, p. 403.

⁶²³ Stephen Martin, “Building on Coal and Steel: European Integration in the 1950s”, in Desmond Dinan (eds.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, *op. cit.*

⁶²⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁶²⁵ *Idem.*

⁶²⁶ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁶²⁷ Stephen Martin, “Building on Coal and Steel: European Integration in the 1950s”, *op. cit.*

⁶²⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

2.2.2. *After de Gaulle*

De Gaulle resigned from office in 1969, following the public's rejection of proposed reforms by referendum. The reforms were heavily opposed by the Europhile MRP.⁶²⁹ Georges Pompidou, the former Prime Minister, succeeded him as President. Pompidou's position on key issues differed considerably from that of de Gaulle. Notably, he supported UK accession, the widening of Community action and the strengthening of EC institutions. His approach to European integration was "more cautious, more flexible, and more pragmatic" than that of de Gaulle.⁶³⁰ Pompidou's positions on integration contributed to him gaining the support of opposition centrists and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's non-Gaullist right, the '*Fédération nationale des républicains indépendants*' (FNRI). This is not to say, however, that the legacy of de Gaulle did not live on. De Gaulle's successors looked to his unique interpretation of the Constitution for inspiration.⁶³¹ Successors also sought to conserve his heritage on foreign policy, which, they believed, would strengthen their legitimacy.⁶³² As such, they tended to oppose supranationalism and voiced a preference for intergovernmentalism. Pompidou notably opposed the proposals of the Werner Report concerning the fixing of currency exchange rates and economic convergence. His opposition caused divisions within the government, with Giscard d'Estaing vocally supporting the Report's proposals.⁶³³ Further, Pompidou decided to hold a referendum in 1972 on the question of UK accession. This had the effect of quietening his Gaullist critics, but also caused divisions among the Socialists and Communists. The Socialists mostly supported enlargement but chose to abstain, whereas the Communists campaigned for a 'no' vote.⁶³⁴ Increasingly, the EC issue was a feature of political debate and competition. This situation in France, in the early 1970s, reflected that in the UK, where there were divisions both between the Conservative and Labour Parties, and within the latter, over the EC issue.

Following the death of Pompidou in 1974, Giscard d'Estaing was elected President. He appointed the Gaullist Jacques Chirac as Prime Minister. Having shown great support for European integration during the Presidential campaign, Giscard d'Estaing succeeded in convincing Europhile centrists, including Lecanuet, to join the coalition government. Their presence in government served to reduce the influence of Gaullists. During his Presidency,

⁶²⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁶³⁰ Georges-Henri Soutou, "Les Présidents Charles de Gaulle et Georges Pompidou et les débuts de la coopération politique européenne: du Plan Fouchet au Plan Fouchet Light", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁶³¹ Helen Drake, "Perspectives on French relations with the European Union: an introduction", *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁶³² Robert Frank, "La France et son rapport au monde au XXe siècle", *op. cit.*, p. 837.

⁶³³ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.

⁶³⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Giscard d'Estaing pursued four key European policy priorities, namely enlargement, the establishment of the European Council, monetary policy, and direct elections to the European Parliament.⁶³⁵ The President's support for direct elections to the European Parliament proved controversial, drawing strong criticism from both Gaullists and the PCF. There had been a series of disagreements between Giscard d'Estaing and Chirac. Chirac's opposition to direct elections, which mirrored that of the Labour government in the UK, was so great that it pushed him to resign as Prime Minister in 1976. The opposition of the RPR grew more intense following Chirac's resignation.⁶³⁶ In order to ensure sufficient Parliamentary support to pass the legislation enabling direct elections to take place, the matter had to be made a question of confidence. That opposition to direct elections to the European Parliament played a key role in Chirac's resignation, and a confidence motion was required in order to pass the necessary legislation, reveals the extent to which the Europe issue, and conflicting visions of future integration in particular, had become a source of divisions, including between mainstream, established parties.

Chirac was succeeded as Prime Minister by Raymond Barre of the UDF, a former Vice-President of the European Commission and supporter of further integration. However, despite the fact both the President and the Prime Minister supported integration, divisions on Europe remained within the governing coalition between and among Giscardians and Gaullists.⁶³⁷ Following his resignation, Chirac relaunched the Gaullist UDR as the '*Rassemblement pour la République*' (RPR). With Chirac as its President from 1976 to 1994, the RPR served as Chirac's "fiefdom", allowing him to advance his political career.⁶³⁸ Nonetheless, the party was heavily divided on European questions, with the RPR's more nationalist members continuing to view national sovereignty and independence as being of paramount importance.⁶³⁹ In order to retain party unity, Chirac would need to satisfy both sides of the divide.

Two years later, in 1978, the '*Union pour la démocratie française*' (UDF) was established with a view to competing against Chirac's RPR at the up-coming legislative and Presidential elections.⁶⁴⁰ The UDF came second to the RPR,⁶⁴¹ and Barre formed a new coalition government. However, divisions over the Europe issue within the governing coalition

⁶³⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁶³⁶ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁶³⁷ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁶³⁸ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁶³⁹ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁴⁰ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁶⁴¹ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections législatives 1978", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-legislatives-1978.htm>>.

could be seen most clearly at the time of the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. The UDF and RPR presented separate lists following the Gaullist's refusal to cooperate with the Giscardians. While the UDF's list, entitled '*Union pour la France en Europe*' and led by Simone Veil, campaigned on a Europhile platform, the RPR adopted a more Eurosceptic tone, presenting a list, led by the EC critic Michel Debré, entitled '*Défense des intérêts de la France en Europe*'.⁶⁴² Chirac, as leader of the RPR, placed Europe at the centre of the election campaign and, in doing so, was likely one of the first European political actors to do so.⁶⁴³ In his *Appel de Cochin* of December 1978, Chirac presented his position on European integration. He stated clearly his opposition to supranationalism and warned of the risk of increased US influence that direct elections presented. Chirac's position was, seemingly, driven by a desire to maintain France's status as a great international power, claiming that "*on prépare l'inféodation de la France*" and "*L'Europe ne peut servir à camoufler l'effacement d'une France qui n'aurait plus, sur le plan mondial, ni autorité, ni idée, ni message, ni visage.*" Further, Chirac criticised the government's EC policy, implying that, by supporting the strengthening of the European Parliament through the direct election of its members, and all that that entailed, the government was not prioritising the national interest.⁶⁴⁴ In many respects, Chirac's speech from Cochin was echoed in Thatcher's Bruges speech. However, a key difference between Chirac and Thatcher can be noted. While Thatcher's criticism of integration was ideologically-based, Chirac's criticism was tactical and sought to draw public support. Also, whereas Chirac was in opposition at the time of his Cochin speech, Thatcher had been in government for nine years when she gave her Bruges speech.

Although French public support for European integration was higher than the EC average, the public's perception of membership as a good thing had fallen considerably since the early 1970s. By the time of the 1979 European Parliament elections, support for membership had fallen to 55 per cent from a high of 68 per cent in 1974.⁶⁴⁵ Despite the fall in public support for EC membership, the UDF's list won the election with 27.6 per cent of the popular vote and the RPR list came fourth with just 16.3 per cent of the vote, behind the PS-Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche and PCF lists.⁶⁴⁶ A majority of the French electorate

⁶⁴² Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁴³ Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁶⁴⁴ Jacques Chirac, *Speech from Cochin Hospital*, 6 December 1978 <<https://clio-texte.clionautes.org/1978-jacques-chirac-appel-de-cochin-6-decembre-1978.html>>.

⁶⁴⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 11*, June 1979; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 1*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴⁶ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1979", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-1979.htm>>.

supported those parties that were supportive of integration and of the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament.⁶⁴⁷ The outcome suggests that, in adopting a discourse of nationalism, Chirac had misread public opinion. However, as a ‘second order’ election, which attracted a turnout considerably lower than either the previous or next Presidential elections, the result was likely a signal of the public’s support for the government’s modernising agenda rather than a manifestation of strong support for integration. The RPR’s MEPs sat within one European parliamentary group, the ‘Group of European Progressive Democrats’. Likewise, PS MEPs sat in one group, the ‘Socialist Group’, alongside UK Labour MEPs. In contrast, UDF MEPs sat in two separate groups, the ‘Group of the European People’s Party’ and the ‘Liberal and Democratic Group’.⁶⁴⁸ This reflected intra-party divisions on EC policy. The governing coalition’s MEPs thus sat in three different European Parliament groups. Although the Europe issue was just one of a number of contentious issues, divisions within the governing coalition served to weaken the government and undermine the authority of the President, contributing to the electoral defeat of Giscard d’Estaing at the 1981 Presidential elections.⁶⁴⁹

2.2.3. *Europe as Mitterrand’s unifying myth*

The SFIO, which became the ‘*Parti socialiste*’ (PS) in 1969, was in opposition from 1958 until 1981 and was led, from 1971, by François Mitterrand. Under Mitterrand’s leadership, the forming of factions was authorised, allowing for the expression and representation of varying ideologies.⁶⁵⁰ Intra-party divisions on Europe and shifting political alliances influenced the party’s EC policy. Divisions on Europe could be seen most clearly in the varying positions advanced by the party’s three most prominent figures, each of whom enjoyed great loyalty from their supporters, in the decade preceding the Socialist’s return to office. On the left of the party, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, a founder, in 1966, of the *Centre d’études, de recherches et d’éducation socialiste* (CERES), was mostly hostile towards existing and further integration, expressing Gaullist concerns about loss of national sovereignty. Michel Rocard, who represented a ‘*nouvelle gauche*’ supportive of the market economy, was largely in favour of integration. Mitterrand had long been a staunch Europhile.⁶⁵¹ He advanced an intermediate position, which drew support from both pro-integration elements within the party, and

⁶⁴⁷ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

⁶⁴⁸ European Parliament, “Results of the 1979 European elections” <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/national-results/france/1979-1984/constitutive-session/>>.

⁶⁴⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶⁵⁰ Frédéric Sawicki, “Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left”, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁶⁵¹ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.* p. 121.

nationalist and far-left critics. Mitterrand's position on European integration was, in part, strategic. Having lost two Presidential elections at the second round, in 1965 and 1974, Mitterrand sought to unite the party and appeal as widely as possible in advance of a third run in 1981. Mitterrand's ability to unite the various factions of the PS was his great political skill.⁶⁵² This strategy was successful as Mitterrand united the PS in support of his candidature for the 1981 Presidential elections, which he won, defeating the incumbent Giscard d'Estaing whose authority had been undermined by divisions within the governing coalition.

The legislative elections that followed the election of Mitterrand as President resulted in a strong Parliamentary majority for the PS.⁶⁵³ Pierre Mauroy was appointed as Prime Minister and both Rocard and Chevènement were given senior positions in government, reflecting a desire to satisfy the various factions within the PS. The Europhile Jacques Delors was made Finance Minister. Although Mitterrand had long been a supporter of EC membership, his position had evolved considerably since the 1950s.⁶⁵⁴ In office, he revealed mixed feelings by calling for a strong Europe with a federal core, while showing reluctance towards the strengthening of the EC's institutions and a preference for intergovernmentalism.⁶⁵⁵ This, again, reflected divisions within the PS, which Mitterrand sought to contain. Although the party became more united on the Europe issue once in office, critics remained, most notably Jean-Pierre Chevènement and his CERES faction, who voiced concerns about the economic liberalisation inherent in European integration.

The government embarked on a programme of economic and social reforms on entering office. However, the government's reflationary measures ran counter to pressure being exerted by the EC in the context of the implementation of the EMS, launched in 1979. The failings of the 'snake' in limiting exchange rate fluctuations during the 1970s meant subsequent French governments were determined to make a success of the EMS. Unable to convince other member states to adopt France's revaluation policy, Mitterrand was faced with a choice between changing the government's economic policy or staying in the EMS, and thus devaluing the franc.⁶⁵⁶ Mitterrand, along with Mauroy and Delors, decided to reverse the government's reforms and devalue the franc in March 1983. This decision implicitly forced the PS to accept the realities of the market economy and led to the resignation of the Eurosceptic Chevènement

⁶⁵² David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁶⁵³ Laurent de Boissieu, "Assemblée nationale 1981", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/assemblee-nationale-1981.htm>>.

⁶⁵⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶⁵⁵ *Idem.*

⁶⁵⁶ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

from government.⁶⁵⁷ The PS government, led by Laurent Fabius from July 1984, pursued this neo-liberal economic policy, lowering taxation and reducing public spending, liberalising financial markets and privatising state-run companies, which caused disillusionment among a section of the party and its supporters. The government sought to justify these reforms by the need to conform with EC obligations.⁶⁵⁸ Concerns within the PS about the economic liberalisation that the completion of the Single Market would require mirrored those within the UK Labour Party, although the Labour Party counted a number of hard Eurosceptics. Like Kinnock, Mitterrand's willingness to accept measures was due, in part, to a desire to have the party appeal more widely.

The link between economic and EC policies, and, in particular, the role of the EC in preventing the implementation of planned economic and social reforms, caused divisions within the party on European integration to deepen and move closer to the fore. These tensions grew throughout the 1980s, in part due to Mitterrand's own shifting stance, which was, in turn, driven by the complexities of the party's internal politics. Europe became a core issue of Mitterrand's presidency. France's EC membership, and the requirements of the EMS, limited the government's ability to implement the radical transformation that the PS had envisioned on entering office. Mitterrand began to look to Europe as "the new inspiring myth and vision" for his Presidency. As such the PS became heavily associated with the drive for further integration.⁶⁵⁹

Mitterrand took the opportunity of France's Presidency of the Communities to present his vision of European integration during a speech to the European Parliament, during which he stated that his « *engagement personnel a accompagné chaque étape de la naissance de l'Europe* » and confirmed his support for a new Treaty that would establish political union.⁶⁶⁰ Mitterrand made this speech in a context of increased public support for EC membership. Having reached a low of 48 per cent in 1980, public perception of EC membership as a good thing had risen to 60 per cent in spring 1984. Further opposition to membership had fallen to just 5 per cent.⁶⁶¹ However, the PS was not successful in improving its standing at the 1984 European Parliament elections, which took place just weeks after Mitterrand's speech. The

⁶⁵⁷ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁵⁸ Frédéric Sawicki, "Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left", *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁶⁵⁹ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁶⁶⁰ François Mitterrand, *Speech to the European Parliament*, 24 May 1984 <https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/discours_de_francois_mitterrand_devant_le_parlement_europeen_24_mai_1984-fr-cdd42d22-fe8e-41bb-bfb7-9b655113ebcf.html>.

⁶⁶¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 14*, December 1980; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 21*, May 1984.

party's list arrived in second place, as it had done in 1979, but lost two seats and a proportion of the popular vote. Having presented separate lists in 1979, the RPR and UDF presented a joint list in 1984, which won the elections. Of note, however, is that RPR and UDF MEPs continued to sit in three separate parliamentary groupings.⁶⁶² This situation reflected on-going differences on EC policy both between the RPR and the UDF and within the latter. Also, for the first time, the FN presented candidates for the European Parliament election and won 11 per cent of the popular vote and ten seats.⁶⁶³

As the pace and scope of European integration advanced during the 1980s, the Europe issue became an intrinsic part of domestic policy. The increased importance of the issue obliged parties to take a position on integration. As a result, the Europe issue began to have a greater role in inter-party competition, impacted the way in which alliances were formed, and influenced intra-party competition. The signing of the Single European Act in February 1986 and the subsequent completion of the Single Market was a particular source of debate, despite Mitterrand's efforts to include greater social protections. This was partly because this project nonetheless clashed with the French tradition for 'dirigisme'. Yet, despite opposition on the left to the government's economic policy, support for the PS was on the rise.⁶⁶⁴ Although divisions were on-going within the PS, the party was successful in presenting a united front in advance of the March 1986 legislative elections. While divisions within the PS simmered beneath the surface, Chirac, leader of the RPR in opposition, succeeded in gaining the support of most of his party for his changed position on European integration.⁶⁶⁵ This change had already been signalled by the RPR alliance with the UDF at the 1984 European Parliament elections, a move that had brought electoral gains. In a move to modernise the party, Chirac and the RPR accepted both the completion of the Single Market, including the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade, and recognised the necessity of QMV. This position marked a break in the traditional Gaullist attachment to both dirigisme and defence of national sovereignty.⁶⁶⁶

The Union RPR-UDF list won the March 1986 legislative elections. Nonetheless, the PS scored its best result to date in terms of popular support.⁶⁶⁷ Chirac returned to the office of Prime Minister, beginning the first period of cohabitation of the 5th Republic. Although the

⁶⁶² European Parliament, "Results of the 1984 European elections" <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/national-results/france/1984-1989/constitutive-session/>>.

⁶⁶³ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1984", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-1984.htm>>.

⁶⁶⁴ Rémi Lefebvre and Frédéric Sawicki, *La société des socialistes. Le PS aujourd'hui*, Editions du Croquant, Broissieux, 2006, p. 32.

⁶⁶⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁶⁶ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁶⁷ Rémi Lefebvre and Frédéric Sawicki, *La société des socialistes. Le PS aujourd'hui*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

policy positions of Mitterrand and Chirac on Europe did not differ greatly, tensions manifested themselves due to their competing claims to policy-making responsibility. The ambitious Chirac was torn between proving his credentials as an international statesman and avoiding diminishing the role of the President, which he hoped soon to occupy, in the domain of foreign policy. He claimed, however, that many EC policies were domestic affairs and thus the responsibility of his government. Further, Chirac insisted that he, rather than the RPR Foreign Minister, Jean-Bernard Raimond, attend meetings of the European Council with the President.⁶⁶⁸ These rivalries aside, this period of cohabitation meant political actors from the three main parties played active roles in EC policy-making at a crucial stage in the process of European integration. This served to strengthen the cross-party consensus in support of EC membership, including the Single Market, which in turn had a positive impact on public opinion.⁶⁶⁹

The RPR showed particular support for the economic aspects of the SEA, although some within the party remained concerned about the institutional provisions. Despite these concerns, the vast majority of the RPR voted to ratify the SEA Treaty in November 1986, with only ten RPR *députés* abstaining from the vote. The high levels of support within the RPR was certainly influenced by the fact that the RPR-led government, and Chirac personally, presented the text to Parliament and there was, therefore, a desire to show party unity. Nonetheless, the result of the vote displayed the extent to which the party's position had evolved since the 1979 European Parliament elections. By 1986, the RPR position was similar to that of the UK Conservative Party, with economic liberalisation viewed as a positive outcome of integration, with concerns based on loss of national sovereignty. While on different sides of the political spectrum, the evolution of the RPR's position resembled, to a certain extent, that of the UK Labour Party. With a view to modernising their parties in keeping with public opinion and making them more electable, the RPR and the Labour Party, respectively, abandoned their soft- and hard-Euro sceptic positions. The SEA was also supported by all PS and all UDF *députés*. That the Treaty enjoyed the support of the UDF was not surprising. However, the levels of support among the PS was striking, given that the Treaty paved the way to economic liberalisation at the European level.⁶⁷⁰ PS support for the SEA contrasted with the Labour Party's opposition. Yet, the support of the three main parties for the SEA was in keeping with public opinion. The

⁶⁶⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁶⁶⁹ Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁶⁷⁰ Marion Gaillard, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

trend of growing support for EC membership had continued to grow since the 1984 European Parliament elections and had reached a new high of 69 per cent in spring 1986.⁶⁷¹

2.2.4. *Mitterrand's second term*

Chirac made his support for European integration, and the Single Market in particular, a feature of the 1988 Presidential election campaign. With a deadline for the completion of the Single Market having been set, Chirac presented himself as the candidate who would ensure this was achieved. While this stance was in keeping with a wider move to modernise Gaullism, Chirac's position was motivated by a strategic desire to secure the support of the Europhile UDF.⁶⁷² Mitterrand was re-elected for a second term and, at the legislative elections held weeks later, the PS secured a relative majority of seats. The need for cohabitation over, Mitterrand appointed Michel Rocard as Prime Minister. Rocard moved the PS-led government towards the centre, allowing for wider political support of its policies. As a result, a considerable proportion of the *Centre des démocrates sociaux* (CDS), a constituent party of the UDF, left the group in 1988 to form a separate parliamentary group, the *Union du centre* (UDC) under the leadership of Jacques Barrot. The UDC would offer active or passive support to the government, notably on European policy.⁶⁷³

The completion of the Single Market and preparations for Economic and Monetary Union were key features of Mitterrand's second Presidential term. He continued to view European integration as a unifying goal, and, during his address on New Year's Eve 1988, made clear his support for economic, monetary and political union. Mitterrand argued that such union was necessary in order to rival the power of the US and Japan, and oppose dominant powers.⁶⁷⁴ Public opinion polls and European Parliament elections, held six months later, in June 1989, suggested that the public supported further integration. Although support for EC membership had peaked two years earlier, public perceptions of EC membership as a good thing stood at 68 per cent and just 5 per cent of the public considered membership to be a bad thing.⁶⁷⁵

Although the European Parliament elections remained 'second order' votes, by 1989 the Europe issue had become more present in political debate and the public had had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the matter. Public support for EC membership

⁶⁷¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 25*, June 1986.

⁶⁷² Cécile Leconte, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁶⁷³ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁷⁴ François Mitterrand, *Speech in Strasbourg*, 31 December 1988 <<https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/140645-allocation-de-m-francois-mitterrand-president-de-la-republique-loc>>.

⁶⁷⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 29*, June 1988.

appeared to translate into votes for pro-integration parties at the elections. As in 1984, the UDF and RPR presented a joint list, this time headed by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. However, divisions within the UDF, that had been visible at the previous two elections, had deepened, resulting in Simone Veil heading a separate, more Europhile list, *Le Centre pour l'Europe*.⁶⁷⁶ Although Veil's list drew public support away from the UDF-RPR, the latter won the election and the PS came second.⁶⁷⁷ Notable, however was the marked fall in turnout at the election. Whereas 60.71 per cent and 56.72 per cent of the electorate had voted at the 1979 and 1984 European Parliament elections respectively, turnout in 1989 was just 48.80 per cent, which was also considerably lower than the EC average.⁶⁷⁸ This fall could perhaps be explained by the fact that, with the legislative and Presidential and legislative elections not due for a number of years, the importance of the European Parliament elections, in terms of sending a signal to the government, seemed to be lower.

In the context of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the imminent reunification of Germany, and the concerns about German economic dominance that this brought, Mitterrand took the lead in shaping EMU. Mitterrand worked closely with Jacques Delors, the former Finance Minister and President of the European Commission since 1985. Having taken a number of difficult, and politically risky, decisions on domestic economic and monetary policy so as to conform with the requirements of the EMS and Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), Mitterrand was determined to see his vision of EMU succeed. Mitterrand, like Delors, favoured the introduction of a single currency. However, although there was strong support within the PS for further integration, not all supported a single currency and some within the PS fully opposed EMU. This was the case of Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who had returned to government as Defence Minister.⁶⁷⁹ With differing views at the heart of government, the question risked bringing intra-party divisions to the fore. Also, as leader of the opposition, Chirac opposed the introduction of a single currency, preferring a common currency.⁶⁸⁰

Despite hostility from within his own party and from the RPR opposition, Mitterrand pushed ahead with his preferred vision of EMU. While he, like Delors, considered a single currency to be a necessary step, he was also driven by his vision of Europe as a project that the

⁶⁷⁶ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁶⁷⁷ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1989", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-1989.htm>>.

⁶⁷⁸ European Parliament, "Results of the 1989 European elections", <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/national-results/france/1989-1994/constitutive-session/>>.

⁶⁷⁹ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*

⁶⁸⁰ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*

French people could unite around. Further, his role in the construction of economic and political union would be key to Mitterrand's legacy. The political context was favourable, with Mitterrand in his second term, Presidential elections not due until 1995, and the PS enjoying the support of the UDC in Parliament on European questions. Further, the public was supportive of European integration. Although Mitterrand had some success in uniting the PS around this European vision, as his hold over the party declined from the early 1990s, the party, as a whole, demonstrated less commitment to political integration and became more critical of what were considered to be the social and economic drawbacks of integration.⁶⁸¹

By studying the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians on European integration since joining the European Communities, this second sub-chapter has shown that whereas, in France, an inter- and intra-party consensus in support of integration emerged soon after accession, such a consensus was not achieved in the UK. The Conservative Party remained united in its (albeit unenthusiastic) support for integration throughout the second half of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, and this despite Thatcher's difficult relations with her EC partners. In contrast, having switched on a number of occasions between the founding of the Communities and the UK's accession, the Labour Party's position on the very question of EC membership remained unsettled until the late-1980s. Much of this instability was due to on-going intra-party divisions around the Europe issue. This is not to say that a consensus existed between and within French political parties as to *how* European integration should proceed.

From the mid-1980s important changes in the positions of UK and French political parties took place. In the UK, while Conservatives became more critical of European integration and its outcomes, the Labour Party abandoned its opposition to EC membership and slowly became more supportive of integration. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, Labour was the more Europhile of the two parties. As the Conservative Party became less supportive, it also became more divided on the Europe issue. In contrast, the Labour Party became more united in its support for integration. The shift in the Conservative Party's position was caused by an ideological opposition to the outcomes of integration. While the shift in the Labour Party's position was also influenced by ideological factors, notably changes in EC policies, electoral strategy was a key driver of the change. The move was particularly relevant in the context of a marked increase in public support for EC membership. As a result of the evolution in the Labour

⁶⁸¹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Party's position, it could be said that a consensus, albeit fragile, in support of integration existed between and within the two main parties in the late 1980s.

In France, the PS leadership abandoned its planned domestic economic reforms in order to pursue EC goals. Likewise, the RPR loosened its attachment to national sovereignty in favour of the EC's liberal economic measures. Whereas the PS' EC policy caused deep divides within the party, the RPR remained relatively united as it shifted to a more supportive position. However, in both cases, the shifts were driven, at least in part, by a strategic desire of the leadership to modernise the parties as the Europe issue became a greater feature of political debate. As in the UK, these shifting positions took place in a context of heightened public support for EC membership. The evolution in the parties' positions meant that, from the mid-1980s, a consensus in support for further integration existed between the two main parties, although *within* the PS divisions endured.

Conclusion

The founding of the European Communities was a major step taken by states in the years following the end of World War II. The process of European integration embarked upon necessitated transfers of national sovereignty and the acceptance of supranationalism, as well as trust and compromise. Together, member states established common institutions and common policies, and accepted the primacy of EC law over domestic law. Through their integration, trust between states grew and a collective vision of the future of Europe began to emerge. Governing elites benefitted from a permissive consensus among the public in support of integration and support for membership of the EC grew considerably during the 1980s as the benefits of integration became more tangible. Nonetheless, as this chapter has shown, questions of membership, and the development, of the European Communities caused divisions between and within mainstream political parties in both the UK and France during the period from accession to 1990. However, the extent and consequences of these divisions varied.

The UK chose not to join other Western European states in founding the European Communities and, instead, limited itself to membership of the intergovernmental Council of Europe and later established the European Free Trade Association. An inter- and intra-party consensus existed in support of the decision not to join the Communities at their founding. However, in light of the success of European integration, the position of the Conservative Party changed. The decision of Harold Macmillan's Conservative government to apply for EC membership in 1961 was supported by an overwhelming majority of the Conservative Party but

was opposed by the Labour Party. The EC issue therefore became the cause of inter-party divisions between the Conservative and Labour Parties.

From the mid-1960s the position of the Labour Party began to evolve, in recognition of the benefits of integration but also the potential for making political gains from adopting a more Europhile stance. However, faced with the challenge of managing a party highly divided over the question of membership, Wilson had to tread carefully. His response was to adopt an ambiguous position in a strategic attempt to satisfy both supporters and opponents of membership. Once returned to office the Labour government submitted a second application for membership in 1967. Yet, even at this point, a consensus in support of UK membership of the EC did not exist. While the Conservative Party remained united in its support for membership, the Labour Party remained highly divided. Following the rejection of the second application and returned to opposition in 1970, the Labour Party's position fluctuated, influenced, on the one hand, by intra-party competition and the desire to make political gains by criticising the Conservative government's EC policy and, on the other, by a desire to see the UK take advantage of the benefits of membership. The disunity of the Labour Party was fully on display at the 1975 referendum, with the Labour leadership calling for a 'yes' vote while the majority of the party's MPs opposed membership. Throughout this period, the Conservative Party, in contrast, remained relatively united in its support for EC membership.

The influence of Labour opponents of membership was such that, from 1980, the party's official position was to call for the UK to leave the EC. This position did not, however, resolve intra-party divisions. In fact, it was not until the late-1980s, and the shift in the Labour Party's position on EC membership, that party unity was restored. Although Labour's changed position was linked to changes in EC policy, the move was driven to a considerable extent by electoral strategy. The expectation that electoral gains could be made through the adoption of a more Europhile EC policy made it easier to ensure party unity. Meanwhile, in contrast, the Conservative Party had become more critical of integration, as evidenced by Thatcher's differences with her fellow EC leaders, culminating in her Bruges speech of 1988. The shift in the Conservative Party's position was driven principally by ideological concerns, as opposed to strategic considerations. As the Conservative Party's position became more critical, intra-party divisions emerged. On the one hand, Thatcher's increasingly Eurosceptic rhetoric legitimised and emboldened those within the Conservative Party who opposed integration. On the other hand, those who supported integration pushed back. By the end of the 1980s, the two main parties had switched sides in the inter-party competition around Europe, with the Labour Party having become more supportive than the Conservatives. Also, whereas the Labour Party

had become more united on the question of integration, divisions within the Conservative Party grew and deepened and, ultimately contributed to Thatcher's departure from office in 1990.

Given the UK's reluctance to engage in the pursuit of European integration, it was France that took the lead. The Schuman Plan of 1950 constituted the basis of the ECSC and laid the foundations of future integration. In contrast to the UK, however, there were pronounced divisions between and within French political parties around the question of the creation of the European Communities in the 1950. However, once the Communities were established, although there were differences as to the form that integration should take, a consensus emerged in support of EC membership and in recognition of its benefits. Where divisions were present between French political parties, they were rarely brought to the fore in an attempt to achieve political gain. In fact, differences over Europe were more likely to be concealed so as to allow for the formation of electoral alliances. This was notably the case of the UDR and RPR, which moderated their positions in order to ensure the support of the Europhile FNRI and UDF.

As in the UK, the positions of France's two main political parties evolved considerably in the 1980s. In opposition, Mitterrand had adopted a somewhat ambiguous EC policy that drew support from both integrationists and critics on the far-left of the party in a strategic attempt to unite the PS around a common vision of European integration. However, once in office, the pressures of EC membership began to conflict with core PS domestic policies. In an attempt to modernise the party, Mitterrand accepted the economic liberalisation that the completion of the Single Market entailed. However, this move faced opposition within the party, causing internal divisions to surface. Mitterrand successfully dealt with the challenge posed by a party divided over Europe. Divisions were contained and, in fact, Mitterrand succeeded in making the PS the party of European integration. Under the leadership of Chirac, the position of the RPR on integration evolved drastically so as to be supportive of economic liberalisation and more accepting of transfers of sovereignty. As with the PS, this change in position was influenced by a strategic desire to modernise the party and benefit from public support for integration. In contrast to the PS, however, the shift in the RPR's position was not a cause of notable intra-party divisions. Like the UK Labour Party, the shift in the positions of both the PS and the RPR was influenced by strategic considerations. In a context of growing public support for EC membership, these parties considered support for integration to be a means of making political gains. They believed that their position on the Europe issue would impact voter behaviour.

In studying the positions of UK and French political parties and individual political elites from the post-war period to the eve of the opening of the intergovernmental conferences of economic and political union, the key difference that can be observed relates to consensus.

Despite different visions of how European integration should proceed, a cross-party consensus in support of EC membership emerged shortly after accession and the main parties united in support of the SEA. This was not the case in the UK. Not only was there no cross-party consensus in support of either the first or second application for membership, a consensus did not emerge following accession. Eventually, by the mid-1980s, it seemed as though a cross-party consensus was emerging. Yet the Labour Party opposed the SEA and internal divisions within the Conservative Party began to deepen. The absence of consensus among the main political parties in the UK served to incentivise and legitimise opponents, exaggerating divisions between and within parties, causing the Europe issue to become a basis of political competition.

The next chapter will study the period around and following the ratification of the TEU so as to determine the extent to which, if any, the Europe issue was the basis of political competition in the UK and France, and whether political actors made gains as a result of their position on integration.

PART 2

Chapter 3

The Treaty on European Union and the Positioning of Politicians on European Integration

Introduction

The entry into force of the Single European Act in 1987 had given the process of European integration a new momentum and the majority of leaders sought to build on its achievements. This was particularly so given the context of increased economic competition on the international stage and the changing world order in light of the Cold War reaching an end. Further, integration enjoyed growing public support throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. In spring 1991, while negotiations of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) were underway, the percentage of Europeans who believed their state's membership of the European Communities to be a good thing peaked at 72 per cent.⁶⁸²

The TEU, signed by member states in Maastricht on 7 February 1992, marked a key juncture in European integration. With the TEU the European Communities became the European Union, and states moved beyond economic integration to begin a process of political integration. The European Union was to be based on three pillars, namely the European Communities, Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Justice and Home Affairs. The European Communities pillar brought together the three pre-existing, highly integrated, communities, namely the European Community, the Coal and Steel Community, and Euratom. Here the Treaty provided for reinforced democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU's institutions, with greater powers for the European Parliament and increased use of qualified majority voting in the Council of the European Union. The Common Foreign and Security Policy pillar was introduced to allow member states to take common positions and joint action in the domain of political external relations, albeit in an intergovernmental and non-legally-binding manner. The Justice and Home Affairs pillar established cooperation between member

⁶⁸² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 35*, *op. cit.*

states, again on an intergovernmental basis, to ensure an area of freedom, security and justice for citizens.

A key provision of the TEU was the establishment of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The Treaty provided for the introduction of a single currency, with a single monetary policy and authority, and the coordination and surveillance, by the EU's institutions, of national economic and budgetary policies. Further, new or expanded powers were created in the areas of economic and social cohesion, environmental protection, and public health protection. A Social Chapter was annexed to the Treaty, providing for enhanced labour rights. In an attempt to bring Europe's peoples closer to the EU, the Treaty introduced EU citizenship for all citizens of an EU member state, it provided for the establishment of the Committee of the Regions and the office of EU Ombudsman. Human rights and subsidiarity were enshrined as general principles of EU law.

The TEU was a significant step forward in the process of European integration and its provisions entailed a considerable transfer of member state sovereignty. Although negotiation of the Treaty took only one year, two member states, the UK and Denmark, sought opt-outs, a first in the history of European integration. Both states were granted opt-outs from the third stage of EMU, and the UK secured a further opt-out from the Social Chapter. The Treaty entered into force on 1 November 1993, less than two years after its signature. Yet the process of ratification by member states was not always smooth. The TEU was not only a key juncture in the process of integration, it also had a profound impact on the attitudes and positions of national politicians towards integration. The far-reaching changes brought about by the TEU, and the debate, both political and public, that this engendered, meant the TEU obliged national politicians to position themselves more explicitly on European integration.

This chapter plots the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and notable individual politicians on European integration, from the opening of the intergovernmental conferences on the Treaty of the European Union in December 1990 to the beginnings of the Convention on the Future of Europe in 2002, which fed into the intergovernmental conference on the Constitutional Treaty. The first sub-chapter focuses on the negotiation and ratification of the TEU, and the responses of UK and French politicians thereto. The second sub-chapter covers the ten-year period beginning with the entry into force of the TEU. The chapter studies how parties and individual politicians positioned themselves on the TEU, how the Treaty impacted inter- and intra-party competition, and how parties dealt with the divisions over the Europe issue in the Maastricht and post-Maastricht periods. Considerable use is made of information gathered through the interviews, especially with UK MPs. As in the

previous chapter, this chapter seeks to understand the motivations of politicians in positioning themselves on the Europe issue. Did strategy play a role in shaping positions on the TEU? Did parties or individual politicians make political gains from their position?

It is argued that, while ideology continued to be the key factor influencing the positions of UK politicians on the Europe issue, from the early 1990s strategic considerations began to play a visible role in determining positions. In France, while it is shown that strategic considerations did, at times, play a role, the positions of French politicians continued to be driven predominantly by ideological beliefs. Following the entry into force of the TEU, the salience and political importance of the Europe issue in France declined until the referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. In the UK, however, divisions over the Europe issue were ongoing and had considerable influence on political competition, especially within the Conservative Party. It is shown that whereas French mainstream parties tended to ‘externalise’ individuals who were vocally critical of the TEU, mainstream parties in the UK, and in particular the Conservative Party, ‘internalised’ critics, thus enabling them to make political gains.

1. The difficult ratification of the Treaty on European Union

The negotiation and, especially, the ratification of the TEU shook the pro-integration consensus among European politicians. In some member states the debate was restricted to parliament, while in others the public was directly involved in the debate with the holding of a referendum. Regardless of the means of ratification, however, the salience of the Europe issue increased markedly with the TEU. The Treaty caused the blurring of the lines between national and European policy, and the politicization of integration.⁶⁸³ The ratification process brought the Europe issue into the public domain meaning the public became more aware of the associated issues, although they did not necessarily better understand them. Concurrently, the percentage of the public who considered their state’s membership of the EC/EU to be a ‘good thing’ began to decline and the percentage who considered membership to be a ‘bad thing’ rose. The permissive consensus of European publics that had underpinned the process of integration was under threat. The ratification of the TEU obliged political parties and individual politicians to take a stand either in support or in opposition to the Treaty, revealing divisions both between and within parties. Certain features of a political system can create incentives for criticism of

⁶⁸³ Simon Usherwood and Nick Startin, “Euroscepticism as a Persistent Phenomenon”, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

European integration and growing public opposition to membership meant that parties and individual politicians stood to make political gains from adopting a more critical position.

The following sections present and analyse the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the negotiation and ratification of the TEU. The sections seek to determine how the TEU impacted inter- and intra-party competition, how parties managed divisions, and the motivations of parties and individual political elites in positioning themselves on the Treaty.

1.1. The UK's Maastricht Rebellion

When the inter-governmental conferences began in Rome on 9 December 1990, John Major had been Prime Minister for less than two weeks. Under his predecessor's leadership, the Conservative Party had won a 102-seat majority at the previous general election in 1987, strengthening Major's position going into negotiations. He was, however, conscious of the role that intra-party divisions over Europe had played in bringing about Thatcher's downfall. While many in the Conservative Party supported further integration, supporters were mostly Europragmatists as opposed to Euroenthusiasts. Importantly, the number of Eurosceptics was increasing. Although most were soft Eurosceptics, a small but not insignificant minority of Conservative MPs were Euro-rejects. Public perception of the UK's membership of the European Communities as a good thing had risen quite consistently throughout the 1980s, and was still rising as negotiations got underway in late 1990.⁶⁸⁴ However, support for membership peaked at 57 per cent, somewhat below the average of member states as negotiations were on-going.⁶⁸⁵ In the six months following the signature of the Treaty, public support for membership fell quite dramatically to 43 per cent, well below the EC average at the time. Moreover, 24 per cent of the public considered membership to be a bad thing.⁶⁸⁶ Public opinion was undoubtedly influenced by the increasingly salient and negative debate around the ratification of the TEU.

It took eighteen months for the TEU to be ratified by the UK Parliament, with Conservative Eurosceptics mounting a rebellion against ratification. The process was arduous, with ever more Conservative MPs joining the rebellion, causing Major to struggle to maintain discipline. According to Conservative MP, Michael Spicer, a vocal opponent of the Treaty, the Maastricht rebellion had three stages. The first stage began in early 1991 with the assessment of the proposed TEU. The second stage began on 3 June 1992, with the Early Day Motion

⁶⁸⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 35*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 36*, December 1991.

⁶⁸⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 38*, October 1992.

(EDM) following the Danish public's rejection of the TEU at referendum. The third stage began in response to the paving vote in the House of Commons on 5 November 1992.⁶⁸⁷ Sterling's suspension from the Exchange Rate Mechanism on 'Black Wednesday' in September 1992 also constituted a key stage in the Maastricht rebellion. Not only was the rebellion sustained over time, delaying the ratification of the Treaty in the UK, it was quite unique in terms of its characteristics. Gifford identifies four distinctive features of the mobilisation by opponents of the TEU in the UK.⁶⁸⁸ First, it could not be curbed by traditional means of party discipline. Second, it was a nation-wide movement with mass appeal. Third, great emphasis was placed on British cultural and symbolic exceptionalism. Fourth, the rebellion had considerable consequences for the government's Europe policy. Further, and most importantly for our purposes, the process of ratifying the TEU had considerable political consequences and costs for the Conservative Party. The TEU caused a shift in support for the process and outcomes of integration. The process of ratification saw the deepening of divisions within the party, challenges to Major's leadership, and a decline in electoral support for the Conservative Party.

1.1.1. Major's negotiations

Major was appointed as Prime Minister on 28 November 1990, shortly before the opening of the two IGCs on the future TEU. Having supported his election as leader, party Eurosceptics awaited confirmation that they had made the right choice. That Major was Thatcher's favoured candidate in the leadership contest no doubt served to reassure her supporters. Like Thatcher, Major was reluctant to see the further deepening of integration and viewed the upcoming IGCs as undesirable.⁶⁸⁹ Nonetheless, doubts remained as Major seemed capable of agreeing with, and appealing to, both Eurosceptics and Europhiles.⁶⁹⁰ Notably, it was Major as Chancellor who had convinced Thatcher to have the UK join the ERM two months previously. Further, it was clear that Major was keen to step out from Thatcher's shadow and prove that he was his own man. As far as Eurosceptics were concerned, the Prime Minister was "on probation" until he had proven his Eurosceptic credentials.⁶⁹¹

An early indicator of the position Major would adopt on European integration as Prime Minister was given by the composition of his first government. The first Major ministry was composed, for the most part, of ministers supportive of, or indifferent to, integration. In

⁶⁸⁷ Michael Spicer, *The Spicer Diaries*, Biteback, London, 2012, p. 204.

⁶⁸⁸ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*, p. 858.

⁶⁸⁹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁶⁹¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

particular, as noted by John Redwood during interview, there was a perception that “Euroscptics were under-represented” in Major’s first Cabinet.⁶⁹² This was interpreted as a sign that Major was not as Euroscptic as he would have had the party believe. Major’s Europhile challengers for the leadership, Hurd and Heseltine, were both given Cabinet roles. Hurd retained his position as Foreign Secretary. Heseltine returned to government as Environment Secretary, having resigned from Thatcher’s Cabinet in 1986. Another prominent Europhile in Major’s Cabinet was Kenneth Clarke, who had been a member of the government since 1979. Nonetheless, there were a number of notable Euroscptics present. Of the twenty-two Cabinet members, eight were Euroscptic. Norman Lamont, an opponent of EMU, was promoted from Chief Secretary to the Treasury to Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kenneth Baker was promoted to Home Secretary and Michael Howard, a key Thatcherite, was promoted to Employment Secretary. Peter Lilley, a Thatcher loyalist, retained his position as Trade and Industry Secretary.⁶⁹³ Hurd, Heseltine, Clarke, and Baker had considerable experience in Cabinet. Notably, with previous (Hurd, Heseltine) and future (Clarke, Howard, Lilley) leadership contenders, Major’s first Cabinet counted a number of ambitious individuals. In addition to composing a moderately Europhile Cabinet, Major adopted a more conciliatory style than his predecessor in inter-governmental negotiations.⁶⁹⁴ He was determined to repair the damage that had been done to UK-EC relations over the previous decade, and was particularly keen to improve relations with Germany.⁶⁹⁵ Major sought to change the UK’s status as a second-class member, behind the Franco-German tandem, and declared that he intended to put the UK “at the very heart of Europe”.⁶⁹⁶

As negotiations got underway, it quickly became apparent that the proposed Treaty had very little support within the government. Peter Lilley recounted during interview that, in assessing the TEU in preparation for negotiations, each government department was asked to score the various proposed measures as either desirable, acceptable, or not acceptable. Despite the presence of a number of Europhiles in government (and notably Hurd, Clarke, and Heseltine), no measure was considered desirable by any department, only acceptable at best. Lilley considered it essential that the Treaty should fail, and therefore recommended that the UK negotiate to render consensus impossible. Major refused to adopt this strategy, saying that

⁶⁹² John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁶⁹³ Luke Stanley, “The ‘Dispossessed’, the ‘Never-Possessed’ and the ‘Bastards’”. Debunking Major’s Myths of the Euroscptics”, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹⁴ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.* p. 84.

⁶⁹⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

⁶⁹⁶ Anthony Seldon, *Major: A Political Life*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1997, pp. 166-167.

to do so would be “dishonourable”.⁶⁹⁷ His desire to behave in an honourable way reflected his objectives of repairing damaged relations and reinstating the UK at the heart of Europe. Major’s response was also considered to be evidence of his support for further integration. Given that he would not block the TEU, Major found himself under pressure from Eurosceptic members of his Cabinet to insist upon certain concessions.⁶⁹⁸

Once backbench MPs had the opportunity to assess the proposed Treaty more closely, their concerns began to crystallize. Yet, despite these concerns, few MPs took the opportunity to raise the question in Parliament during the year-long negotiating process. Backbenchers were not, at this early stage, willing to risk taking a stand against the new Major government. Nonetheless, Eurosceptics did begin to organise themselves in a more structured way, notably by joining the Bruges Group and the parliamentary Friends of Bruges group, which had been established in 1989 in support of the vision of European integration set out by Thatcher in her Bruges speech.⁶⁹⁹ These moves towards better organisation of Eurosceptic voices signalled the beginning of the first stage of the Maastricht rebellion, as identified by Spicer.⁷⁰⁰ As negotiations proceeded, membership of the Bruges Group increased, most certainly in an attempt to maintain pressure on Major.⁷⁰¹ This also signalled that Euroscepticism was no longer confined to the margins of the party. Further, not only backbenchers were members of the Group. Members of Cabinet, including Peter Lilley and Michael Howard, and other government ministers, including John Redwood and Michael Portillo, joined. Like Lilley and Howard, Redwood and Portillo were ambitious Thatcherites who went on to contest the party leadership. That senior, ambitious party members joined the Group suggests that holding Eurosceptic views was no longer considered damaging to career prospects within the party.⁷⁰²

Faced with increasing Euroscepticism within his party and the subtle Eurosceptic positioning of some government members, Major adopted a strategy specifically designed to quell opposition. He directly involved prominent Eurosceptic members of his Cabinet, notably Norman Lamont, Kenneth Baker, Michael Howard, and Peter Lilley in the negotiation of the TEU. In doing so he disarmed these individuals and deprived backbenchers of leadership and a voice within Cabinet. This strategy seemed to work as Eurosceptic members accepted, albeit unenthusiastically, the government’s Europe policy at Cabinet meetings. They did not publicly

⁶⁹⁷ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

⁶⁹⁸ David Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁶⁹⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁷⁰⁰ Michael Spicer, *The Spicer Diaries, op. cit.*

⁷⁰¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

voice criticism of the government's policy and did not seek to garner support for their position from within the Parliamentary Party.⁷⁰³ In fact, a divide between Eurosceptic Cabinet members and backbenchers could be observed as the former sought, at least in public, to distance themselves from the latter. Teresa Gorman, a Eurosceptic backbench MP, noted in her memoirs that frontbench Eurosceptics considered those on the backbenches to be quite radical. Meanwhile, backbench Eurosceptics felt those on the frontbench would put their own career interests before those of their Eurosceptic cause.⁷⁰⁴ Gorman's statement is highly revelatory: how else could the likes of John Redwood, a long-standing critic of European integration who advised Thatcher against signing the Single European Act, explain their decision not to oppose the ratification of the TEU other than by a desire to stay in government and rise through the ranks of power? As the number of openly Eurosceptic Conservative MPs grew, this perception must have weighed increasingly heavily on MPs who hoped to advance further through the party hierarchy.

Having succeeded in (temporarily) silencing opposition to the TEU within his Cabinet, Major made use of the party's whips to limit the influence of Eurosceptic backbenchers and, in particular, Bruges Group members. Party whips play an extremely important role in maintaining discipline in the Westminster system with its large, broad parties. Party whips brought about the removal of Eurosceptics from two Conservative Party committees, a significant move as these committees serve to coordinate the positions of backbenchers and influence government.⁷⁰⁵ Bill Cash, a hard Eurosceptic, was removed as chairman of the Conservative backbench European Affairs Committee in November 1991, to be succeeded by Sir Norman Fowler, a loyal Major supporter.⁷⁰⁶ Shortly after the removal of Cash, the Eurosceptic and Thatcherite chairman of the Conservative Foreign Affairs Committee, Sir George Gardiner, was replaced by the vocal Europhile Cyril Townsend. Townsend was a strong supporter of integration, who had voiced opposition to Thatcher's Europe policy and had supported Heseltine's candidacy for party leader for this reason.⁷⁰⁷

In a further attempt to secure loyalty and quell opposition to the TEU, Major sought to link support to career advancement. Such efforts were focused on younger, ambitious MPs. This tactic was successful in ensuring the loyalty of Eurosceptic Jonathan Aitken, who was

⁷⁰³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁷⁰⁴ Teresa Gorman, *The Bastards: Dirty Tricks and the Challenge of Europe*, Pan Books, London, 1993, p. 13.

⁷⁰⁵ Philip Norton, "The House of Commons at Work", in Bill Jones and Philip Norton (eds.), *Politics UK, op. cit.*, p. 321.

⁷⁰⁶ Teresa Gorman, *The Bastards: Dirty Tricks and the Challenge of Europe, op. cit.*, pp. 29-35.

⁷⁰⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

promised promotion in return for his loyalty. Aitken entered government for the first time in April 1992 and joined the Cabinet in 1994.⁷⁰⁸ This serves as an illustration of strategy shaping the ideology of an individual politician and resulting in political gain. However, the offer of a position as Parliamentary Private Secretary did not win over James Cran, an outspoken Eurosceptic who would become a leading member of the Eurosceptic Fresh Start Group, more on which below.⁷⁰⁹ Neither did this tactic succeed in gaining the loyalty of Bill Cash, who turned down promises of promotion so as to pursue his hard Eurosceptic agenda.⁷¹⁰ Both Cran and Cash chose to prioritise ideology over career advancement.

Major was successful in winning a number of concessions from his European counterparts during negotiations. He ensured that an intended reference in Article 1 of the Treaty to a federal goal of integration was abandoned; that the principle of subsidiarity was enshrined in the Treaty; and that cooperation in the domains of foreign and security policy, and justice and home affairs would be fully intergovernmental. Unable to prevent the introduction of EMU, Major secured an opt-out from the third stage of EMU. This would mean that, although the UK would engage in economic coordination measures, it would not be obliged to adopt the single currency. He also secured an opt-out from the Social Chapter, which established a body of workers' rights. That he was successful in securing these concessions served to quell, albeit temporarily, Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party.⁷¹¹ Major judged negotiations to have been a success, with his spokesman referring to the outcome as “game, set and match” for UK diplomacy.⁷¹² However, although Major had secured an opt-out from the third stage of EMU, he chose to keep open the possibility of the future adoption of the single currency. According to John Redwood, Major's refusal to rule out the adoption of the single currency was a “driver of the Maastricht rebellion” to come.⁷¹³

As negotiations reached completion in November 1991, Alan Sked, a Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and a founding member of the Bruges Group, established the Anti-Federalist League (AFL). The AFL was a cross-party organisation founded to campaign against the Maastricht Treaty in the context of the up-coming general election. The AFL constituted the first anti-Maastricht political offer for a public that

⁷⁰⁸ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁷⁰⁹ Luke Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷¹⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁷¹¹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷¹² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

⁷¹³ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

increasingly questioned the value of European integration. Its establishment undoubtedly had some impact on the strategies of Eurosceptics within mainstream political parties.

1.1.2. Opposition mounts as ratification begins

In contrast to the government's claim that negotiations had been "game, set and match" to the UK, Eurosceptics highlighted a number of failings in the outcome, despite the opt-outs secured. They claimed concessions had been made by the government that were not in the UK's interest, that the government had been complacent, had lacked attention to detail, and had been complicit in advancing political integration that would result in a loss of national sovereignty.⁷¹⁴ By the time the TEU was signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992, concerns about the Treaty had spread within the Conservative Party, in no small part due to the highly effective organisation of Eurosceptic groups. Approximately 130 backbench Conservative MPs – around 40 per cent of the Parliamentary Party – joined, or were associated with, the Friends of Bruges Group in 1992. Further, during the eighteen-month ratification period, twenty-seven Eurosceptic organisations were established by Conservative Eurosceptic activists⁷¹⁵. The Eurosceptic wing of the party was far more organised than the party as a whole,⁷¹⁶ and enjoyed the financial support of wealthy patrons, including Lord Forte, Sir James Goldsmith, and Lord King.⁷¹⁷ And, not only did Conservative Eurosceptics' organisation and financial resources improve over time, the intellectual basis of their arguments gained credibility, with debates becoming more ideological around Maastricht.⁷¹⁸

Party Eurosceptics were increasingly militant and disputes could no longer be resolved using the usual tools of party management.⁷¹⁹ The job of party whips grew increasingly difficult and the promise of career advancement could be relied upon less to ensure loyalty. For a few Conservative MPs, opposition to the TEU was a matter of conscience, and their attachment to the idea was stronger than their attachment to the party,⁷²⁰ or their ambition to rise through the party's ranks. Such MPs were prepared to defy the party whip at various stages of the reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill and would go so far as to vote against the government on a motion of confidence. This flags a dividing line among Conservative Eurosceptics at the time of the ratification of the TEU. On the one hand, there were those, such

⁷¹⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-88.

⁷¹⁶ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p.202.

⁷¹⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

⁷¹⁹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, pp. 182, 201.

⁷²⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

as Lilley and Howard, who would vote with the government while voicing their opposition through membership of groups such as the Bruges Group. Many such individuals would rise through the party's ranks, hold senior positions in government, and exert increasing influence. On the other hand, there were ideologues, such as Cash, who were prepared to topple the government in their efforts to block the ratification of the Treaty. Such individuals remained on the backbenches.

Eurosceptic activism was to be seen not only within the Parliamentary Party but also outwith, with political activists voicing concerns about the government's Europe policy. Of importance was the increase in Eurosceptic activism among the Conservatives' youth activists. In February 1991, Young Conservatives, the youth wing of the party, openly condemned the government's Europe policy. Closely associated with the activities of Young Conservatives was Conservative Youth against a Federal Europe.⁷²¹ Euroscepticism in the youth wing of the party reflected a generational change in attitudes towards EC/EU membership in the party and corresponded with the increasing number of Eurosceptic Conservative candidates elected to Parliament from 1992.

As seen in Chapter 1, the level of support for European integration among UK MPs surveyed has evolved considerably over time, with a substantial minority signalling that their support had increased or decreased over time. Almost half of those whose support for membership had declined pointed to the period around the TEU as the point of this change. The TEU as a trigger for increased negativity was particularly common among Conservative respondents. Over two-thirds of Conservative MPs have become less supportive of membership over time, of which 60 per cent became less supportive around the signing and ratification of the TEU. The TEU caused Eurosceptics and Europragmatists, particularly in the Conservative Party, to question their support for the process and outcomes of integration.

A key impression communicated during interviews with Eurosceptic politicians was that the TEU changed the very nature of European integration. Desmond Swayne stated that "the EU was a changed beast" following Maastricht and was thenceforth driven by a "Eurotrajectory."⁷²² As a Parliamentary Private Secretary for over ten years, Swayne gained insight into the evolution of backbench attitudes towards integration. Some, such as Peter Lilley, believe that it was with the ratification of the TEU that the European project revealed its "true nature", something which, until then, had been planned but hidden from the British

⁷²¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁷²² Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

people.⁷²³ Lilley went on to claim that most Conservative MPs shared this view and that this “sense of deceit” was the cause of a fall in support for, and an increase in opposition to, EU membership within the party. The perception that the European project had changed and that the British people had been deceived was shared by Lewis Moonie. Moonie stated that with the TEU “political union within the EU became the driving force”.⁷²⁴ He added that the increasing use of qualified majority voting within the Council subsequent to the TEU “diluted the UK’s ability to exert influence” and that the government’s leaders “knew this was coming”. For Moonie, UK governments had been complicit in the deceit of the British people. John Redwood encapsulated the sentiment at the time, saying “Maastricht was a watershed moment both for European integration and for the UK’s relationship with it”.⁷²⁵ Regardless of whether MPs considered the British people had been deceived or not, the perception that the TEU had changed the nature, objectives, and outcomes of integration was widely held. With this attitudes towards integration, most notably among Conservative politicians, changed.

However, despite discontent with the concessions negotiated by Major, the increasing influence of Eurosceptic groups, and the perception that the nature of European integration had changed, vocal criticism of the Treaty remained muted among Conservative MPs in the months following the ending of negotiations. At a first debate on the outcomes of the Treaty negotiations, held in December 1991, only seven Conservative MPs voted against the European Communities (Amendment) Bill, with three abstentions. Among the seven Conservative rebels were Norman Tebbit and John Biffen.⁷²⁶ Both had long and successful parliamentary careers, having served in Thatcher’s Cabinet. Both were highly influential party figures, with Tebbit having served as party Chairman and Biffen as Leader of the House of Commons. Also, both were nearing the end of their careers in the House of Commons, with Tebbit entering the House of Lords in 1992 and Biffen in 1997. Of note is that Tebbit is the current President of the Bruges Group. In rebelling against the government, Tebbit and Biffen took limited personal risk. However, their stature within the party served to draw attention and influence others. In order to contain the rebellion, Major made tactical use of the up-coming general election, emphasising the need for the party to present a united front in support of the TEU so as to avoid giving the public the impression of a party in disarray.⁷²⁷ This was particularly important given that

⁷²³ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

⁷²⁴ Lewis Moonie, interview by telephone.

⁷²⁵ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁷²⁶ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

⁷²⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

opinion polls consistently predicted a Labour victory. Major's tactics served to suppress, to a certain extent, open criticism of the Treaty. However, the muting of criticism was short-lived.⁷²⁸

As discussed in Chapter 2, following the introduction of social protections at the European level in the mid-1980s, and possibly also in an attempt to attract greater public support, the Labour Party's Europe policy had shifted to one of support for membership by the late-1980s. The party's leadership supported the TEU in its entirety and opposed the opt-outs from the Social Chapter and EMU negotiated by the government. Nonetheless, Labour's criticism of the outcome of negotiations was muted. Although the vast majority of Labour MPs supported the TEU, there remained some reticence and resistance from a minority of MPs on the left of the party, and also from trade unions. In limiting its criticism of the government, the leadership sought to avoid the revival of harmful intra-party divisions on Europe. The Labour Party's objective was to see the TEU adopted with the opt-outs from the Social Chapter and EMU overturned. It was hoped that, faced with a choice between adopting the Social Chapter or seeing the Treaty fail due to lack of support from the opposition, the government would be forced to renounce this opt-out. Yet, given the Labour Party had been in opposition since 1979, the opportunity to cause trouble for the government, and undermine Major's leadership, was attractive. The Labour leadership called for its MPs to abstain on the principal votes on the Treaty with a view to bringing divisions within the Conservative Party to the fore.⁷²⁹

Labour Eurosceptic groups were far lesser in number and influence than those of the Conservative Party. Given the strong consensus within the party in support of the TEU, opponents did not stand to advance their careers by opposing the leadership. On the contrary, vocal opponents of the Treaty found themselves confined to the party backbenches. Nonetheless, the Labour Euro Safeguards Campaign, established shortly after the 1975 referendum, brought together prominent Labour backbench opponents of the TEU, including Peter Shore, Tony Benn, and Austin Mitchell. Shore was a senior figure in the party, having served in the Cabinets of Harold Wilson, during which time he led the renegotiation of the terms of the UK's membership of the EC, and James Callaghan. He also held senior positions in the Shadow Cabinets of Callaghan and Michael Foot. Although Shore's bid for the party leadership in 1983 received very limited support, he was Shadow Leader of the House of Commons between 1983 and 1987. Benn had also served in Wilson's Cabinet and Mitchell was a party whip between 1979 and 1985. In 1990 the Euro Safeguards Campaign claimed that a quarter of the party's 229 MPs were members. Shore noted, however, that from the early 1990s, it became

⁷²⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.

⁷²⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

increasingly difficult to attract ambitious Labour MPs to join the group as they feared the consequences for their careers. As a result of growing concerns among Labour MPs about the career consequences of being openly Eurosceptic, the Euro Safeguards Campaign stopped publicising its members list.⁷³⁰ This is in keeping with the claims made by Moonie and Hopkins during interview that the Labour Party leadership considered that political gains would be made from adopting a Europhile position.

Although Shore attended meetings of the Bruges Group, Labour opponents of the TEU did not join forces with their Conservative colleagues to fight for a common cause.⁷³¹ First, the basis of Labour and Conservative opposition to the Treaty tended to be very different. Labour Eurosceptics tended to criticise the projected outcomes of the Treaty. In particular they focused on the deflationary policy that would result, which would make it impossible for a future Labour government to increase public spending as per party policy. Conservative critics, on the other hand, focused more on questions of national sovereignty and identity. However, Shore and Mitchell also voiced concerns for the loss of national sovereignty and the weakening of the state, which did not differ too much from those of Conservative critics.⁷³² Second, the typical profile of Conservative and Labour critics was quite distinct. A typical Conservative opponent of the TEU was relatively young and ambitious. A study published by The Bruges Group shows that, between 1990 and 1997, the younger a Conservative MP was, the more likely it was he or she would be critical of European integration. In fact, Conservative MPs born after 1930 were more likely to be critical of integration than supportive or indifferent. Further, the study shows that MPs entering Parliament for the first time during Thatcher's leadership of the party were far more likely to be critical of integration than their colleagues elected before 1979.⁷³³ The study's findings correspond with the responses of Conservative MPs to the questionnaire: younger Conservative MPs, elected after 1979, tended to be critical of integration.

As well as being relatively young, Conservative critics also tended to be ambitious. Many had successfully climbed the party's ranks and held positions in government or even Cabinet. Lilley, Howard, Redwood, and Portillo – all 'young Thatcherites' – are key examples of the typical Conservative Eurosceptic or Europragmatic MP in the Maastricht period. In contrast, critics of European integration in the Labour Party tended to be older and had entered Parliament before or around the 1975 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the

⁷³⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

⁷³¹ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁷³² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁷³³ Luke Stanley, *op. cit.* p. 35.

EC. The vast majority of Labour critics spent most or all of their career on the backbenches. Benn and Shore stood out in terms of their previous experience in government, although they had left the frontbench in 1979 and 1987 respectively. Critics represented ‘old Labour’, a minority that had refused to be drawn towards the centre under Kinnock’s leadership. Something Conservative and Labour critics of integration of the early 1990s did have in common, however, was that they all represented constituencies in England. This is relevant because, as shown in Chapter 1, opposition to membership has tended to be higher in England than in other parts of the UK.

1.1.3. The Conservatives’ election victory against the odds

A general election was held on 9 April 1992, just two months after the signing of the Treaty on European Union. As electoral law at that time stated a general election must be held no more than five years after the previous one, held in June 1987, Major had little room for manoeuvre in fixing a date. Yet the timing of the election allowed Major to both advertise the success of recent negotiations and suppress criticism from Conservative opponents of the Treaty. The election having been declared the day after Chancellor Lamont announced tax cuts in his annual budget, the Conservative leadership made tax a key theme of the election, which served to the party’s advantage.⁷³⁴ Neither the Conservative nor the Labour Party sought to make the Europe issue, and the ratification of the TEU in particular, a feature of the campaign. The absence of debate around the Europe issue caused some to complain that the British people had not been given the opportunity to endorse the TEU, and thus boosted calls for a referendum on its ratification.⁷³⁵ Nonetheless, Europhile voters were more likely to vote for Labour, whereas Eurosceptic voters were more likely to vote Conservative.⁷³⁶

That the Conservative Party was re-elected for a fourth consecutive term was a source of great surprise, a win “against odds”, as opinion polls had consistently predicted a Labour victory, albeit a narrow one.⁷³⁷ However, the Conservative Party’s majority in Parliament was greatly reduced from 102 to just twenty-one seats. The party lost further seats at subsequent by-elections, reducing its majority to eighteen seats.⁷³⁸ Faced with a unified Labour Party, the

⁷³⁴ BBC, “1992: Tories win again against odds”, 10 April 1992 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/vote_2005/basics/4393317.stm>.

⁷³⁵ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷³⁶ Catherine E. de Vries, “EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties Electoral Fortunes”, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

⁷³⁷ BBC, “1992: Tories win again against odds”, *op. cit.*

⁷³⁸ Michael Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

disunity of the post-Thatcher Conservative Party surely contributed to the decline in electoral support.

The large majorities enjoyed by Conservative governments during the 1980s had allowed for the marginalisation of Eurosceptics within the party. In light of the 1992 general election result, the ability of Eurosceptics to exert influence grew as the government needed the support of almost all of its MPs in order to advance its agenda. However, it was not only the sharp reduction of the government's majority that boosted the influence of Eurosceptics. More than 70 per cent of Conservative MPs elected for the first time in 1992 were Eurosceptic.⁷³⁹ The party thence counted 192 Eurosceptic MPs, constituting 58 per cent of the Parliamentary Party.⁷⁴⁰ Among the 1992 intake were the Eurosceptics Iain Duncan Smith and Bernard Jenkin. Duncan Smith, who succeeded Tebbit as MP upon his retirement, was a particularly vocal critic of Major's Europe policy and quickly joined Maastricht rebels in opposing the ratification of the TEU. Ambitious, he was appointed to the Hague's Shadow Cabinet in 1997 before becoming party leader in 2001.⁷⁴¹ Greater in number and influence, Eurosceptics could increase their demands of the government on Europe policy and make use of issue linkages. Although, in theory, a narrow majority might result in greater party unity, this was not the case for the Conservative Party following the 1992 general election. Certain hard Eurosceptic Conservative MPs placed ideology before party and were willing to topple the government so as to achieve their goal of blocking the ratification of the TEU.

As the number and influence of party Eurosceptics increased, so did the possibility of forcing a change in the government's policy. As the Eurosceptic Conservative MP, Teresa Gorman, wrote in her memoirs, "with a majority of twenty Conservatives, a group of MPs can change government policy."⁷⁴² Maastricht rebels were successful in recruiting new members to their ranks, making it increasingly difficult for whips to ensure party discipline. The Labour MP, Jess Phillips, observed in 2019 that in a hung parliament, like that between 2017 and 2019, "everybody becomes a bit of a freelancer" and that "it doesn't feel like a team going over the wall together".⁷⁴³ Although Parliament was not hung in 1992, such freelancer behaviour could be observed among Conservative MPs: individual Eurosceptic MPs pursued their own

⁷³⁹ Luke Stanley, *op. cit.* p. 35.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁴¹ UK Parliament, "Iain Duncan Smith: Parliamentary Career", <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/iain-duncan-smith/152>>.

⁷⁴² Teresa Gorman, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁷⁴³ Zoe Williams, "Jess Phillips: 'I thought I was quite posh – I've realized I'm basically a scullery maid'", *The Guardian* <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/03/jess-phillips-i-thought-i-was-quite-posh-ive-realised-im-basically-a-scullery-maid>>.

ideological or careerist agendas, placing those interests above those of the party. The voice of backbenchers was boosted when, in May 1992, Eurosceptic Marcus Fox succeeded Europhile Cranley Onslow as Chair of the 1922 Committee. Fox strengthened the voice and influence of party backbenchers by regularly appearing in the media. Eurosceptic Conservative MP Nigel Evans, noted during interview that, under Fox's leadership between 1992 and 1997, "the 1922 Committee was much stronger than it is today."⁷⁴⁴ Yet, although he was Eurosceptic, Fox was loyal to the government throughout the ratification of the TEU.⁷⁴⁵

Despite the clear shift in the balance of Europhile and Eurosceptic Conservative MPs, Major composed a Cabinet more Europhile than the Parliamentary Party as a whole. Further, and in a mark of the divide between Major and much of his party, his second Cabinet was more Europhile than his first. Whereas his first Cabinet had eight notably Eurosceptic members, his new Cabinet had only seven. Of the four great offices of state, three were occupied by Europhiles: Major himself, Hurd remained as Foreign Secretary, and Clarke was promoted to Home Secretary. Heseltine was promoted to Trade and Industry Secretary, a role involving considerable contact with European partners. Chris Patten, the former party Chairman and an increasingly prominent Europhile, was also appointed to Major's second cabinet. Norman Lamont, who retained his role as Chancellor, was the only Eurosceptic senior member of Cabinet and others were demoted to less senior roles.⁷⁴⁶ Howard was demoted from Employment Secretary to Environment Secretary, and Lilley from Trade and Industry Secretary to Social Security Secretary. During interview, Lilley joked that, because the role of Social Security Secretary had little to do with Europe, he "could not cause too much trouble" for John Major.⁷⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Lilley used this appointment to greatly increase his visibility within the party and the wider public. A notable exception to this trend of demoting Eurosceptics was the promotion of Michael Portillo to Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. This move was perhaps an attempt to ensure the loyalty of this young, up-and-coming Thatcherite.

While vocal Eurosceptics were confined to the backbenches, they enjoyed the support of a number of former MPs who had retired to the House of Lords; most notably, Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit who had retired to the House of Lords at the 1992 election. Rather than reduce their leverage, their presence in the House of Lords served to boost their influence as they were less constrained by the tools of Parliamentary Party discipline. Thatcher became

⁷⁴⁴ Nigel Evans, interview in person.

⁷⁴⁵ Luke Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁷⁴⁶ *Idem.*

⁷⁴⁷ Peter Lilley, interviewed by telephone.

more outspoken about the TEU, the Euro, and European integration in general. She made clear her disappointment in the outcome of Treaty negotiations and went so far as to state that she would never have signed the TEU.⁷⁴⁸ Thatcher made no attempt to conceal her disappointment in Major and turned against him quite publicly. Along with Tebbit, she led calls for the UK to hold a referendum on ratification.⁷⁴⁹ This public criticism served to encourage Eurosceptics in the lower House to whom she offered her support. In particular, Thatcher's positioning reinforced the view that European integration was incompatible with the pursuit of Thatcherite liberal economic policies. This was the view of Howard, Lilley, Redwood, Portillo, and Cash for whom the pursuit of Thatcherite liberal economic policies and the limiting, or ending, of the UK's membership of the EU were one and the same struggle.

At its second reading on 21 May 1992, the European Communities (Amendment) Bill was passed by 336 votes to ninety-two. This time, twenty-two of the Conservative Party's 336 MPs voted against the government, meaning the number of rebels had more than tripled since December 1991.⁷⁵⁰ This rebellion constituted the largest Conservative rebellion on Europe since the debate on accession in the early 1970s.⁷⁵¹ Again, Conservative rebels were backbench MPs and included John Biffen, Bill Cash, Teresa Gorman, Teddy Taylor, and Michael Spicer.⁷⁵² Eurosceptic government and Cabinet ministers, notably Lamont, Howard, Lilley, Portillo, and Redwood, remained loyal. The Labour leadership called for its MPs to abstain from the vote, which the majority did. However, a number of Eurosceptic Labour MPs, including Peter Shore and Tony Benn, broke ranks to vote against the Bill, boosting the influence of Conservative rebels as they sought to put the government under pressure.

Although the Labour Party gained forty-two seats and increased its share of the popular vote at the general election, it nonetheless entered its fourth term in opposition.⁷⁵³ Neil Kinnock resigned as party leader in July 1992, prompting a leadership election. The contest opposed the Europhile Shadow Chancellor, John Smith, and the Eurosceptic Shadow Environment Secretary, Bryan Gould. Despite having abstained at the second reading of the EC (Amendment) Bill, Gould was a leading Labour critic of EMU and an advocate of a referendum on the TEU. Smith won a resounding victory against Gould, who won only 9 per cent of the

⁷⁴⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 275; Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷⁴⁹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

⁷⁵⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁷⁵¹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

⁷⁵² Hansard, "Debate on European Communities (Amendment) Bill", 21 May 1992 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1992-05-21/debates/f2fc85dc-0750-4195-8de3-b4948765eb2c/EuropeanCommunities\(Amendment\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1992-05-21/debates/f2fc85dc-0750-4195-8de3-b4948765eb2c/EuropeanCommunities(Amendment)Bill)>.

⁷⁵³ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections", *op. cit.*

overall vote of MPs, party members, and trade unions. Gould did, however, win the support of 23 per cent of Labour MPs, indicating support for his views on the TEU among parliamentary colleagues. Although Smith appointed Gould to his predominantly Europhile Shadow Cabinet, the latter resigned in September 1992 to campaign against the ratification of the TEU. Gould's retirement from politics in 1994 deprived the Labour Party of a powerful Eurosceptic voice.⁷⁵⁴ Following Smith's succession of Kinnock, public support for the Labour Party continued to rise, indicating the leadership's modernising agenda and support for European integration was reaping political gains. This served to further marginalise Eurosceptics within the Labour Party.

On 2 June 1992 the ratification of the TEU was put to referendum in Denmark. With a turnout of over 83 per cent, voters rejected the Treaty by 50.7 per cent. This result put the future of the TEU in jeopardy and served to launch a second stage of the Maastricht rebellion. Although the ratification process was to continue, the Danish rejection of the TEU provided UK opponents of the Treaty with hope and, importantly, more time to plan and develop their strategy. The Danish 'no' vote also served to strengthen calls, led by Thatcher and Tebbit in the House of Lords and Bill Cash in the House of Commons, for the UK to hold its own referendum on ratification.⁷⁵⁵ In fact, Teddy Taylor, one of the Maastricht rebels, assured Major that if he promised a referendum the backbench rebellion would end immediately.⁷⁵⁶ Yet the TEU issue had become part of a wider discussion on party policy. Given the incompatibility of further integration with Thatcherism's liberal economic doctrine, the former Prime Minister's on-going involvement in the campaign against the Treaty was a direct challenge to Major to choose between pursuing her policies, as he had promised to do, or not. The extent of divisions within the Conservative Party over the TEU was very much a reflection of the internal crisis of identity around this question of whether or not Thatcherism would remain the dominant ideology of the Conservative Party.⁷⁵⁷ Major's determination to pursue parliamentary ratification of the Treaty, without taking the risk of holding a referendum, became a tool for party colleagues to undermine his leadership.⁷⁵⁸ However, calls for a referendum on the ratification of the TEU also came from within other political parties. Both Tony Benn, the outspoken Labour Eurosceptic, and Paddy Ashdown, the Europhile leader of the Liberal Democrats, called for a referendum.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁷⁵⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

⁷⁵⁶ David Baker, Andrew Gamble and Steve Ludlam, "The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Division and British Ratification", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1994, p. 39.

⁷⁵⁷ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁷⁵⁸ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁷⁵⁹ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

On 3 June 1992, the day after the Danish referendum, opponents of the TEU launched Early Day Motion (EDM) 174. An EDM is a request for the government to take, or suspend, action at the earliest possible opportunity.⁷⁶⁰ In the wake of the Danish ‘no’ vote, EDM 174 called for the government to take the “opportunity to make a fresh start with the future development of the EEC” and for negotiations of the TEU to be re-opened.⁷⁶¹ With ninety-one signatories, the EDM put considerable pressure on the government and, as a consequence, further votes on the European Communities (Amendment) Bill were delayed until November 1992. The primary sponsor of the EDM was backbench Conservative MP Michael Spicer. The vast majority of signatories of the EDM were backbench Conservative MPs. Some, namely Spicer, Cash, Gorman, and Taylor had rebelled at the second reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill two weeks earlier. Other signatories, such as newly-elected Iain Duncan Smith and Bernard Jenkin, had not rebelled at the second reading. Frontbench Eurosceptic Conservative MPs Lamont, Howard, Lilley, Portillo, and Redwood, did not sign Spicer’s EDM. Outside the Conservative Party, the EDM was signed by a number of Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) MPs, and one Labour MP, Harold Walker.⁷⁶²

In summer 1992 Spicer established the Fresh Start Group (FSG) to organise opposition to the TEU. In contrast to the Bruges Group, the FSG was a parliamentary and partisan group with a specific aim, namely to secure a referendum on the ratification of the TEU and also on any future adoption of the single currency. Other than Spicer, key members of the group included Bill Cash, James Cran, Christopher Gill, and Roger Knapman. Both Gill and Knapman were, like Spicer, Cash and Cran, backbenchers.⁷⁶³ Gill and Knapman would go on to join the UK Independence Party, with the latter leading the party between 2002 and 2006. Soon after its establishment, the group counted over fifty Conservative MPs as members. What distinguished the FSG from previous efforts to oppose the TEU was its level of organisation, its financial resources, and the militancy of its members. As a sign of its efficacy, FSG members tabled over 500 amendments and 100 new clauses to the ratification bill. Further, FSG members refused to inform party whips of their voting intentions and they were willing to vote with the opposition Labour Party, instead of merely abstaining, if this were judged strategically

⁷⁶⁰ Philip Norton, “The House of Commons at Work”, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁷⁶¹ UK Parliament, “Early Day Motion 174”, 3 June 1992 <<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/7898/future-development-of-the-eec>>.

⁷⁶² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁷⁶³ UK Parliament, “Christopher Gill: Parliamentary Career” <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/273/career>>; UK Parliament, “Roger Knapman: Parliamentary Career” <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/1208/career>>.

opportune. In total, FSG members voted against the government 985 times and abstained 1515 times in an attempt to block the adoption of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill. Further, the effectiveness of the actions of the FSG served to accelerate the development of Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party.⁷⁶⁴

In view of support for Spicer's Early Day Motions and the successful launch of his Fresh Start Group, as well as the increasing membership of the Bruges Group, certain Eurosceptic frontbenchers began to question whether the government could continue to pursue its Europe policy.⁷⁶⁵ Particularly vocal in voicing their concerns were Cabinet members Howard, Lilley, and Portillo. While they would not vote in opposition to the government and had not signed Spicer's EDMs, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Major to count on their loyalty. However, for Major to change policy would have caused great damage to his political credibility, both within the UK and in the eyes of his European counterparts, especially given his claims that negotiations had been a great success. Major was increasingly dependent on the support of Europhile members of his Cabinet, in particular Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, in pursuing his efforts to ratify the TEU as negotiated.⁷⁶⁶

As the ratification process dragged on, with opponents becoming more numerous and vocal, the support of the UK general public for membership of the EC/EU began to fall. As noted above, having peaked at 57 per cent towards the end of TEU negotiations, perceptions of membership as a good thing fell considerably throughout 1992 to 43 per cent, well below the EC average. Concurrently, perceptions of membership as a bad thing grew. Whereas 15 per cent of the public viewed membership as a bad thing in late 1991, this view was shared by 24 per cent of the public by October 1992.⁷⁶⁷ In particular, Euroscepticism increased among Conservative Party members and supporters.⁷⁶⁸ Undoubtedly the increasing salience and negativity of the debate around the TEU influenced public opinion. As highlighted in earlier chapters, where parties are divided on the Europe issue, the public tends to become less supportive of integration. Importantly, inter- and intra-party divisions on the Europe issue increase the influence of public opinion on politicians.⁷⁶⁹ Increasingly negative public attitudes, particularly among Conservative Party supporters, undoubtedly pushed more Conservative

⁷⁶⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88.

⁷⁶⁵ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

⁷⁶⁶ *Idem.*

⁷⁶⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 36*, *op. cit.*; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 38*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶⁸ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶⁹ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

MPs to adopt and manifest Eurosceptic positions. Public opinion doubtless also served to make Cabinet members such as Howard, Lilley, and Portillo increasingly uncomfortable.

Stanley's study of Conservative MPs during the 1992 Parliament shows that those with a narrow majority were more likely to position as Eurosceptic, indicating that positioning as Eurosceptic was seen by Conservative MPs as a means of ensuring the continued support of their constituents. However, those with the narrowest majorities were less likely to rebel against the government on the ratification of the TEU.⁷⁷⁰ Rebels were seen as risking the collapse of an already weak government, something too perilous for those in the least safe seats. Yet, while the Danish people's rejection of the TEU signalled "the people's triumphant entry onto centre stage of the European integration process"⁷⁷¹ and saw a marked reduction in public support for integration, the UK public remained relatively disinterested in the Europe issue.⁷⁷² Despite their increased activity, Conservative Eurosceptic groups had not yet succeeded in placing the Europe issue centre stage in public debate.⁷⁷³ So long as the government's policy remained unchanged, the differences between the Conservative and Labour Parties' Europe policies were not enough for the issue to be a basis of inter-party competition. For the time-being, the Europe issue was salient principally within the Conservative Party and was clearly emerging as a basis of intra-party competition.

1.1.4. The rebels' final assault

On 16 September 1992, three months after the Danish 'no' vote, the government was forced to withdraw the Pound Sterling from the ERM after speculative pressure caused the value of the currency to fall drastically. This day has been remembered as 'Black Wednesday' due to the damage caused to the UK economy by the associated high interest rates. Black Wednesday also caused profound damage to the Conservative Party's reputation for sound economic management. The event provided opponents of the TEU with further arguments against ratification of the Treaty.⁷⁷⁴ Membership of the ERM prepares states for the adoption of the single currency and obliges governments to adjust interest rates so as to maintain currency values within certain limits. The UK joined the ERM in October 1990, when Major was Chancellor, and shortly thereafter entered a period of recession. A growing number of Conservative MPs made a connection between ERM membership and the economic situation.

⁷⁷⁰ Lukey Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 39.

⁷⁷¹ Juan Diez Medrano, *op. cit.* p. 2.

⁷⁷² Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁷⁷³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁷⁷⁴ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

Black Wednesday served to confirm this belief and strengthen opposition to the adoption of the single currency, which Major still had not ruled out. This opposition was reflected in the high level of support for a second EDM launched by Spicer on 24 September 1992. EDM 539 welcomed the government's decision to leave the ERM and urged "a fresh start to economic policy, in particular the abandonment of fixed exchange rates."⁷⁷⁵ This request again reflected the sense among Thatcherite Eurosceptics that integration was incompatible with the pursuit of Thatcherite economic policies. This second EDM attracted 71 signatures, with the same notable signatories and non-signatories as that of June.

Despite the damage that Black Wednesday caused to the government's reputation for sound economic management, it was not until May 1993 that Norman Lamont was succeeded as Chancellor by the Europhile Kenneth Clarke. Lamont perhaps retained his position because Major sought to play down the gravity of Black Wednesday and thus lessen his own exposure to criticism, given it was he who had convinced Thatcher to join the ERM. Lamont also enjoyed the support of party Eurosceptics who felt that he had managed a situation that was not his doing as best he could. In fact, rather than weakening Lamont's credibility, Black Wednesday served to further undermine Major's leadership.

On 20 September 1992, just days after Black Wednesday, the ratification of the TEU was put to referendum in France. With a turnout of nearly 70 per cent, French voters narrowly approved the Treaty by 51.04 per cent⁷⁷⁶. That the Treaty was ratified in France no doubt disappointed Eurosceptics in the UK. However, following the Dutch rejection of the Treaty three months earlier, this close result confirmed that the TEU lacked public support throughout member states. The outcome of the French referendum thus served to reinforce demands that the UK hold its own referendum, further deepening divisions within the Conservative Party.

These divisions were laid bare at the Conservative Party Conference in October 1992. The Europe issue was uncommonly high on the agenda, with the number of Europe-specific motions much greater than usual.⁷⁷⁷ In his address to the conference, Major sought to reassure Conservative Eurosceptics by voicing his opposition to an overly-centralised EU. He directly evoked British cultural and symbolic exceptionalism, stating: "I will never – come hell or high water – let our distinctive British identity be lost in a federal Europe". However, he also

⁷⁷⁵ UK Parliament, "Early Day Motion 549", 24 September 1992 <<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/7231/fixed-exchange-rates>>.

⁷⁷⁶ Ministère de l'Intérieur, "Référendum du 20 septembre 1992", *op. cit.*

⁷⁷⁷ Martin Ball, "The Conservative Conference & Euro-Sceptical Motions 1992-95", June 1996, *Bruges Group* <<https://www.brugesgroup.com/media-centre/papers/8-papers/805-the-conservative-conference-euro-sceptical-motions-1992-95>>.

emphasised the benefits the UK had reaped from EC membership and noted the role of ERM membership in allowing Chancellor Norman Lamont to control inflation.⁷⁷⁸ In his speech, the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, implored the party not to “break itself over Europe”, the consequences of which “would deeply damage Britain and give comfort only to our opponents”.⁷⁷⁹ However, opposition to the TEU was vocal, led by Norman Tebbit, by then sitting in the House of Lords. Tebbit attacked the TEU and the government’s support for it, and called on Major to abandon the Treaty. He criticised Major directly by recalling that it was Major, as Chancellor, who had taken the UK into the ERM. Tebbit’s speech received a sustained ovation, his words drawing support particularly among younger members of the Conservative Party.

Faced with the growing opposition to the TEU that was manifest at the party conference, Major pursued his strategy of identifying opinion leaders who could be encouraged to support his policy of ratifying the TEU. He was successful in winning the support of 1922 Committee members at their meeting on 29 October 1992, which, given their influence, was a key victory.⁷⁸⁰ Major might have been aided by Marcus Fox, the committee’s Chair, who, although Eurosceptic, was not opposed to the TEU. The two had a connection dating from 1979 when Fox helped Major to be selected as a candidate by putting in “a good word” for him with the constituency association.⁷⁸¹ Major also sought to win over members of the FSG who had not voted against the Treaty at its second reading. Just as during the negotiation of the TEU, efforts were focused on ambitious MPs.⁷⁸²

Despite the apparent success of Major’s meeting with the 1922 Committee and efforts to ensure the loyalty of moderate FSG members, he continued to face ever-increasing opposition to the TEU within his party. The number of backbench Eurosceptics continued to grow and Eurosceptics in government voiced their concerns more readily than before. The traditional means of party discipline – the whipping of votes and the suggestion of career advancement for those who towed the party line – were less and less effective. Major thus decided to make a crucial Paving Motion on 4 November 1992 a question of confidence and

⁷⁷⁸ John Major, *Speech to Conservative Party Conference*, 9 October 1992 <<http://www.johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990-1997/mr-major-speech-to-1992-conservative-party-conference-9-october-1992/>>.

⁷⁷⁹ Anthony Bevins, “Tories slug it out on Europe: Tebbit wins anti-Maastricht hearts at Conference but Hurd rallies party votes behind the Prime Minister”, *The Independent*, 6 October 1992 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tories-slug-it-out-on-europe-tebbit-wins-anti-maastricht-hearts-at-conference-but-hurd-rallies-1556019.html>>.

⁷⁸⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁷⁸¹ The Telegraph, “Sir Marcus Fox”, 19 March 2002 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1388125/Sir-Marcus-Fox.html>>.

⁷⁸² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

threatened to call a general election should the motion be opposed. Knowing that the Labour opposition would vote against a motion of confidence in an effort to bring about a general election, this tactic convinced some would-be rebels to support the government. Nonetheless, the vote of confidence passed by just 319 to 316,⁷⁸³ and required the vital support of the Liberal Democrats.⁷⁸⁴ Twenty-six Conservative MPs voted against the government and a further three abstained. It should be clear that, in opposing the government on a motion of confidence, these rebels were prepared to risk a general election, which Labour would likely have won, in an attempt to prevent the ratification of the TEU. This marked the beginning of a third stage in the rebellion, according to Spicer.⁷⁸⁵ Rebels again included Spicer, Cash, Gorman, Taylor, and Duncan Smith, all of whom had signed the June Early Day Motion. As with the first and second readings of the EC (Amendment) Bill and the EDMs, Howard, Lilley, Portillo, and Redwood voted with the government. As part of the bargaining to ensure enough support for the motion of confidence, a promise was made to delay the third reading of the EC (Amendment) Bill until after a positive Danish referendum outcome.⁷⁸⁶ This delay was an important victory for rebels as it gave them time to increase their number. By the end of 1992 it was estimated around 130 Conservative MPs, approximately 40 per cent of the Parliamentary Party, had joined or were associated with the Bruges Group.⁷⁸⁷ In the knowledge that Eurosceptics were close to being in the majority in the party, a core group of approximately 50 backbench Conservative MPs, led by Spicer, Cash, Gorman, and Taylor, waged a final assault against the Treaty over the next nine months.⁷⁸⁸

The TEU was put to referendum in Denmark for a second time on 18 May 1993. With a turnout of 86.5 per cent, even higher than at the first referendum, the Danish people voted by 56.7 per cent to ratify the Treaty. Having delayed the third reading of the EC (Amendment) Bill until after a positive Danish referendum outcome, the third reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill by the UK Parliament took place two days later. MPs voted by 292 to 112 in favour of the Bill, compared to 336 to 112 at the second reading one year earlier. This time the government was opposed by forty-one Conservative rebels, meaning the number of Conservative rebels had almost doubled since the second reading. A further five

⁷⁸³ Hansard, "Debate on European Communities (Amendment) Bill", 4 November 1992 <<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1992/nov/04/european-communities-amendment-bill>>.

⁷⁸⁴ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

⁷⁸⁵ Michael Spicer, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁸⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

Conservative MPs abstained.⁷⁸⁹ The rebellion was led, as ever, by Spicer, Cash, Gorman, and Taylor. These long-standing rebels were joined at the third reading by Iain Duncan Smith and Bernard Jenkin. Both had positioned themselves as opponents of the TEU since signing Spicer's EDMs of June and September 1992. However, whereas Jenkin voted with the government at November 1992's paving vote, Duncan Smith voted against the government, demonstrating his willingness to bring down the government in an attempt to block the ratification of the TEU.

Although their opposition to the Treaty was increasingly evident, Howard, Lilley, Portillo, and Redwood continued to tow the party line at the third reading. The fact that, at a Cabinet reshuffle one week after the third reading, Major promoted Howard to Home Secretary and Redwood entered Cabinet to become Secretary of State for Wales, was seen as a reward for their continued loyalty. However, it was also at this time that Europhile Kenneth Clarke replaced Norman Lamont as Chancellor. Following his departure, Norman Lamont commented that Black Wednesday ought best to be remembered fondly as the day on which the UK was freed from the EU's monetary and economic rules.⁷⁹⁰ As a senior party figure, Lamont's open criticism of the ERM and EMU, and European integration in general, not only reflected sentiment within the party, but surely also encouraged quiet Conservative Eurosceptics to take a stand. The Labour Party leadership again called for its MPs to abstain at the third reading, in continued protest at the opt-out from the Social Chapter. However, sixty-six Labour MPs defied the party whip to vote against the Treaty.⁷⁹¹ Most did so due to the government's efforts to limit the social protections afforded by membership, although some, notably Shore and Gould, opposed the TEU and EC/EU membership outright.

Given the extent of the rebellion within his own party, Major was under pressure to secure the Labour Party's support for the final ratification of the Treaty. He was therefore forced to give consideration to the opposition's demand that he annul the UK's opt-out from the Social Chapter. However, the inclusion of the Social Chapter constituted a red line for Eurosceptic Cabinet members who had hitherto remained loyal to Major. Perhaps emboldened by Lamont's comments following his departure from government, Howard, Lilley, and Portillo went so far as to threaten to resign if Major agreed to Labour's demands, greatly reducing the Prime Minister's room for manoeuvre. Their threat made clear the limits of the loyalty of these three Cabinet members, marking a step change in the relationship between Major and Eurosceptic members of Cabinet. On 22 July 1993, conscious that if the Social Chapter were included the

⁷⁸⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁷⁹⁰ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁷⁹¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

TEU would not have the necessary support to be ratified by Parliament, twenty-three Conservative MPs voted against the government on a Labour amendment to annul the UK's opt-out.⁷⁹² This backbench rebellion, led by Spicer, Cash, Gorman, and Taylor, resulted in the humiliating defeat of the government by 316 votes to 324.⁷⁹³ A second vote on the amendment was held the following day, which Major made a vote of confidence, as he had done in November 1992. This resulted in a government win by 339 votes to 299.⁷⁹⁴ All Conservative MPs present, including Spicer, Cash, Gorman, and Taylor, supported the government.⁷⁹⁵ Just one Conservative MP, Eurosceptic Rupert Allason, abstained.⁷⁹⁶ This final victory for Major allowed for the Treaty on European Union to be ratified on 2 August 1993, eighteen months after its signature and almost a year after France.

Although Major did not conceal his pleasure at having ensured the ratification of the TEU, the outcome could not be seen as positive as it came at considerable political cost to his party. The process of ratification revealed deep divisions within the Conservative Party and stretched the tools of party discipline to their limits. The process of ratification not only saw an increase in the number of opponents of the Treaty, but also the growing effectiveness of their opposition through better organisation. In particular, the pre-existing Bruges Group increased its membership and the newly-established FSG quickly attracted members. The activity of Eurosceptic groups did not decline with the ratification of the Treaty. On the contrary, new Eurosceptic groups were established as the process of ratification came to an end. Notably, the European Research Group (ERG) was established by Michael Spicer in July 1993. The purpose of the ERG was to provide information for, and coordinate activities of, Eurosceptic Conservative MPs.⁷⁹⁷ The group would later play an important role in the campaign for Brexit. Conservative opponents of the TEU clearly did not intend to give up their struggle against further integration.

⁷⁹² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

⁷⁹³ Hansard, "Debate on the Treaty of Maastricht (Social Protocol)", 22 July 1993 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1993-07-22/debates/048bebd6-175b-46bb-9617-12c43862d695/TreatyOfMaastricht\(SocialProtocol\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1993-07-22/debates/048bebd6-175b-46bb-9617-12c43862d695/TreatyOfMaastricht(SocialProtocol))>.

⁷⁹⁴ Hansard, "Debate on the Social Policy Protocol (Confidence motion)", 23 July 1993 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1993-07-23/debates/17cff0c2-b38d-4b6c-8964-85437879be00/SocialPolicyProtocol\(Confidencemotion\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1993-07-23/debates/17cff0c2-b38d-4b6c-8964-85437879be00/SocialPolicyProtocol(Confidencemotion))>.

⁷⁹⁵ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁷⁹⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁷⁹⁷ UK in a Changing Europe, "What is the European Research Group (ERG)?" <<https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-facts/what-is-the-european-research-group-erg/>>.

1.2. France's 'petit oui'

Whereas John Major became the UK's Prime Minister just weeks before the negotiation of the TEU began in December 1990, his French counterpart, François Mitterrand, had been in office since 1981. Mitterrand was in the third year of his second and final seven-year mandate. Michel Rocard, the PS Prime Minister, had been in office since May 1988. The Parti socialiste held a relative, not absolute, majority in the National Assembly and had formed an alliance with the centre-left *Mouvement radical de gauche* and the centre-right UDC.⁷⁹⁸ By the time negotiation of the TEU began, this alliance had been functional for over two years. Yet the PS was beset by divisions as the party prepared for the post-Mitterrand period. Three powerful rivals – Lionel Jospin, Laurent Fabius, and the Prime Minister Michel Rocard – competed to succeed Mitterrand. The keenest rivalry was between the 'Mitterrandistes', Jospin and Fabius, the latter of whom was the President's preferred heir. These manifestations of intra-party divisions served not only to discredit the PS in the eyes of the public, but also to deepen the rift between the President and the Prime Minister.⁷⁹⁹ Having risen quite consistently throughout the 1980s, public perceptions of France's membership of the European Communities as a good thing had peaked relatively early in 1987 at 75 per cent, well above the EC average at the time.⁸⁰⁰ By the start of the TEU negotiations, however, support for membership had fallen to 66 per cent, although this was still notably higher than public support at that time in the UK.⁸⁰¹

Mitterrand, along with Commission President Jacques Delors, who had been the French Finance Minister from 1981 to 1984, drove negotiations of the TEU. Whereas it took eighteen months for the Treaty to be ratified by the UK Parliament, the TEU was ratified by France seven months after it was signed in February 1992. However, the President's unexpected decision to hold a referendum on its ratification obliged parties and individual politicians to take a very public stand on the Treaty and on European integration in general. In doing so, they revealed divisions both between and within parties.

1.2.1. Mitterrand drives negotiations

Although the SEA, which completed the Single Market, had been a source of internal divisions for the PS, the vast majority of the party's politicians supported further integration. This fact, combined with relatively supportive public opinion, gave Mitterrand a strong negotiating

⁷⁹⁸ Jean-Jacques Becker, *Histoire Politique de la France Depuis 1945*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2011, p. 220.

⁷⁹⁹ Jean-Jacques Chevallier, Guy Carcassonne, Olivier Duhamel, *Histoire de la Ve République. 1958-2009*, Dalloz, Paris, 2009, p. 377.

⁸⁰⁰ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 28*, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 34*, *op. cit.*

position. The political context for Mitterrand was thus very different from that in which Prime Minister Major operated. Further, the French President had been successful in ensuring German support for the opening of negotiations on both EMU and political union.⁸⁰² Mitterrand saw the swift introduction of a single currency and political integration as necessary to ensure a reunited Germany would remain tied to its partners without dominating them.⁸⁰³ On EMU, Mitterrand, like the Commission President, Jacques Delors, supported the introduction of a single currency over a common currency. Mitterrand took the lead in negotiations to ensure this preferred vision of EMU would succeed. Further, he pushed for the currency to be introduced as quickly as possible so as to minimise the economic dominance of Germany resulting from reunification. Mitterrand was forced, however, to accept that the European Central Bank would be independent, which ran counter to the French tradition of political control over bodies exercising such powers.⁸⁰⁴

However, that the PS, as a whole, supported further integration does not mean that there were no differences within the party on the substance of the TEU negotiations. Further, and despite taking the lead at the European level, Mitterrand faced opposition from within his own government. Notably the Finance Minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, favoured a common currency over a single currency, the former entailing a less significant loss of sovereignty. On the left of the party, the Defence Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, fully opposed EMU. Chevènement viewed EMU, as he did much of the process of integration, as a threat to national sovereignty. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Michel Rocard, who was highly supportive of further integration, was successful in garnering sufficient support for Mitterrand's EMU policy. Yet Rocard resigned as Prime Minister in May 1991, to be succeeded by Edith Cresson. On the question of political union, and notably the strengthening of the Community's institutions, Mitterrand met considerable resistance, in particular from national party organizations and PS MEPs. In fact, the party's MEPs set themselves apart from their European counterparts by voting against the introduction of the co-decision legislative procedure. The fact that Mitterrand's personal popularity was greater than that of his party strengthened his hand in intra-party negotiations.⁸⁰⁵ Yet, by the end of December 1991, the President's approval rating had fallen to just 22 per cent according to an IFOP poll.⁸⁰⁶ His popularity declined in the context of economic stagnation and increasing unemployment, which some linked to policies introduced at the demand of the

⁸⁰² Jacques Attali, *C'était François Mitterrand*, Fayard, Paris, 2005, p. 341.

⁸⁰³ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

⁸⁰⁴ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁸⁰⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁸⁰⁶ Jean-Jacques Becker, *Histoire Politique de la France Depuis 1945*, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

EEC.⁸⁰⁷ The President's ability to carry his party and drive public opinion on the Treaty therefore declined as negotiations advanced.

Most of the opposition RPR, under the leadership of Jacques Chirac, had accepted both the economic and political consequences of the SEA. Although Chirac made clear his preference for a common currency over a single currency, support for further economic integration and liberalisation was strong within the party. The party was also supportive of enlargement to include the newly democratised states of Central and Eastern Europe.⁸⁰⁸ However, there was considerable opposition within the RPR to the deepening of integration, in particular the strengthening of Community institutions. Reflecting its position on further integration, a party document published in December 1990 called for a "slowing of European construction".⁸⁰⁹ Nonetheless, and despite concerns voiced by some on the right of the party, Chirac sought to present the RPR as Europhile to a public that appeared to be supportive of further integration.⁸¹⁰ Further, the UDF, the RPR's regular electoral ally was highly supportive of further integration.

1.2.2. *An unexpected referendum*

Before the TEU could be ratified, the French Constitution had to be revised. It appeared as though Mitterrand had the necessary Parliamentary support to ensure this revision, especially as he could count on the support of Europhile UDC and UDF *députés*.⁸¹¹ In fact, the decision of the Constitutional Court of 9 April 1992, held that transfers of powers do not require a revision of the Constitution so long as they do not impact the essential conditions of the exercise of sovereignty.⁸¹² Nonetheless, the Danish rejection of the TEU at referendum in June 1992 was a boost to anti-TEU politicians on both the left and the right. Conscious of on-going divisions within the PS, concerned by the potential for an increase in opposition sufficient to block Parliamentary ratification of the Treaty, and confident of the public's continued support for integration, Mitterrand announced on 3 June 1992, the day after the Danish referendum, that in France too, the ratification of the TEU would be subject to a referendum.⁸¹³ Importantly,

⁸⁰⁷ Mathias Bernard, *La France de 1981 à 2002. Le temps des crises?*, Librairie Générale Française, Paris, 2005, p. 83.

⁸⁰⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁸⁰⁹ Le Rassemblement pour la République, "Un manifeste pour l'Union des Etats de l'Europe – appel au ralentissement de la construction européenne", 5 December 1990, cited in Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

⁸¹⁰ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p.86.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁸¹² Jean-Jacques Chevallier, Guy Carcassonne, Olivier Duhamel, *Histoire de la Ve République. 1958-2009, op. cit.*, pp. 387-388.

⁸¹³ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p.93.

ratification by referendum would legitimise the abandoning of the French Franc and the transfer of sovereignty that EMU, with its independent monetary authority, entailed.⁸¹⁴

Mitterrand saw his role in the establishment of the European Union as key to his legacy and announced that, if the public opposed the ratification of the Treaty, he would resign.⁸¹⁵ Like Major, Mitterrand went so far as to make his tenure as leader conditional upon the ratification of the TEU. The referendum was to be held on 20 September 1992. Despite relatively strong public support for integration, the holding of a referendum was a great political risk, especially given Mitterrand's falling popularity. The President's decision angered PS leaders who feared the vote could have negative consequences for the party in advance of the March 1993 legislative elections.⁸¹⁶ This was particularly relevant given the poor result of the PS at the local and regional elections of March 1992.⁸¹⁷

The ensuing referendum campaign was one of the first national debates on Europe to have taken place in France. It provided an opportunity for politicians to influence the debate on the future of integration and served to clarify party positions. Although a majority of politicians supported the ratification of the Treaty, the referendum campaign revealed divisions both between and within political parties. Politicians could essentially be classed as 'integrationists', who supported the deepening of integration or 'nationalists', who wanted to limit the powers of the future EU.⁸¹⁸ Although, in announcing the referendum, Mitterrand felt confident of sufficient public support for the Treaty, public support for integration had fallen substantially since the beginning of negotiations in December 1990. By spring 1992, just 59 per cent of the public considered French membership of the EC to be a good thing, below the EC average.⁸¹⁹ In the context of a referendum, where the influence of public opinion on politicians is greater, it could be expected that declining public support for integration impacted the positioning of certain politicians on the TEU.⁸²⁰

As the majority of the PS were integrationists, the party was thus quite unified in calling for a 'yes' vote. Support was led by Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, who had succeeded Edith Cresson in April 1992, and Laurent Fabius, who had succeeded Pierre Mauroy as First Secretary in January 1992. There was, however, a vocal minority, led by Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who

⁸¹⁴ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁸¹⁵ Jacques Attali, *C'était François Mitterrand*, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

⁸¹⁶ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁸¹⁷ Jean-Jacques Chevallier, Guy Carcassonne, Olivier Duhamel, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.

⁸¹⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁸¹⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 37*, June 1992.

⁸²⁰ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

opposed the Treaty. Chevènement was no longer a member of the government, having resigned as Minister of Defence in January 1991 in protest at France's military intervention in the Iraq War. He did not oppose the process of European integration per se and he actually supported certain redistributive policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the structural funds. In fact, he had intended to abstain from the vote until he read the Treaty in detail.⁸²¹ In a speech given shortly before the referendum, Chevènement explained that he opposed the TEU because he was socialist, republican, French, and European.⁸²² He considered that, with the TEU, the EU would become more liberal, national sovereignty would be threatened, French independence would be limited, and integration would be based on states' ability to meet economic and monetary criteria. He also expressed concerns about German dominance of such an EU. Chevènement's position on the TEU was in keeping with his long-held views and principles. Further, given that PS supporters tended to support the Treaty, he stood to make limited political gains from his anti-TEU position. Yet, it was in the context of the ratification of the TEU that Chevènement established the *Mouvement des citoyens* (MDC) faction, which allowed him to stand out within a highly divided PS. It should be noted that the TEU was supported by individuals who, in 2005, opposed the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. These included Laurent Fabius, Henri Emmanuelli, President of the National Assembly, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who had founded the 'Gauche Socialiste' movement within the PS in 1988.

In calling a referendum on the TEU, not only did Mitterrand seek to avoid parliamentary opposition impeding ratification, he hoped to bring to the surface divisions over the TEU within the RPR, and between the RPR and its UDF allies. Exploiting divisions on the right was particularly important in the context of up-coming legislative elections, to be held in March 1993. While approximately half of RPR politicians were integrationists, a sizeable minority were nationalists,⁸²³ and the party was quite evenly divided between supporters and opponents of the TEU.⁸²⁴ Opponents were especially concerned about loss of national sovereignty and the widening of the future EU's powers to include Justice and Home Affairs. The introduction of EU citizenship and its associated rights, in particular the right to vote in local and European elections in the EU member state of residence, was another focus.⁸²⁵ These concerns for

⁸²¹ Jean-Pierre Chevènement, *Passion de la France*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 2019.

⁸²² Jean-Pierre Chevènement, *Speech to the Convention nationale pour la création d'un Mouvement des citoyens*, 30 August 1992.

⁸²³ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁸²⁴ Leonard Ray, "Measuring party orientations towards European integration: Results from an expert survey", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 36, no. 2, 1999.

⁸²⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

national sovereignty and identity caused nationalist sentiment to become more apparent in the context of the referendum.⁸²⁶ So important were the divisions within the party that it was not until more than 6 months after the signing of the TEU, and not long before the referendum, that a major party figure spoke openly in support of the TEU. First was Nicolas Sarkozy, then Alain Juppé, followed by the party leader Jacques Chirac. Chirac shared some of the concerns about the TEU voiced within the party, and announced that by voting in favour of ratification, he did so in his personal capacity as opposed to as President of the RPR.⁸²⁷ He certainly made little attempt to encourage his party with him.⁸²⁸

Chirac's muted support for the Treaty could be seen as an attempt to appeal to both supporters and opponents of the TEU, and serves as an illustration of strategy shaping ideology. Chirac's presidential aspirations required that he back the Treaty.⁸²⁹ Support for the process and outcomes of European integration was considered necessary for the credibility of an individual aspiring to the highest functions of state. However, conscious that half of the Parliamentary Party, and an even higher proportion of party supporters, opposed the TEU, Chirac was keen not to appear as an enthusiastic supporter of integration. As the RPR's leadership officially supported the ratification of the TEU, the party conformed to Ben Crum's 'collusive model'. Crum shows, where an opposition party adopts the same position as the party in government, intra-party divisions are more likely.⁸³⁰

As Mitterrand had expected, the referendum campaign did serve to deepen divisions within the opposition. The referendum provided opponents of the Treaty within the RPR with a public platform. Having attempted unsuccessfully to have the party's leadership take a more Eurosceptic stance, Philippe Séguin and Charles Pasqua led the *Rassemblement pour le Non*.⁸³¹ As prominent Gaullists, their opposition to the TEU was based predominantly on its impacts for national sovereignty. Pasqua, the President of the RPR group in the Senate, was a highly influential member of the party. Séguin was a long-standing *député* and had been Minister for Social Affairs and Employment in Chirac's government from 1986 to 1988. Pasqua and Séguin were joined by former UNR/UDR Prime Ministers Michel Debré and Maurice Couve de Murville, both of whom served under De Gaulle, and Pierre Messmer. Nicolas Dupont-Aignan,

⁸²⁶ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁸²⁸ Helen Drake, "Jacques Chirac's Balancing Acts: the French Right and Europe", *Southern European Society and Politics*, vol. 10, no. 2, July 2005, p. 299.

⁸²⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁸³⁰ Ben Crum, "Party Stances in the Referendums on the EU Constitution. Causes and Consequences of Competition and Collusion", *op. cit.*

⁸³¹ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

then a member of the RPR but not yet a *député*, was a key member of Séguin's team.⁸³² At a parliamentary vote on 5 May 1992, Séguin and Pasqua's campaign enjoyed the support of fifty-eight, or 46 per cent, of the RPR's 126 *députés*.⁸³³ Divisions within the RPR over the ratification of the TEU were even greater than in the UK's Conservative Party. However, a key difference between the the Conservatives and the RPR was that the latter was in opposition. Divisions within the RPR are in keeping with Crum's contention that the Europe issue is more likely to cause intra-party divisions where the opposition party 'colludes' with the party in government by adopting the same position.⁸³⁴

Like their Conservative counterparts, RPR *députés* seemed to be influenced by public opinion in positioning themselves in opposition to the TEU. While support for European integration had fallen among the general electorate, opposition to integration, and the TEU in particular, was higher among RPR voters.⁸³⁵ The increased salience of the Europe issue and the deep divide within the RPR served to drive opposition among party supporters. This opposition, in turn, influenced the positions of politicians within the divided party.⁸³⁶ However, unlike many of their Conservative counterparts, RPR opponents of the TEU were at pains to insist that their campaign was against the Treaty itself and not the process of European integration per se. In France, anti-integration rhetoric was the preserve of marginal parties and politicians, notably Jean-Marie Le Pen.⁸³⁷

Not only did the referendum campaign lay bare differences within the RPR, it revealed differences between the RPR and their electoral allies, the UDF. On the whole, the UDF were more supportive of integration and more united in their support. There was, nonetheless, some opposition to the TEU within the party, led by Philippe de Villiers. De Villiers was a prominent party figure, having been a *député* since 1987 and a junior Minister for Culture in Chirac's government from 1986 to 1987. Like opponents of the TEU within the RPR, de Villiers opposed the loss of sovereignty that the Treaty would entail. However, his opposition went further in that he was also hostile to the future EU's free market principles.⁸³⁸

Although at the beginning of the referendum campaign polls indicated reasonably strong public support for the TEU, opinion evolved over the summer months, suggesting a 'no' vote

⁸³² Jean-Philippe Tanguy, interview by telephone, 6 December 2019.

⁸³³ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁸³⁴ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*

⁸³⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁸³⁶ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

⁸³⁷ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁸³⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

was possible.⁸³⁹ Public opposition to the government grew as the campaign took place in a context of economic stagnation and rising unemployment, which some attributed to measures introduced at the behest of the EC. The turnout at the September referendum was relatively high at 71 per cent, reflecting public agitation and the heightened salience of the issue.⁸⁴⁰ The public narrowly voted by 51.04 per cent to ratify the TEU.⁸⁴¹ While 74 per cent of PS supporters voted in favour of ratification, 67 per cent of RPR supporters voted against the TEU.⁸⁴² By announcing his support for the TEU, Jacques Chirac ensured that the ‘no’ vote among RPR supporters was not higher.⁸⁴³ While this attested to Chirac’s ability to shape supporters’ opinion, the fact that two-thirds of the party’s supporters opposed the Treaty was problematic. Further, 95 per cent of FN supporters opposed the Treaty.⁸⁴⁴ The far-right party thus established itself as the voice of opponents of further integration. The referendum campaign and the resulting ‘petit oui’ of the French public highlighted changing attitudes towards European integration both among the public and politicians. The referendum also served to spur further changes in attitudes.⁸⁴⁵

As was seen in Chapter 1, the results of the questionnaire showed that the level of support for European integration among French politicians has evolved to a certain extent over time, with one-third of respondents claiming their position has changed. Yet, where positions of French politicians had evolved, they tended to have become more supportive: one in five respondents signalled this to be the case. This positive evolution was more common among LR respondents than among their PS counterparts. The situation stands in contrast to the UK where a negative evolution of positions was more common, particularly among Conservative respondents. In a further contrast, the period around the signing and ratification of the TEU was not a particular cause of changes in positions, and less so a cause of falling support. In fact, PS *député*, Dominique Raimbourg, pointed to the TEU and “*les améliorations apportées par le traité en ce qui concerne le fonctionnement des institutions*” as a cause for the positive evolution in his support for integration.⁸⁴⁶ Responses reflected the fact that although the TEU did spur change in attitudes towards European integration, unlike in the UK, the Treaty did not have a fundamental or lasting impact on political competition around the Europe issue.

⁸³⁹ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁸⁴⁰ Mathias Bernard, *La France de 1981 à 2002. Le temps des crises?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83- 84.

⁸⁴¹ Ministère de l’Intérieur, “Référendum du 20 septembre 1992”, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴² Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁸⁴³ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁸⁴⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁸⁴⁵ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁸⁴⁶ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

1.2.3. *The management of intra-party divisions*

Given that two-thirds of their supporters had opposed the ratification of the TEU, there was reason within the RPR to fear that the party's support for the Treaty might have negative consequences at the up-coming legislative elections of March 1993. In particular, RPR supporters might be attracted by the FN's calls for a 'Europe of nations'. Although Le Pen's FN held only one seat in Parliament following the return to the less proportional two-round electoral system, it had won nearly 10 per cent of the popular vote at the first round of legislative elections in 1988 and 11.73 per cent at European Parliament elections in 1989.⁸⁴⁷ At local elections in 1992 the FN had won 12.32 per cent of the popular vote at the first round, not far behind the RPR with 14.58 per cent.⁸⁴⁸ Faced with rising electoral support for the FN, the divided RPR could have been expected to be more susceptible to the bottom-up influence of public opinion. However, neither Séguin nor Pasqua sought to reopen the debate on the TEU. Intra-party divisions had, it seemed, been contained and the RPR succeeded in presenting a united front just months after the ratification of the TEU. This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the situation within the Conservative Party at this time. Further, divisions between the RPR and their electoral allies, the UDF, were limited enough to allow them to present a joint list, *Union pour la France*, headed by Jacques Chirac.

In contrast to the RPR, the PS appeared divided. Pierre Bérégovoy was the third Prime Minister in the four years of Mitterrand's second term. Intra-party divisions were further revealed by disagreements between Bérégovoy and Fabius, head of the party's list for the legislative elections, over the running of the campaign.⁸⁴⁹ Because the TEU referendum had been held six months earlier, the Europe issue was not an important feature of the election campaign.⁸⁵⁰ This fact undoubtedly aided the RPR, and to a certain extent the PS, to remain united in advance of elections and avoid losing the support of opponents of the TEU to the FN.

The result of the elections was a severe blow to the PS. The RPR-UDF list won 55.82 per cent of the popular vote and together the RPR and UDF would hold 84 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly.⁸⁵¹ The Socialist list won less than 30 per cent of the popular vote and the number of seats the party held fell from 275 to just 57. The FN again increased its popular

⁸⁴⁷ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1989", *op. cit.*

⁸⁴⁸ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections cantonales 1992", *France politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-cantonales-1992.htm>>.

⁸⁴⁹ Jean-Jacques Chevallier, Guy Carcassonne, Olivier Duhamel, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

⁸⁵⁰ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁸⁵¹ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

support, winning 12.42 per cent of the vote. For Dominique Raimbourg, rising public support for the FN was “*lié aux divisions au sein des grands partis politiques.*”⁸⁵²

Despite having led the RPR-UDF list to victory, Chirac preferred not to assume the role of Prime Minister for a third time. Rather, Edouard Balladur, who had supported a ‘yes’ vote at the 1992 referendum, was appointed Prime Minister, beginning the second period of cohabitation of Mitterrand’s presidency. Charles Pasqua was made a Minister of State for the Interior, a senior position in government. Philippe Séguin, declined the position he was offered in government, considering it to be beneath him. He was instead made President of the National Assembly, a high-ranking and highly visible role. These appointments could be viewed as rewards given to the RPR’s two key opponents of the TEU for not having reopened the debate during the election campaign. The appointments also helped ensure the loyalty of the two men and thus greater unity within the governing party going forward. Opponents of Séguin’s stance on the TEU accused him of populism and opportunism.⁸⁵³ It is certainly true that his positioning in opposition to the TEU contributed to his growing stature within the RPR and in the eye of the public. It is notable that it was Séguin who faced Mitterrand in a televised face-to-face debate in the days before the referendum.⁸⁵⁴ For the time-being, the RPR managed intra-party divisions over the TEU by internalising critics and even promoting them to help ensure their loyalty. This approach is similar to that of the Conservative leadership, which sought to contain the Maastricht rebellion by keeping would-be vocal Eurosceptics in government. Like their Conservative counterparts, the RPR leadership knew that punishing Séguin and Pasqua for their opposition carried risks as their position was supported by almost 50 per cent of RPR *députés* and two-thirds of RPR supporters.

In light of his party’s heavy electoral defeat, Fabius resigned as First Secretary shortly after the legislative elections. He was succeeded in this role by Michel Rocard, who had lost his seat in the National Assembly at the elections. On-going intra-party divisions had contributed to the heavy defeat of the PS. Chevènement, who was a driver of these divisions, was pushed out of the PS following the elections. His MDC group left the PS and became a political party in its own right in May 1993.⁸⁵⁵ The departure of Chevènement from the PS was a first and prominent example of how French mainstream political parties have tended since to

⁸⁵² Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

⁸⁵³ Michaël Gaumnitz, “Philippe Séguin, la politique au corps”, *France 3 Alsace*, 13 January 2020.

⁸⁵⁴ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l’Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, p. 238-239.

⁸⁵⁵ Susan Milner, “For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty”, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

ensure party discipline on the Europe issue. Those, like Chevènement, who adopt and vocally pursue Eurosceptic positions, compromising party unity, have regularly been externalised.

In analysing the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the negotiations and ratification of the Treaty on European Union, this first sub-chapter has shown that, while there were certain similarities between the UK and France in terms of the impacts on political competition, there were many differences. Major entered Treaty negotiations as the new leader of an increasingly Eurosceptic party. He sought to retain the support of his party while at the same time attempting to repair damage done to EC relations by his predecessor. Mitterrand, on the other hand, was an experienced leader confident of domestic support for integration, which allowed him to drive negotiations. Whereas the TEU was ratified by Parliament alone in the UK, the Treaty was put to referendum in France. In both the UK and France, the two main parties officially supported the ratification of the TEU. Nonetheless, most Labour politicians abstained from votes on the Treaty in an attempt to reverse the UK's opt-outs, but also to leverage the Europe issue so as to weaken the Conservative government. In both the UK and France, the ratification process revealed deep divisions within the centre-right Conservative Party and RPR. However, whereas the former was in government at the time, the latter was in opposition. The centre-left Labour Party and PS maintained relative unity. Yet, although a greater proportion of RPR politicians opposed the TEU, the rebellion within the Conservative Party was more consequential. Many of those who rebelled against the government did not only oppose the TEU, but were critical of European integration more generally. For Thatcherites, integration had become incompatible with the pursuit of the former Prime Minister's liberal economic doctrine. The TEU and the Europe issue therefore became part of a wider debate on future party policy. Some rebels showed themselves willing to bring about the collapse of the government to achieve their objective and were therefore unlikely to back down following ratification of the Treaty. The number of rebels grew and their organisation became more effective. Major was forced to make two key votes on the Treaty motions of confidence in order to ensure their passage. Further, there were a number of Eurosceptics in the government. Although they remained discreet, their continued loyalty had to be rewarded with career advancement. However, their continued presence in government not only allowed them to directly influence government policy on Europe, it also sent a message that Euroscepticism was not per se an impediment to career advancement.

Following the ratification of the TEU by referendum, RPR opponents of the Treaty fell into line. A key PS opponent of the Treaty, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, refused to do the same

and was pushed out the party. The externalisation of a vocal critic of the TEU demonstrated that such positions had no place in the party. In contrast, the Conservative Party *internalised* its Eurosceptics, allowing them increasing influence over party policy. During an off-the-record exchange with a journalist on 23 July 1993, following the vote of confidence, Major referred to Howard, Lilley, and Portillo, albeit not by name, as “bastards”. Major’s strong language indicates the extent to which these three Eurosceptic Cabinet members impacted the process of ratification and undermined the Prime Minister’s authority, despite having always voted with the government. When asked why he did not simply sack the three Eurosceptic Cabinet members, Major noted that, given the government had a majority of just eighteen at the time, they would probably have caused more trouble had they been removed from Cabinet and returned to the backbenches. The “dispossessed” and the “never-possessed”, he said, cause most trouble.⁸⁵⁶ Major’s statement shows the importance of the distinction between *being* Eurosceptic and *positioning* as Eurosceptic. It can be concluded that during the Maastricht period, although being Eurosceptic was not an impediment to career advancement, positioning as such was.

Intra-party divisions over the Europe issue subsided in France once the salience of the TEU declined. The Europe issue only grew in importance in the UK, where the inter-party divide between the two main parties became increasingly clear, and divisions within the governing Conservative Party deepened. The second part of the chapter will study how political competition around the EU issue evolved following the entry into force of the Treaty.

2. The political consequences of the Treaty on European Union

Once ratified by the twelve member states, the Treaty on European Union entered into force on 1 November 1993. The process of ratifying the Treaty had increased the salience of the Europe issue and exposed divisions between and within national political parties. While the increase in salience could have been expected to increase the ability of politicians to influence public opinion on the Europe issue, internal divisions revealed within certain parties by the ratification process served to increase the bottom-up influence of public opinion over politicians.⁸⁵⁷ Although, for the most part, these intra-party divisions subsided once the Treaty came into

⁸⁵⁶ David Baker, Andrew Gamble and Steve Ludlam, “The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Division and British Ratification”, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁸⁵⁷ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, “Who’s Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration”, *op. cit.*

force, this was not always the case. Further, in some member states the Europe issue became a competitive dimension, with differing visions of future integration creating a new basis of inter-party competition. Although the majority of mainstream parties continued to support integration, it was during this period that the first anti-EU parties were established.

As the ratification process advanced, public perceptions of European integration as a good thing fell and perceptions of it being a bad thing rose, a trend that continued beyond the entry into force of the TEU. This trend in public opinion could be observed in both the UK and France. Ratification of the Treaty signalled the end of the permissive consensus of the public, but also an increase in the potential for negative public opinion to influence the positions of politicians. Falling public support for European integration potentially created an opportunity for political gain.

The following sections present and analyse the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the period from the entry into force of the TEU until the eve of the opening of negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty in October 2003. The sections seek to determine how political debate and competition around the Europe issue evolved, and, notably, whether measures taken to contain divisions during the ratification of the TEU were successful.

2.1. UK politicians and Europe post-Maastricht

Despite the ratification and entry into force of the TEU, the Conservative Party leadership struggled to return discipline to the divided party. Euroscepticism was being mainstreamed within the Conservative Party. The number of Eurosceptic backbenchers continued to grow. Further, there was a shift within the Cabinet, with some hitherto neutral and Europhile members developing more Eurosceptic attitudes. Also, Eurosceptic government and Cabinet ministers became more openly critical of the EU and, most importantly, some who publicly positioned themselves as Eurosceptic were subsequently promoted. It became increasingly clear that *positioning* as Eurosceptic was not necessarily an impediment to career advancement within the Conservative Party. With a narrow majority of just eighteen seats and in a context of declining public support for the party, Eurosceptics posed a serious threat to Major's authority as party leader.

In contrast, the Labour Party pursued its EU policy of support for integration and displayed relative unity. Public support for the party grew, resulting in its landslide victory at the 1997 general election. The party's EU policy was not in keeping with public opinion, however. The public's perception of membership of the EU as a good thing had fallen

drastically to 43 per cent by the end of 1993.⁸⁵⁸ This trend did not reverse following the entry into force of the TEU, rather support continued to fall, reaching a low of just 25 per cent in 2000. At the same time, perceptions of membership as a bad thing rose to 24 per cent.⁸⁵⁹

2.1.1. *A shift in Eurosceptic focus*

Under the terms of its opt-out, the UK could adopt the single currency at a later date so long as it fulfilled the conditions of Eurozone membership and the government, with the support of a majority in Parliament, recommended adoption.⁸⁶⁰ Major refused to rule out the possibility of adopting the single currency, arguing that, as participating member states would be unlikely to fulfil the convergence criteria before 1997, a decision was not yet necessary.⁸⁶¹ The Prime Minister's 'wait and see' approach angered those opposed to the adoption of the single currency. Their aim was to prevent the adoption of the Euro, and at the very least to ensure a referendum would be held on the question. As such, in the aftermath of the ratification of the TEU, the Treaty's opponents refocused their efforts on preventing the adoption of the single currency by the UK.

This anti-Euro focus revealed the existence of a new type of Eurosceptic, one who opposed the adoption of the single currency but not necessarily the UK's membership of the EU per se. Euro-focused Euroscepticism increased the range of actors involved in the debate to include business actors and academics, increasing diversity and thus causing divisions within the Eurosceptic movement.⁸⁶² The arguments of anti-Euro campaigners post-Maastricht were based more on economic than political reasoning. Not only did they highlight perceived weaknesses inherent in EMU, they drew attention to the specificities of the UK's economic system which, they argued, made participation in EMU unsuitable. Joining EMU would require the UK to re-enter the ERM for two years, which would necessitate Parliamentary approval. To boost their case and dissuade the government from taking such a political risk, campaigners drew on the UK's experience of ejection from the ERM in September 1992. Eurosceptics within the Labour Party emphasised the fact that EMU limited the economic policy instruments available to national governments to respond to their specific economic situation. While the anti-Euro focus of Eurosceptics increased in prominence, political Euroscepticism, with its

⁸⁵⁸ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 40*, December 1993.

⁸⁵⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 53*, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶⁰ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

focus on national sovereignty and identity, remained very much present in the Conservative Party.⁸⁶³

A large majority of Conservative MPs elected for the first time in 1992 were critical of the EU. Henceforth, the majority of the Parliamentary Party was critical of the process and/or outcomes of integration, while only 25 per cent were supportive of integration.⁸⁶⁴ Despite their limited experience, the likes of Iain Duncan Smith and Bernard Jenkin exerted considerable influence and were able to move the party as a whole towards a more Eurosceptic position and challenge the government's EU policy. While many critics were ideologically opposed to the process or outcomes of European integration, a growing number appeared to be carried by the wave of Euroscepticism moving across the party. As the balance shifted towards Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party, it became increasingly important for ambitious politicians to position themselves on integration bearing in mind the impact this could have on their career.

Frontbenchers Malcolm Rifkind and Gillian Shephard, who had remained neutral during the ratification of the TEU, and Stephen Dorrell, who had hitherto been Europhile, adopted Eurosceptic positions in the post-Maastricht period. These newly Eurosceptic government ministers frequently broke from the agreed Cabinet position on the single currency and offered support to backbench MPs.⁸⁶⁵ Shifting positions within Cabinet took place as the number and influence of Eurosceptic backbench Conservative MPs grew.⁸⁶⁶ Further, polls suggested electoral defeats were increasingly likely, meaning public opinion on the Europe issue was ever more important. The shift in Rifkind's position might be accounted for, in part, by his relatively narrow majority of just 9.6 per cent during the 1992 parliament. Stanley shows that in the early 1990s, 57 per cent of Conservative MPs with a majority of 10 per cent or less were Eurosceptic.⁸⁶⁷ Further, in 1995, Major promoted Rifkind to Foreign Secretary. This indicates not only that his Eurosceptic positioning did not impede his career progression, but that it might actually have contributed to it. Although Dorrell had secured a solid 18.4 per cent majority at the 1992 general election, the Labour candidate had gained considerable ground.⁸⁶⁸ Following his shift to a more Eurosceptic position, he was selected as the candidate for a safe Conservative seat at the next general election. Dorrell became Chair of the Europhile European Movement in

⁸⁶³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-116.

⁸⁶⁴ Philip Norton, "The Party in Parliament", in Philip Norton (eds.), *The Conservative Party*, Prentice Hall, London, 1996.

⁸⁶⁵ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

⁸⁶⁶ Philip Stephens, *Politics and the Pound*, Macmillan, London, 1997, p.332.

⁸⁶⁷ Luke Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 61.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

2016, which gives further weight to the suggestion that his shift to a more Eurosceptic position was strategic.

The increase in the proportion of Conservative politicians positioning as Eurosceptic took place not only as Euroscepticism grew among the party's backbenches and the among public, but also in the context of the founding of the UK Independence Party. In September 1993, Alan Sked relaunched the Anti-Federalist League, which he had founded in 1991, as the UK Independence Party. Sked established UKIP to lead opposition, not only to further integration, but to the UK's very membership of the EU. This new political offering stood in contrast to that of mainstream parties, whose official position was in support of the UK's continued membership of the EU. Given the growing salience of the issue and increasing public opposition to EU membership, UKIP constituted a potential electoral threat, especially in view of up-coming European Parliament elections.

The European Parliament elections held in June 1994 were the first opportunity for the UK public to express its opinion on European integration following the ratification of the TEU. The Labour Party won an outright victory at the elections, winning 44 per cent of the vote and 62 of the 84 seats allocated to the UK. Their nearest rival, the Conservative Party, won only 28 per cent of the vote and 18 seats.⁸⁶⁹ Given falling public support for the EU, that a more Europhile party should secure a victory is perhaps surprising. However, the electorate tended at that point to consider elections to the European Parliament to be of limited importance. It is therefore likely that Labour's success was an indication of a turn in public opinion against the Conservative Party, which had been in power for fifteen years, rather than a sign of a change in attitudes towards integration. Nonetheless, Labour's resounding victory gave an indication that its Europe policy, even if not in keeping with public opinion, would not have a negative impact on its electoral fortunes.

John Smith, the Labour Party leader, died suddenly just weeks before the European Parliament elections. He was succeeded by Tony Blair, who was elected leader of the party in July 1994. Elected to Parliament under the leadership of Michael Foot, Blair entered Neil Kinnock's Shadow Cabinet in 1988 and was promoted to Shadow Home Secretary by John Smith.⁸⁷⁰ He had, therefore, experienced first-hand the switch in the Labour Party's Europe policy. Under Blair's leadership, the party became known as New Labour and consolidated its move towards the centre and its pro-EU policy. In particular, the party's Eurosceptics were

⁸⁶⁹ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, "European Parliament Elections – 1979 to 1994", *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁸⁷⁰ UK Parliament, "Tony Blair: Parliamentary Career" <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/mr-tony-blair/512/>>.

pushed further to the margins and became less out-spoken on the Europe issue.⁸⁷¹ By the mid-1990s, only three percent of the party's MPs advocated leaving the EU and just twenty percent opposed the adoption of the single currency. The position of Labour MPs at that time stood in contrast to their Conservative contemporaries, twenty-six percent of whom advocated leaving the EU and sixty-six percent of whom opposed the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁷² Yet, despite Blair being the most Europhile party leader, and later Prime Minister, since Edward Heath, Alexandre-Collier and Avril contend that his support for integration would remain rhetorical.⁸⁷³

2.1.2. *Challenges to Major's leadership*

The growing prevalence of Euroscepticism in the Conservative Party was laid bare at the party's October 1994 conference. During an address, the former Chancellor, Norman Lamont, who by then sat on the backbenches, became the first Eurosceptic Conservative MP to openly suggest that consideration be given to the UK leaving the EU.⁸⁷⁴ The apparent reason for Lamont's suggestion was his belief that monetary union would necessitate further integration, in particular the creation of "a European government and a European state."⁸⁷⁵ Lamont's comments not only served to boost the credibility of Conservative critics of integration, but also the plausibility of those, including outside the party, who wished to see the UK leave the EU. Shortly after the Conservative Party conference in November 1994, James Goldsmith, who had close ties to the party, established The Referendum Party with a view to fighting the 1997 general election. His sole objective was to ensure a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, not merely on the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁷⁶

In this context, challenges to Major's EU policy and leadership intensified. Attacks focused on the Prime Minister's policy of delaying a decision on the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁷⁷ Major continued to justify this delay by claiming that it was unlikely that other member states would fulfil the convergence criteria on schedule. This angered Eurosceptics, who believed Major underestimated both the political will of the other member states to introduce the single currency on time and the flexibility of the convergence criteria. Faced with

⁸⁷¹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸⁷² Brian Brivati and David Baker, "The History of the Blues", *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 11 December 1998, p. 11.

⁸⁷³ Agnès Alexandre-Collier and Emmanuelle Avril, *Les partis politiques en Grande-Bretagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁸⁷⁴ Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism", *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁸⁷⁵ Norman Lamont, "Seldom Group Speech, 11 October 1994", cited in Martin Holmes (eds.), *The Eurosceptical Reader*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1996, p. 100.

⁸⁷⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁸⁷⁷ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

a Parliamentary Party, the majority of whom was by then Eurosceptic, and Cabinet members who had begun to regularly break with the government's position, Major struggled to assert control. As the government's majority declined, the ability of party managers to ensure discipline diminished. The power of party Eurosceptics increased as they made it clear that Major could not count on their loyalty. On 28 November 1994, in an attempt to impose discipline, Major withdrew the party whip for a period of six months from a group of eight MPs who refused to support the government in a vote of confidence on the European Community (Finance) Bill. The MPs concerned included Teresa Gorman, Teddy Taylor, Christopher Gill, and John Wilkinson, all of whom had been Maastricht rebels.⁸⁷⁸ Through their actions, the eight MPs showed that they continued to be willing to bring down the government in order to block the process of integration. However, Major's attempt to impose discipline by withdrawing the whip backfired as the result was to free the eight MPs to campaign more openly, as Independent Conservative MPs, against the government's EU policy. This served to increase pressure on Major to promise a referendum on the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁷⁹

Yet, despite the undermining of his authority, Major continued to refuse to promise a referendum on the single currency. This could be seen more as a determined effort by Major to assert his leadership rather than a manifestation of his support for the single currency per se. In an attempt to put an end to the challenges, Major resigned on 22 June 1995, forcing a leadership contest. In announcing the contest, Major called on his opponents to "put up or shut up".⁸⁸⁰ Major's only challenger for the leadership was John Redwood, who, as Secretary of State for Wales, was a member of Cabinet. Notably absent from the leadership contest were Lilley, Howard, and Portillo. All three were prominent and ambitious Eurosceptic Cabinet members, and all went on to contest the party leadership in later years. During interview, Redwood claimed that in contesting the leadership he was "motivated solely by his opposition to the EU and the Euro," seeing himself as a "crusader to save the pound." He was not, he insisted, driven by personal ambition. It should be noted, however, that Redwood contested the party leadership again in 1997 when the race was dominated by Eurosceptics, which would suggest he did in fact harbour ambitions of leadership. Redwood sought to make the EU the core of the 1995 leadership contest, challenging Major to a debate on the issue, which the latter refused.⁸⁸¹ Major

⁸⁷⁸ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-120.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸⁸⁰ John Major, *John Major's Resignation Speech*, 2 June 1995 <<http://www.johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990-1997/mr-majors-resignation-speech-22-june-1995/>>.

⁸⁸¹ John Major, *Letter to John Redwood*, 29 June 1995 <<http://www.johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990-1997/mr-majors-letter-to-john-redwood-29-june-1995/>>.

sought to play down policy differences between Redwood and himself, which a debate would have brought to the fore.⁸⁸² Major was re-elected as leader by 218 votes to 89. Although this was a sound victory for Major, Redwood nonetheless won the support of over 25 per cent of Conservative MPs.

Redwood resigned from the Cabinet following his defeat and subsequently established the Conservative 2000 Foundation to challenge the trajectory of European integration and the UK's role in it.⁸⁸³ Yet Redwood's departure from Cabinet did little to shift the balance towards Europhiles. In fact, following a reshuffle in July 1995, the Cabinet was dominated by Eurosceptics. Leading Eurosceptics, Lilley and Howard, retained their positions, while Portillo was promoted to Defence Minister. Portillo's promotion was seen by some as a reward for him not having entered the leadership contest and having instead remained loyal to Major.⁸⁸⁴ Malcolm Rifkind was promoted to Foreign Secretary following Hurd's retirement from politics. The appointment of Rifkind, who had become more openly critical of the EU in the post-Maastricht period, as Foreign Secretary marked a key turning point. Rifkind's predecessors Hurd, Major, and Howe had been more supportive of integration than the Prime Minister. Gillian Shephard, who like Rifkind had become more critical of the EU, retained her position in Cabinet with a widened portfolio. William Hague, a young Thatcherite who would go on to become the party's leader, entered Cabinet for the first time to succeed Redwood as Secretary of State for Wales. All of the Eurosceptic members of the Cabinet had remained discreetly loyal during the ratification of the TEU, which served to underscore the subsequent shift within the Conservative Party. Heseltine and Clarke were among just a few Europhiles to hold Cabinet positions from 1995. Heseltine was promoted from Trade and Industry Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister.⁸⁸⁵ This promotion was perhaps in recognition that he did not challenge Major's leadership alongside Redwood. Clarke retained his role as Chancellor.⁸⁸⁶

In an attempt to deflect criticism of his EU policy from within the Conservative Party, Major adopted the tactic of 'rhetorical scepticism', criticising the Labour Party's policy of further and deeper integration.⁸⁸⁷ In particular, Major criticised the opposition's plan to overturn

⁸⁸² John Major, *John Major's Comments on John Redwood Standing in the Leadership Election*, 26 June 1995 <<http://www.johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990-1997/mr-majors-comments-on-john-redwood-standing-in-the-leadership-election-26-june-1995/>>.

⁸⁸³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸⁸⁴ Peter Snowdon, *Back from the Brink: The Extraordinary Fall and Rise of the Conservative Party*, 2010, Harper Collins, London, p. 2.

⁸⁸⁵ UK Parliament, "Lord Heseltine: Parliamentary Career" <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-heseltine/94>>.

⁸⁸⁶ UK Parliament, "Lord Clarke: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/366/career>>.

⁸⁸⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

the opt-out from the Social Chapter.⁸⁸⁸ This tactic was, however, unsuccessful in quelling criticism from within his party.⁸⁸⁹ Major found himself under continuing pressure to promise that the adoption of the Euro would be subject to a referendum. Conservative anti-Euro campaigners were aided by their Labour Party counterparts, 50 of whom signed a statement entitled ‘Europe isn’t working’ in March 1996. This statement, supported by almost 20 per cent of Labour MPs, called for the Labour Party to exclude the possibility of adopting the single currency.⁸⁹⁰

The following month, in April 1996, Major committed to holding a referendum if a Conservative government were to recommend the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁹¹ During interview, Redwood claimed this promise to hold a referendum was a direct result of his challenge to Major’s leadership the previous year. Redwood claimed that the focus on the currency during his campaign had contributed to “bringing the issue into the public domain.” This, he stated, increased the pressure on Major in a context of rising public opposition to EU membership and the single currency in particular.⁸⁹² Major’s pledge to hold a referendum served to calm most of his opponents within the Conservative Party, including Cabinet members Lilley, Howard, and Hague, as well as Baroness Thatcher and Lord Lamont in the House of Lords. However, some, notably Portillo, would have preferred that the government rule out entirely the possibility of adopting the single currency.⁸⁹³ Further, David Heathcoat-Amory, the Paymaster General, resigned from government in July 1996 due to the fact that the adoption of the single currency remained a possibility. Heathcoat-Amory went so far as to argue that the UK would be better off if it were to leave the EU.⁸⁹⁴ Despite his stated opposition to EU membership, Heathcoat-Amory had remained loyal to Major throughout the ratification of the TEU. This loyalty and, he claims, his influence within the Eurosceptic FSG had led Major to promote him to Paymaster General in 1994.⁸⁹⁵ That Heathcoat-Amory, himself, links his promotion to his Euroscepticism gives further weight to the claim that Euroscepticism could serve to advance the career of a Conservative MP.

⁸⁸⁸ David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

⁸⁸⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁸⁹¹ Philip Norton, “The Conservative Party”, in Anthony King (eds.), *New Labour Triumphs: Britain at the Polls*, Chatham House Publishers, Chatham, 1998, p. 90.

⁸⁹² John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁸⁹³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁸⁹⁴ David Heathcoat-Amory, “A Single European Currency: Why the United Kingdom Must Say ‘No’”, *Bruges Group*, London, 1996, p. 15.

⁸⁹⁵ David Heathcoat-Amory, *Confessions of a Eurosceptic*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 2012, p. 57.

Not only did Redwood's anti-Euro campaign bring about a change in Major's policy on the single currency, it served to force the Labour Party to match the government's promise to hold a referendum before adopting the Euro.⁸⁹⁶ Even though opposition to the single currency within the Labour Party was minimal, Major's promise and the context of declining public support for the EU and the Euro made it politically impossible for Blair not to do the same. The promise of a referendum by both parties served to bring the debate on the single currency further into the public domain. Between spring and autumn 1996, public opposition to the adoption of the single currency rose further, with 57 per cent of the public being opposed.⁸⁹⁷ It seems that increasingly negative political discourse on the issue of the single currency served to drive growing public opposition.

2.1.3. *Labour's 1997 landslide victory*

The Europe issue was estimated to be one of the most salient for UK political parties in 1997. For the Conservative Party, Europe was the most prominent issue, even more so than economic policy.⁸⁹⁸ Having committed, in April 1996, to holding a referendum before any future adoption of the single currency, the Conservative Party's 1997 general election manifesto did not rule out the future adoption of the single currency. Rather, it announced a 'negotiate and decide' policy, leaving the government room for manoeuvre. This policy statement clearly did not go far enough as more than one-third of Conservative Party candidates for election issued statements specifically opposing the adoption of the single currency.⁸⁹⁹ That such a high proportion of candidates would disassociate themselves from the party's official position highlights the extent of on-going internal divisions at such a crucial time and, given the electoral context, the perception that positioning as anti-Euro would increase the likelihood of election.

Notwithstanding the 'Europe isn't working' statement of March 1996, Euroscepticism within the Labour Party was rarely vocal. Under Blair's leadership, and as the party seemed to be closer to gaining power, Eurosceptics had been pushed to the fringes of the party.⁹⁰⁰ Although 20 per cent of Labour MPs opposed the adoption of the single currency, only 3 per cent opposed EU membership.⁹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the Labour Party manifesto sought to reassure an increasingly Eurosceptic public by promising both to hold a referendum before adopting the

⁸⁹⁶ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁸⁹⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 46*, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹⁸ Michael Laver, "Party Policy in Britain 1997: Results from an Expert Survey", *Political Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1998, pp. 338-339.

⁸⁹⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁹⁰¹ Brian Brivati and David Baker, "The History of the Blues", *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Euro and to retain the veto on issues of vital national interest. In doing so, the party hoped to counter Conservative claims that it supported further integration at any cost. On the other hand, Labour pledged to reverse the opt-out from the Social Chapter and, in doing so, set its EU policy apart from that of the Conservative Party.

The Labour Party won a landslide victory, taking 418 of the 659 seats, despite securing just 43.2 per cent of the popular vote. Whereas the Labour Party dramatically increased its seats in Parliament, the Conservative Party lost over half of its seats and returned, heavily defeated, to the opposition benches for the first time in eighteen years. The UK Independence Party and the Referendum Party competed in the 1997 general election for the first time. UKIP failed to attract the support of the electorate, rather the Eurosceptic vote went to the Referendum Party, which came 4th and won 2.6 per cent of the popular vote.⁹⁰² De Vries shows that the Labour and Conservative Parties were most impacted by EU issue voting, with the former more likely to win the support of pro-EU voters than the latter. She also shows that pro-EU voters were considerably less likely to vote Conservative in 1997 than they were in 1992.⁹⁰³

Geddes attributes the resounding defeat of the Conservative Party to damage caused by intra-party divisions, notably over Europe, and this despite a general lack of public interest in the EU.⁹⁰⁴ Geddes' contention was confirmed by Peter Lilley, who acknowledged that in-fighting on the Europe issue contributed to the party's defeat in 1997. Lilley insisted, however, that in-fighting in the Conservative Party was rarely personal, whereas, he claimed, intra-party disputes in the Labour Party could be "quite vicious" at that time.⁹⁰⁵ While Labour opponents of official party policy were far fewer in number, the gap between opponents and supporters was wider. In contrast to Geddes and Lilley, John Redwood argued that intra-party divisions over the EU did not have an impact on the party's electoral fortunes in 1997. Rather, he claimed, it was "the damage done by John Major in joining the ERM", and the consequences this had for the UK economy and the Conservative Party's reputation for sound economic management, that caused the electoral defeat. He thus implied that, had the party adopted a more Eurosceptic position, it would have fared better at the general election. Redwood went on to claim that his own challenges to Major's leadership had served to strengthen support for the Conservative Party in polls rather than weaken it, because the leadership campaign revealed the

⁹⁰² Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections", *op. cit.*, pp. 10-13.

⁹⁰³ Catherine E. de Vries, "EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties Electoral Fortunes", *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

⁹⁰⁴ Andrew Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁹⁰⁵ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

Parliamentary Party to be “more Eurosceptic than the public had realised.”⁹⁰⁶ There might well be some truth in this claim as the widely-circulated *Sun* newspaper supported Redwood’s bid for the party leadership and thus brought his Eurosceptic arguments to readers who perhaps viewed them as representing official party policy.

With a majority of 178, the Labour government could implement its policies with little regard for Parliamentary opposition.⁹⁰⁷ Blair intended to end the UK’s isolation in the EU and to take on a leadership role. He considered this resetting of the relationship to be a necessary part of the modernisation of the UK constitution.⁹⁰⁸ Blair’s ambitions were not entirely different from those of Major who, on taking office, had sought to repair the damage to relations done by his predecessor and to put the UK at the very heart of Europe. Would Blair succeed where Major had failed? His Cabinet was composed predominantly of Europhiles, and more specifically Euroenthusiasts who supported both the process and outcomes of integration. A notable exception was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown. While Brown was a moderniser and a key actor in the New Labour movement, he was less enthusiastic than Blair about the benefits of integration. He was, however, by no means opposed to either the process or outcomes of integration.⁹⁰⁹ The New Labour government therefore gave cause to believe that a new era in UK-EU relations was beginning.

Labour came to power as negotiations of a new treaty were underway. Negotiations of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which revised the Treaty of Rome and the TEU, were completed in October 1997. Blair’s signing of the Social Protocol, which had been left out of the TEU at the insistence of the UK, meant that the Social Chapter could be incorporated into the new Treaty. The UK did, however, negotiate an opt-out from the Schengen Agreement, which would become part of the *acquis communautaire*. A further sign of changed UK-EU relations came in October 1997, when Brown announced that, although the UK would not be among the first states to adopt the single currency, the government was, in principle, supportive of future Eurozone membership.⁹¹⁰ In his memoirs, Blair notes that at this early stage, Brown was more enthusiastic about the single currency than he was: “At first, indeed in 1997, he had been the one wanting a more pro-single-currency position and I was resisting.”⁹¹¹ Further, during debates

⁹⁰⁶ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁹⁰⁷ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, “UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections”, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁹⁰⁸ Pauline Schnapper, “Le Royaume-Uni et l’Europe: Toujours un Malentendu?”, *Hérodote*, vol. 2, no. 137, 2010, p. 135.

⁹⁰⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁹¹⁰ *Idem.*

⁹¹¹ Tony Blair, *A Journey*, Hutchinson, London, 2010, p. 537.

on EMU membership, the government was keen to stress that it sought to delay membership for economic reasons and not for reasons of principle, as their Conservative predecessors had done.⁹¹² Brown set out five economic tests that would have to be met before the UK would adopt the Euro. The granting of operational independence to the Bank of England in 1998 and Brown's efforts to ensure the balancing of the budget, in line with the requirements of membership of the single currency, provided evidence that the government was working towards adopting the single currency.⁹¹³

In a further sign of the government's enthusiastic support for integration, Blair appointed Keith Vaz, a strong supporter of European integration, as Europe Minister. During interview, Vaz claimed that Blair wanted "outspoken supporters of Europe" in his government and that he himself was appointed to this role *because of* his strong support for integration.⁹¹⁴ This indicates that, in contrast to the Conservative Party in the post-Maastricht period, pro-EU positions could serve to advance careers within the Labour Party. On his appointment, Vaz took a campaign bus around the UK and to Paris to promote UK support for the EU. Blair also played an active role in promoting Europe on the international stage. An agreement reached between Blair and his French counterpart, Jacques Chirac, at St Malo in 1998 allowed for the establishment of a European defence capacity.⁹¹⁵ Further, the UK was a key supporter of enlargement of the EU to include states in Central and Eastern Europe. During Labour's first term, its EU policy was actively Europhile and not merely rhetorically so.

2.1.4. *The Conservative Party in opposition*

Following the heavy defeat of the Conservative Party at the 1997 general election, John Major resigned as party leader. Five candidates sought to succeed Major: John Redwood, Peter Lilley, Michael Howard, William Hague, and Kenneth Clarke. All but Clarke were Eurosceptic and all but Hague had considerable Parliamentary and government experience. Perhaps surprisingly, given the proportion of Eurosceptic Conservative MPs, Clarke won the first and second rounds of the contest, with Hague coming second. Clarke's win could be explained by the fact that the Eurosceptic vote was split between his four rivals. It was not until the third round, and the elimination of John Redwood, that the Eurosceptic vote was no longer split, allowing Hague to win the contest and become leader of the Conservative Party in June 1997, just eight years after

⁹¹² Juan Diez Medrano, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁹¹³ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁹¹⁴ Keith Vaz, interview in person, 30 March 2015.

⁹¹⁵ Pauline Schnapper, "Le Royaume-Uni et l'Europe: Toujours un Malentendu?", *op. cit.*, p. 137.

entering Parliament.⁹¹⁶ Fundamentally, Hague benefitted from the support of Margaret Thatcher. Upon his election as party leader Thatcher wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper that Hague “stands for the things I believe in.”⁹¹⁷ Nonetheless, Clarke’s rather narrow defeat reflected ongoing divisions within the Conservative Party, in particular around the Europe issue.

Positioning himself on the centre-right, Hague sought to unite the party and garner the support of both Eurosceptic rebels as well as party loyalists.⁹¹⁸ However, in a context of opposition to the adoption of the single currency among the general public and especially among Conservative party members, his position on integration soon changed to one of outright Euroscepticism. Euroscepticism became a key characteristic of the party as Hague sought to mobilise Eurosceptic resources. In fact, Alexandre-Collier contends that from 1997 the Conservative Party became something close to a single-issue party.⁹¹⁹ The Conservative Party was quite unique in the political landscape of the EU member states at that time as it was the only established, mainstream party with a Eurosceptic EU policy.

In a sign of the shift in the party’s EU policy under Hague’s leadership, a number of key Eurosceptics were appointed to the Shadow Cabinet. Hague’s Eurosceptic leadership rivals, Lilley and Howard, were appointed Shadow Chancellor and Shadow Foreign Secretary respectively.⁹²⁰ Neither men had occupied such senior positions in Major’s Cabinets. Redwood and Heathcoat-Amory, who had resigned from Major’s government, returned to the frontbenches as Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary and Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury respectively.⁹²¹ Ian Duncan Smith was appointed as Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, sitting on the frontbenches for the first time.⁹²² Having held positions in government

⁹¹⁶ Neil Johnston, “Leadership Elections: Conservative Party”, *Briefing Paper 01366*, House of Commons Library, 8 August 2019, p. 21 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01366/>>.

⁹¹⁷ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique”, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁹¹⁸ John Turner, *The Tories and Europe*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, p. 241.

⁹¹⁹ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997”, in Agnès Alexandre-Collier, Bernard d’Hellencourt and Pauline Schnapper (eds.), *Le Royaume-Uni et l’Union Européenne depuis 1997*, Editions Universitaires de Dijon, Dijon, 2007, pp. 9-10; Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique”, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁹²⁰ UK Parliament, “Lord Lilley: Parliamentary Career” <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-lilley/68>>; UK Parliament, “Lord Howard: Parliamentary Career” <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-howard-of-lympne/82>>.

⁹²¹ UK Parliament, “John Redwood: Parliamentary Career” <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/john-redwood/14>>; UK Parliament, “David Heathcoat-Amory: Parliamentary Career” <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/ Commons/member/257>>.

⁹²² UK Parliament, “Iain Duncan Smith: Parliamentary Career”, *op. cit.*

almost continually since the mid-1970s, Clarke returned to the backbenches.⁹²³ Notably, Portillo, one of Major's three "bastards", lost his seat at the 1997 election.⁹²⁴

In June 1997, Hague imposed a three-line whip to ensure all Conservative MPs voted against the ratification of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Edward Heath, the Prime Minister who took the UK into the EEC in 1973, was the only Conservative MP to rebel.⁹²⁵ As such, the Conservative Party stood out as a rare example of an established, mainstream party whose official position was to oppose treaty reform. The same month, 78 Conservative MPs, almost 50 per cent of the party's MPs, voted in favour of a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU.⁹²⁶ Shadow Cabinet member, John Redwood, and former Cabinet members, Norman Lamont and Ken Baker, supported the motion.⁹²⁷ The result of these votes show that Hague had succeeded in restoring discipline on the Europe issue and that the party was more united in its increasingly Eurosceptic position. That senior party figures were among those to call for an 'in-out' referendum shows that, unlike under Major's leadership, the positions of Conservative frontbenchers on European integration were closer to the Eurosceptic positions of backbenchers.

Unsurprisingly, the party's opposition to the adoption of the single currency grew and became more vocal under Hague's leadership. In November 1997, Hague told the conference of the highly influential Confederation of British Industry (CBI) that "British business could find itself trapped in a burning building with no exits" if the UK were to join EMU.⁹²⁸ He warned that EMU would lead to a financial crisis and even conflict.⁹²⁹ In October 1998, 84 per cent of Conservative MPs voted in support of a motion ruling out the adoption of the single currency, not only during the current Parliament but for the next ten years. This became the party's official policy and an integral part of its electoral strategy.⁹³⁰ The following year, in 1999, Hague travelled throughout the UK on a 'Save the Pound' campaign. His aim was to draw the attention of a rather disinterested public to anti-Euro arguments and the fact that this was now official Conservative Party policy. Hague's campaign took place at the same time as that of Keith Vaz, the Europe Minister, in support of the UK's membership of the EU. Vaz

⁹²³ UK Parliament, "Lord Clarke: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

⁹²⁴ UK Parliament, "Michael Portillo: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/187/career>>.

⁹²⁵ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique", *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁹²⁶ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁹²⁷ Philip Stephens, *Politics and the Pound*, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

⁹²⁸ William Hague, *Speech to Confederation of British Industry*, November 1997.

⁹²⁹ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

claimed that Hague essentially “followed him around the country”, “contradicting” everything he said.⁹³¹ This strategy allowed the Conservative opposition to clearly distinguish itself from, and attack, the Labour government on the issue of the single currency. In pursuing a Eurosceptic and anti-Euro policy, Hague also reinforced his power within the Conservative Party. As per Budge and Farlie’s salience theory, the Conservative leadership sought to push the Euro and wider Europe issues, on which they considered themselves to have greater credibility, up the agenda.⁹³² Hague hoped to speak to, and make political gains from, growing public opposition to integration and the single currency. Further, according to Kriesi, this strategy is particularly typical of Conservative parties in opposition seeking to score political points and regain power.⁹³³

John Redwood claimed that, having been in government from 1979 to 1997, the period from 1997 to 2010 was the only “happy time” on Europe for the party.⁹³⁴ Alexandre-Collier suggests that, unencumbered by the restrictions of office, the party’s MPs were more free to express their opinions on integration.⁹³⁵ Szczerbiak and Taggart find that the Conservative Party became more united in its Euroscepticism during this period in opposition,⁹³⁶ which is in keeping with Kriesi’s theory that parties in opposition are more likely to have a unified EU policy.⁹³⁷ Further, greater party unity on the Europe issue, is likely, as contended by Ray, to have increased the party’s influence over the opinion of its supporters.⁹³⁸ Opposition to the EU was higher among Conservative Party members and supporters than among the general electorate,⁹³⁹ and the proportion of Conservative supporters who supported continued membership of the EU had fallen considerably since 1992.⁹⁴⁰ It was essential that the party showed its policy to be in keeping with the opinion of its supporters. This was particularly important so as to avoid the loss of support to UKIP. Although the anti-EU party had won just 1 per cent of the popular vote at the 1994 European Parliament elections, it had enjoyed increased support since the dissolution of the Referendum Party in 1997. This was of particular

⁹³¹ Keith Vaz, interview in person.

⁹³² Ian Budge and Dennis J. Farlie, *op. cit.*

⁹³³ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁹³⁴ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁹³⁵ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997”, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁹³⁶ Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, “Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality”, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹³⁷ Hanspeter Kriesi, *op. cit.*

⁹³⁸ Leonard Ray, “When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration”, *op. cit.*

⁹³⁹ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴⁰ Richard Flickinger, Staci Rhine, and Stephen Bennett, “Changing Policies but Keeping Voters? British Parties, the British Public and the EU”, paper prepared for European Community Studies Association 2001 International Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, 31 May 31 – 2 June 2001, p. 14.

concern for the Conservative Party in view of up-coming elections to the European Parliament, at which UKIP stood to benefit from the use, for the first time in the UK, of a form of proportional voting.⁹⁴¹

Yet, with only 165 seats in Parliament and in opposition to a government which held a very sizeable majority, it was difficult for the Conservative Party to influence the Labour government's EU policy.⁹⁴² A key advantage Eurosceptics had, however, was increasing public interest in, and opposition to, the EU in general and the single currency in particular. Given New Labour's particular attention to public opinion, Eurosceptics would foster and mobilise this opposition as much as possible. The Conservative Party's campaign against the adoption of the single currency was aided by the establishment of a number of extra-Parliamentary anti-Euro groups. Business for Sterling was launched in June 1998, with Dominic Cummings as campaign director. Cummings went on to become heavily influential in the Conservative Party and took a leading role in the official Vote Leave campaign at the 2016 referendum. Key supporters of the group were Tim Melville Ross, Director General of the Institute of Directors, Brian Prime, Executive Director of the Federation of Small Businesses, and Sir John Banham, former Director General of the CBI. In August 1998, the businessman and political donor, Paul Sykes, established the Euro Information Campaign. In January 1999, the Euro Information Campaign was merged with the Referendum Movement, the successor to the Referendum Party, to establish the Democracy Movement. In addition to coordinating their campaigns against the introduction of the single currency, extra-parliamentary actors worked directly with politicians. In March 1999, shortly before elections to the European Parliament, the New Europe movement was established. This non-partisan anti-Euro but pro-EU group brought together parliamentary actors from across the political spectrum with figures from the business and media worlds. The group was led by David Owen, a former Labour Foreign Secretary and one of the founders of SDP in 1981. In October 1999, Business for Sterling and New Europe launched an initiative to work together in their campaign against the Euro.⁹⁴³

The involvement of business actors in anti-Euro groups reflected a change in the typical positioning of this sector in the debate on European integration. Whereas business actors had mostly been supportive of, or quiet on, the UK's membership of the EEC at the time of the 1975 referendum, by the mid-1990s, such actors were increasingly vocal in expressing their concerns

⁹⁴¹ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, "Elections to the European Parliament – June 1999", *Research Paper 99/64*, House of Commons Library, 21 June 1999, p. 7 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp99-64/>>.

⁹⁴² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

about integration and about the single currency in particular.⁹⁴⁴ This change in attitude among the business community was of great importance to the Conservative Party. First, because it reinforced the anti-Euro arguments of Eurosceptic MPs. Second, because the Conservative Party is typically favoured by the business community, and it was important that the party's EU policy was seen to respond to the positions of key supporters and donors. Further, such business actors were important 'opinion leaders' for the Conservative Party, with the ability to influence supporter and public opinion.⁹⁴⁵

The Labour Party's campaign for the 1999 European Parliament elections was less overtly Europhile than might have been expected given the government's approach during its first two years in office. This can be explained by two factors. First, the government could not ignore growing Euroscepticism among the general public and the business community. Public support for EU membership fell to just 31 per cent in spring 1999, the lowest in the EU, and opposition rose to 23 per cent. Further, support for the Euro was just 28 per cent, while 55 per cent of the public were against the adoption of the single currency.⁹⁴⁶ Although the next general election was at least two years away, Young notes that the government sought to down-play the question of Euro membership so as not to undermine the possibility of winning a second term in office.⁹⁴⁷ Blair himself states: "Though my general posture was pro-European, I took care not to go beyond what was reasonable for British opinion."⁹⁴⁸ He was clearly aware of the limits the constraining dissensus among the UK public placed on this EU policy. Despite the government's markedly more positive and unified position on integration, it had not succeeded in altering public perceptions of the EU.⁹⁴⁹

Second, Chancellor Gordon Brown, who exercised a very influential role in the Cabinet, took an increasingly cautious approach to the single currency. He was held back principally by economic considerations.⁹⁵⁰ Lewis Moonie, who was a Labour MP during the Blair premiership, claimed during interview that Blair was keen to adopt the Euro, but it was Brown who held him back.⁹⁵¹ Yet Blair contends that his "disagreement with Gordon was that he was expressing himself negatively on the euro," with the former arguing "Even if we don't join and

⁹⁴⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁹⁴⁵ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁹⁴⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 51*, July 1999.

⁹⁴⁷ Hugo Young, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

⁹⁴⁸ Tony Blair, *A Journey*, *op. cit.*, p. 536.

⁹⁴⁹ Pauline Schnapper, "Le Royaume-Uni et l'Europe: Toujours un Malentendu?", *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁹⁵⁰ Carine Berberi, "La question de l'adoption de l'euro", in Agnès Alexandre-Collier, Bernard d'Hellencourt and Pauline Schnapper (eds.), *Le Royaume-Uni et l'Union Européenne depuis 1997*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁹⁵¹ Lewis Moonie, interview by telephone.

maybe especially if we don't, for reasons of diplomacy always sound positive."⁹⁵² Further, Brown's Eurosceptic economic advisor, Ed Balls, regularly gave anti-Euro briefings to economic journalists, contributing to the growth of public opposition to the Euro.⁹⁵³

The differences between Blair and Brown over the single currency risked aggravating the rivalry between the party's 'Blairites' and 'Brownites'. Further, historically, divisions within the Labour Party over the merits of EU membership have centred around national economic policy. The single currency issue therefore had the potential to reopen deep intra-party divides, despite relatively low levels of Euroscepticism within the party. Labour opponents of EMU, supported by key trade unionists, focused their criticism on the laissez-faire nature of the convergence criteria and maintenance mechanisms. These placed caps on public spending and contrasted with their preference for an interventionist economic policy.⁹⁵⁴ The likelihood that the public would reject the adoption of the single currency in a referendum served to strengthen the case of those who argued in favour of retaining the Pound Sterling.⁹⁵⁵

In these circumstances, the Labour Party focused on exploiting any remaining divisions within the Conservative Party over Europe. A Labour campaign poster for the 1999 European Parliament elections featured photographs of William Hague, Michael Heseltine, and Kenneth Clarke with the caption 'Speaking with one voice on Europe'. The Conservative Party's opposition to the single currency, and in particular its promise to rule out its adoption before 2008, was central to the opposition party's election campaign. Unlike at the 1994 European Parliament elections, the party was relatively united and thus more able to influence public opinion. Whereas the Labour Party had secured an outright victory at the 1994 European Parliament elections, it was the Conservative Party that won in 1999, winning 43 per cent of the vote and thirty-six seats. The Labour Party came second, winning 35 per cent of the vote and twenty-nine seats. Public support for UKIP had been growing since 1997 and the use of a more proportional electoral system for the first time worked to the marginal party's advantage. UKIP won 7 per cent of the popular vote and three seats.⁹⁵⁶ This was an important gain for UKIP as it was the first time it won a seat at the national level. Support for UKIP was higher

⁹⁵² Tony Blair, *A Journey*, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

⁹⁵³ Denis MacShane, *Brexit. How Britain will leave Europe*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2015, p. 94.

⁹⁵⁴ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

⁹⁵⁵ Pauline Schnapper, "Le Royaume-Uni et l'Europe: Toujours un Malentendu?", *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁹⁵⁶ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, "Elections to the European Parliament – June 1999", *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 18.

than average in the south-east and south-west of England, regions that are typically Conservative strongholds.⁹⁵⁷

That the Conservative Party won the European Parliament elections, markedly increasing its share of the vote and seats, validated Hague's radicalisation of the party's EU policy. Nonetheless, UKIP's strong result, particularly in Conservative strongholds in Southern England, was undoubtedly a cause for concern for many within the Conservative Party. Despite being more vocal and united in its Euroscepticism, the party had not managed to curb increasing support for UKIP. The relative success of UKIP therefore boosted Conservative opponents of the EU who called for the party to adopt an even harder position on Europe. Yet the turnout at the elections was just 24 per cent, reflecting low public interest in Europe issues.⁹⁵⁸ Given growing public opposition to integration, if the salience of the Europe issue and the turnout at European Parliament elections could be increased, the Conservative Party stood to make considerable political gains.

Following the European Parliament elections, Hague reshuffled his Shadow Cabinet. Particularly noticeable was the promotion of key 'new generation' Eurosceptics – hard Eurosceptics who had entered Parliament in 1992. Iain Duncan Smith was promoted to Shadow Defence Secretary and Liam Fox was promoted from Constitutional Affairs Spokesperson to Shadow Health Secretary.⁹⁵⁹ Bernard Jenkin moved to the frontbenches as Shadow Transport Secretary.⁹⁶⁰ The promotion of Duncan Smith, Fox, and Jenkin just seven years after their election to Parliament sent a clear signal to ambitious Conservative MPs that positioning openly as Eurosceptic could help advance their career. While Redwood retained his position within the Shadow Cabinet, Lilley, Howard, and Shephard, prominent Eurosceptics who had, nonetheless, remained loyal to Major, returned to the backbenches.

2.1.5. *A second election victory for Labour*

Despite rising public opposition to integration and its loss at the previous European Parliament elections, the Labour Party's manifesto for the 2001 general election promised to engage "fully" and "constructively" in Europe. It made clear the party's support for enlargement of the EU and for a "successful single currency". The manifesto committed the government to recommending,

⁹⁵⁷ European Parliament, "Results of the 1999 European elections" <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/resource/static/files/european_elections/http___www.europarl.org.uk_section_1999_1999-election-results.pdf>.

⁹⁵⁸ Richard Cracknell and Bryn Morgan, "Elections to the European Parliament – June 1999", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁹⁵⁹ UK Parliament, "Iain Duncan Smith: Parliamentary Career" *op. cit.*; UK Parliament, "Liam Fox: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/223/career>>.

⁹⁶⁰ UK Parliament, "Bernard Jenkin: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/40/career>>.

in the coming two years, whether the UK should adopt the single currency and thus trigger a referendum on the question.⁹⁶¹ The timing of a possible referendum was, however, unfavourable as the UK had enjoyed a prolonged period of economic growth outside EMU.⁹⁶² That the Labour Party presented itself as supportive of further integration and open, in principle, to the adoption of the single currency tends to confirm Gaxie's contention that politicians are unlikely to respond directly to public opinion on integration given that the public is, on the whole, disinterested and uninformed about Europe.⁹⁶³

In contrast, Hague made criticism of the EU a central theme of the party's election campaign, with the phrase 'In Europe, not run by Europe' becoming a key slogan. In particular, the Conservative Party pursued its well-publicised policy of ruling out the adoption of the Euro until the end of the coming Parliament, a policy which was vocally supported by Margaret Thatcher. In order to maintain the relative unity of the party's position on the EU, the party leadership went so far as to seek to ensure only Eurosceptic candidates were selected to run in the election.⁹⁶⁴ The Europe issue, and Euroscepticism in particular, was placed at the centre of the Conservative Party's campaign despite the apparent lack of public interest in the issue. This can be seen as an attempt to increase the salience of the Europe issue with a view to making political gains in a context of growing public opposition to integration. Mair's claim that "the parties that contest elections" would seek to "push [the Europe issue] to the shadows" seemed not longer to hold true for the Conservative Party.⁹⁶⁵

The Labour government was re-elected for a second term, conceding just five seats and thus retaining its strong majority. In contrast, the Conservative Party gained only one seat. Not only was the Labour Party not punished for its integrationist EU policy, the Conservative Party did not make any gains from seeking to increase the salience of the Europe issue and offering a policy more in keeping with public opinion. In fact, the Conservative Party received its lowest ever number of votes.⁹⁶⁶ Nick Kent, Ken Clarke's leadership campaign manager, suggested the party's "relentless and hysterical anti-European campaigning" had the effect opposite to that

⁹⁶¹ Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 2001" <<http://labourmanifesto.com/2001/2001-labour-manifesto.shtml>>.

⁹⁶² Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁹⁶³ Daniel Gaxie, "What we Know and do not Know About Citizens' Attitudes Towards Europe", *op. cit.*

⁹⁶⁴ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁹⁶⁵ Peter Mair, "Political Opposition and the European Union", *Government and Opposition*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2007, p. 12.

⁹⁶⁶ Lukas Audickas and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections", *op. cit.*, p. 14.

desired as insufficient attention was paid to the issues that most mattered to the electorate.⁹⁶⁷ Unsurprisingly given the electoral system, UKIP was unsuccessful in replicating its 1999 European Parliament election success at the national level, winning just 1.5 per cent of the popular vote and no seats in Parliament. However, although the Europe issue was not a key concern for voters at the 2001 general election, de Vries nonetheless shows that EU issue voting strongly impacted support for the Conservative and Labour Parties, with pro-EU voters again less likely to support the Conservative Party.⁹⁶⁸ The on-going importance of UK voters' attitudes on integration in determining the party they voted for indicated that parties would continue to pay close attention to public opinion on the Europe issue.

Given the extent of public Euroscepticism by 2001 – with support for membership having recently reached a low of just 25 per cent and opposition a high of 24 per cent - the outcome of the election reflects the fact that, at general elections, the Europe issue continued to be of limited importance to the voters.⁹⁶⁹ As Spiering observes, public Euroscepticism remained “passive”.⁹⁷⁰ This lack of interest, contended John Redwood, was due to a “conspiracy” between the main political parties to “not talk about Europe.” They sought to justify this by telling themselves that the public was “not interested in the EU” and did not feel affected by its actions.⁹⁷¹ It seemed, therefore, that so long as the Europe issue lacked importance in the minds of the electorate, Eurosceptic parties and individuals would not be successful in mobilising public opposition to the EU and single currency membership for their political gain. De Vries also shows that if a party is to take the most advantage of EU issue voting, it should seek to increase the salience of the issue, adopt a clear position that sets it apart from other parties, and should minimise intra-party dissent.⁹⁷² Despite the hard-Eurosceptic strategy of increasing the salience of the EU issue having borne little fruit for the Conservative Party at the 2001 general election, this strategy continued to hold potential for political gain.

Following the 2001 general election defeat, Hague resigned as leader of the Conservative Party. In selecting a new party leader, new rules, introduced in 1998, were applied for the first time. The reform of 1998 introduced a two-stage leadership election whereby Conservative MPs select two candidates who are then presented to party members. This reform

⁹⁶⁷ Nick Kent, “The party I joined was full of nice old people; today it is full of nasty old people”, *The Guardian* <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/dec/05/conservatives.uk2>>.

⁹⁶⁸ Catherine E. de Vries, “EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties Electoral Fortunes”, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

⁹⁶⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 53*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷⁰ Menno Spiering, “British Euroscepticism”, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁹⁷¹ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

⁹⁷² Menno Spiering, “British Euroscepticism”, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

would be of great consequence as it gave an important role to party members who tend to be more Eurosceptic than the Parliamentary Party. Five candidates sought the party leadership: Michael Portillo (who had been re-elected in 1999), Iain Duncan Smith, David Davis, Michael Ancram, and Kenneth Clarke. As at the 1997 leadership contest, all candidates were Eurosceptic except Clarke, who sought the party leadership for a second time. Clarke announced his candidature days after the others and addressed the Europe issue directly in his launch statement, suggesting his decision to run was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to steer the party away from its Eurosceptic course.⁹⁷³ Michael Portillo won the first and second rounds of the ballot, but was eliminated at the third round. It was Clarke and Duncan Smith who went through to the ballot of Conservative Party members, the latter enjoying the support of Margaret Thatcher. Despite Clarke having won the third ballot of Conservative MPs, party members elected Duncan Smith.⁹⁷⁴ That Clarke won the third round indicates that although the Parliamentary Party had become more united in its Euroscepticism, divisions over policy orientation, including the Europe issue, remained. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the final outcome of the leadership election showed an ongoing divide between the Parliamentary Party and its wider membership. Although MPs had become more Eurosceptic, party members were nonetheless more resolutely on the right and Eurosceptic. Given the change in the leadership election process, it henceforth became essential that ambitious Conservative MPs appeal both to the Parliamentary Party and members.

Like Hague, the Eurosceptic Duncan Smith had risen quickly through the party's ranks, becoming leader just nine years after his election to Parliament. However, unlike his predecessor, Duncan Smith had been a Maastricht rebel, taking the risk of voting against the government at the third reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill and at the motion of confidence of November 1992. Given that Duncan Smith had at times advocated the UK's withdrawal from the EU, his election as leader of the opposition reflected the further radicalisation of the Conservative Party on the Europe issue.⁹⁷⁵ Duncan Smith's Shadow Cabinet was predominantly Eurosceptic. His leadership rival, Michael Ancram, was appointed Deputy Leader of the party and Shadow Foreign Secretary, despite having only a limited amount of ministerial experience.⁹⁷⁶ David Davis, who became party Chairman, was appointed

⁹⁷³ Nick Kent, "The party I joined was full of nice old people; today it is full of nasty old people", *op. cit.*

⁹⁷⁴ Neil Johnston, "Leadership Elections: Conservative Party", *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁷⁵ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Le phénomène eurosceptique au sein du Parti Conservateur britannique", *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁹⁷⁶ UK Parliament, "Michael Ancram: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/259/career>>.

Minister without Portfolio.⁹⁷⁷ Michael Howard, who had left Hague's Shadow Cabinet in June 1999, was made Shadow Chancellor, and Bernard Jenkin was made Shadow Defence Secretary.⁹⁷⁸ Bill Cash, the vocal anti-EU campaigner, was made Shadow Attorney-General and, later, Shadow Foreign Secretary.⁹⁷⁹ Notably, neither Portillo, Lilley, nor Redwood were given positions within Duncan Smith's Shadow Cabinet. Dominic Cummings, the former campaign director of Business for Sterling, was appointed as Director of Strategy in 2002 and was charged with refining the party's strategy for blocking the adoption of the single currency.⁹⁸⁰ However, Duncan Smith resigned as party leader after just two years following a vote of no confidence in October 2003. Although he did not contest an election as party leader, given his hard Eurosceptic position, the very fact that Duncan Smith was leader marked a turning point for the Conservative Party.

2.2. *French politicians post-Maastricht*

As the TEU entered into force, President Mitterrand, in cohabitation with the RPR Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, was nearing the end of his second term in office. Mitterrand was succeeded by Jacques Chirac in 1995, much of whose first term as President was spent in cohabitation with the PS, with Lionel Jospin as Prime Minister. Cohabitation, and with it, consensus-building and convergence around the centre, were thus key features of the post-Maastricht period in France.⁹⁸¹

By the end of 1993, the French public's perception of the EU membership as a good thing stood at 55 per cent, considerably lower than three years earlier and also slightly lower than the EU average.⁹⁸² Support for membership fell slightly over the coming years and hovered around 50 per cent throughout the post-Maastricht period. Nonetheless, public support for EU membership was considerably higher than in the UK.

⁹⁷⁷ UK Parliament, "David Davis: Parliamentary Career" <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/david-davis/373>>.

⁹⁷⁸ UK Parliament, "Lord Howard: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*; UK Parliament, "Bernard Jenkin: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

⁹⁷⁹ UK Parliament, "William Cash: Parliamentary Career", <<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/sir-william-cash/288>>.

⁹⁸⁰ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997", *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹⁸¹ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁹⁸² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 40*, *op. cit.*

2.2.1. *Simmering intra-party divisions*

While the ratification of the TEU revealed intra-party divisions, both the PS and the RPR were successful in managing these: whereas the RPR convinced opponents of the Treaty to tow the party line following ratification, the PS externalised the leader of vocal opposition to the TEU. As a result, the Treaty did not have a fundamental or negative impact on the positions of French politicians on European integration. The success of parties in managing divisions is perhaps surprising given that a referendum was held, potentially boosting the influence of increasingly negative public opinion on divided parties. However, it might be exactly because a referendum was held, with its limited campaign period, that the debate and its associated divisions were contained. The containment of the debate was also facilitated by the fact that no single issue anti-TEU parties emerged as a result of the ratification of the Treaty. In contrast to the UK's UKIP and Referendum Party, Chevènement's MDC positioned itself on a wide range of issues.

During the second period of cohabitation, from 1993 to 1995, relations between President Mitterrand and the government of Edouard Balladur were much smoother than during the previous period of cohabitation when Chirac was Prime Minister. Relations between the President and the government were also smoother than they had been with previous PS governments. That the Balladur government sought to pursue the EU policy of the previous PS government certainly eased the relationship, and Mitterrand was much more inclined to leave EU policy decisions to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, Alain Juppé, whose views on integration were aligned with his own. The important role played by the government in the domain of foreign policy was also due to the fact that it enjoyed a strong majority in Parliament and the President was politically weakened as he approached the end of his second term.⁹⁸³ However, that Balladur's government pursued this integrationist EU policy angered Eurosceptics within the RPR who had opposed the TEU.⁹⁸⁴ This laid the ground for the resurfacing of intra-party divisions over the Europe issue.

The European Parliament elections held in June 1994 were the first opportunity for the public to directly voice its opinion on European integration following the ratification of the TEU. The PS list, *Europe solidaire* was headed by Michel Rocard. However, despite the departure of Chevènement from the PS, intra-party divisions over the EU came to the fore when Bernard Tapie presented a dissident socialist list, *Energie Radicale*. Tapie, a prominent businessman, was a PS *député* and had served for a short time as Minister for Cities in Bérégovoy's government. His was a federalist vision of European integration and he supported

⁹⁸³ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁹⁸⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 53.

substantially greater powers for the European Parliament as well as the direct election of an EU president. Tapie, like many within the PS, was concerned that enlargement of the EU would hinder its political development.⁹⁸⁵ Fundamentally, he enjoyed the support of Mitterrand, albeit discreet.⁹⁸⁶ Following the establishment of his MDC as a separate party, the European Parliament elections provided an opportunity for Jean-Pierre Chevènement to test electoral support by presenting a separate socialist list.⁹⁸⁷ The 1994 European Parliament election campaign served to highlight the fact that the PS had essentially split in three directions over the question of integration since the ratification of the TEU.

Given that Presidential elections were to take place the following year, the RPR was keen to contain internal divisions. The party also sought to avoid being considered Eurosceptic. As in 1984 and 1989, the RPR presented a joint list with the more Europhile UDF. However, in return for a promise that the UDF would support the RPR's candidate for President, the *Union UDF-RPR* list was headed by the Europhile UDF *député*, Dominique Baudis, and the RPR would be the junior partner in the alliance.⁹⁸⁸ In contrast to the PS, the UDF-RPR list supported a more intergovernmental approach and a limited increase in the powers of the European Parliament, coupled with an increase in national parliamentary oversight.⁹⁸⁹ Yet, despite the UDF being, on the whole the more Europhile and united party in the alliance, Philippe de Villiers, the party's leading opponent of the TEU, broke with the UDF to head a separate list, *Majorité pour l'Auture Europe*.⁹⁹⁰ While de Villiers, like many Eurosceptics on the right, opposed federalism, he also opposed the free market. His position thus had the potential to attract the support of voters on the right and the left. Fundamentally, he benefitted from the endorsement of the RPR heavyweight, Charles Pasqua, then Minister of State for the Interior. Pasqua's decision to back de Villiers, despite his own senior role in government, served to underscore ongoing divisions within the RPR and the Balladur government over the Europe issue. Pasqua's actions reflected anger among opponents of the TEU on the right of the party caused by government's pursuit of an integrationist EU policy in cohabitation with the PS President Mitterrand. It should also be recalled that this episode took place in the context of upcoming Presidential elections, a period when opinion leaders seek to influence the positions of

⁹⁸⁵ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁹⁸⁶ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁹⁸⁷ Gérard Grunberg, "Euroscepticism in France, 1992-2002", in Aleks Szerbiak and Paul Taggart (eds.), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism*, Volume 1, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁹⁸⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 77.

⁹⁹⁰ Gérard Grunberg, "Euroscepticism in France, 1992-2002", *op. cit.*, p. 45.

candidates, and that Pasqua was close to Balladur,⁹⁹¹ the frontrunner to become the RPR's candidate.

The UDF-RPR list won the elections, winning 25.6 per cent of the vote and twenty-eight of the eighty-seven seats. Yet, despite their show of unity in advance of the elections, MEPs elected from the UDF-RPR list sat in three different political groups in the European Parliament.⁹⁹² The alliance far outscored its nearest rivals, Rocard's *Europe solidaire* list, which won just 14.5 per cent of the vote and fifteen seats. The PS list suffered heavily due to its three-way split following the ratification of the TEU. That Mitterrand did not support his former Prime Minister undoubtedly also impacted the success of the PS list. In light of this disastrous result, Rocard resigned as First Secretary of the party to be succeeded by Henri Emmanuelli. De Villiers' and Tapie's dissident lists followed closely behind the PS list, winning 12.3 per cent and 12 per cent of the vote respectively, and thirteen seats each. Jean-Marie Le Pen's list came 5th, winning 10.5 per cent of the popular vote and eleven seats.⁹⁹³ However, his share of the vote declined compared to 1989 suggesting de Villiers attracted some support from FN voters. Tapie was also successful in drawing the support of voters who might have been tempted to vote for the FN.⁹⁹⁴ Chevènement's list won just 2.5 per cent of the vote and thus no seats.⁹⁹⁵ Following this disappointing outcome, Chevènement decided not to run at the Presidential elections the next year.⁹⁹⁶ Taken together, the anti-TEU lists of de Villiers, Le Pen, and Chevènement attracted over 35 per cent of the popular vote. This outcome stood in contrast to the UK, where, despite higher levels of opposition to EU membership, the more Europhile parties made gains at the elections. Coming less than two years after the 'petit oui' of the TEU referendum, the result of the elections was a blow to the pro-European political elite.⁹⁹⁷ Yet the result of the 1994 European Parliament elections in France should be interpreted more as a rejection of Mitterrand and the divided PS than the EU, just as the result in the UK was very much a rejection of the long-serving and divided Conservative Party.

In November 1994, buoyed by his success at the European Parliament elections, de Villiers left the UDF to establish the *Mouvement pour la France* (MPF) party.⁹⁹⁸ Following

⁹⁹¹ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

⁹⁹² Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁹⁹³ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1984", *op. cit.*

⁹⁹⁴ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁹⁹⁵ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1994", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-1994.htm>>.

⁹⁹⁶ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁹⁹⁷ Helen Drake and Susan Milner, "Change and resistance to change: the political management of Europeanisation in France", *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁹⁹⁸ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Chevènement's departure from the PS the year before, de Villiers' move provides a second example of a mainstream Europhile party externalising Euroscepticism. Charles de Courson, a long-standing UDF/Union des démocrates et indépendants (UDI) *député* noted that, not only did the departure of de Villiers not cause any upheaval within the UDF, his departure probably served to unite the party.⁹⁹⁹ De Villiers' MPF campaigned for a looser form of cooperation between European states that would not undermine the sovereignty of the French state.¹⁰⁰⁰ However, although he was re-elected to the European Parliament three times, he was unsuccessful in translating his European Parliament victories into national victories when he ran at the 1995 and 2007 Presidential elections. Hainsworth et al offer explanations for this phenomenon.¹⁰⁰¹ First, as European Parliament elections are viewed by most as second-order elections, voters are more prepared to take a risk by voting for non-mainstream parties. Second, de Villiers' success in 1994 came in the context of a new 'political opportunity structure'. Kitschelt contends that such a political opportunity structure can emerge when mainstream parties position themselves around the centre and allow for an opening along the political spectrum.¹⁰⁰² This was the case with the Europe issue at the time, with all mainstream parties having officially supported the ratification of the TEU. The Europe issue was not considered important enough, however, for the political opportunity to present itself at first-order elections. Third, and this is specific to de Villiers, his marginal position was legitimised by the endorsement he received from Charles Pasqua. A comparison can be made with the success of the UK's Conservative Party at the 1999 European Parliament elections followed by its drastic defeat at the 2001 general election. Despite both the MDF and the Conservative Party presenting an EU policy in keeping with public opinion, their political gain was limited to second rate European Parliament elections.

2.2.2. *The first Chirac Presidency*

By the time of the 1995 Presidential elections, divisions within the PS had subsided somewhat and were less notable than among parties on the centre-right.¹⁰⁰³ For the first time the party held a primary in order to select its candidate for the Presidential election, thus strengthening the voice of PS members. Henri Emmanuelli, the PS First Secretary, faced Lionel Jospin, with the latter selected as the party's candidate. That Emmanuelli enjoyed the support of Laurent Fabius,

⁹⁹⁹ Charles de Courson, interview by telephone, 1 June 2016.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰¹ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰² Herbert Kitschelt, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁰³ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

highlighted the on-going rivalry between Fabius and Jospin. The primary process undoubtedly helped to legitimise Jospin's candidacy and to unite the PS around him. In contrast, and in a sign of divisions on the centre-right, there were two RPR candidates for the Presidency: the incumbent Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, and Jacques Chirac, President of the RPR and Mayor of Paris. The popular Prime Minister enjoyed the support of both the RPR and the UDF, as per the parties' agreement in advance of the 1994 European Parliament elections. Notably, Balladur enjoyed the support of Charles Pasqua, to whom he was close.¹⁰⁰⁴ Chirac caused surprise by entering the race, yet he enjoyed strong support from within the RPR. Philippe Séguin, who had been President of the National Assembly since 1993 and thus was heavily influential, was a key advisor to Chirac during his campaign.¹⁰⁰⁵ Séguin's role reflected his closeness, and loyalty, to Chirac. Many consider him to have been pivotal in ensuring Chirac's election and, as such, he expected to reap a reward beyond that which he was offered by Balladur following the 1993 legislative elections.¹⁰⁰⁶

By the mid-1990s, the Europe issue had become a key theme of French political debate and politicians paid increasing attention to the need to address the concerns of the electorate in this domain.¹⁰⁰⁷ At the time of the Presidential elections, 14 per cent of the electorate considered Europe integration to be the most important issue.¹⁰⁰⁸ However, the Europe question was not a key feature of the Presidential campaign, which was partly due to efforts by Balladur and Chirac to avoid exposing divisions within the RPR and among their supporters. That de Villiers did not pose any serious threat meant they need not respond to his anti-EU positions.¹⁰⁰⁹ The relative silence on the Europe issue on the centre-right meant that Jospin came across as the pro-Europe candidate. The key issue of the election was the increasing social divide. Although not directly linked to the Europe issue, some associated the social divide with integration. Despite his support for the TEU and EMU, Chirac contributed to this perception by indirectly suggesting that the economic and social situation facing France was linked to measures originating at the EU level. His campaign promises of public spending were not in keeping with France's commitment to cut its debt and deficit.¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰⁴ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Michaël Gaumnitz, "Philippe Séguin, la politique au corps", *op. cit.*'

¹⁰⁰⁷ Alain Guyomarch, "The European dynamics of evolving party competition in France", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 48, no. 1, 1995.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Richard Nadeau, Eric Belanger, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Bruno Cautrès, and Martial Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁰¹⁰ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

Jospin won the first round of the elections, aided by the fact that the centre-right vote was split between two candidates, and went on to face Chirac in the second round. Despite his popular support having fallen slightly at the previous year's European Parliament elections, Jean-Marie Le Pen maintained his 1988 Presidential elections result to win 15 per cent of the popular vote in the first round.¹⁰¹¹ Had de Villiers not been a candidate at the 1995 Presidential elections, support for Le Pen would likely have been higher. Chirac went on to win the second round of the Presidential elections, and he appointed Alain Juppé as Prime Minister, who composed a government drawn from the RPR and the UDF. This was to the disappointment of Séguin, who had hoped to be made Prime Minister in light of his key role in ensuring Chirac's election.¹⁰¹²

It should be recalled that Chirac was not an instinctive Europhile, but rather a convert to European integration.¹⁰¹³ His position had evolved considerably since his *Appel de Cochin* of December 1978 in which he opposed further supranationalism and defended national sovereignty. Chirac's position had evolved, in line with growing public support for integration, to the point where he supported, albeit unenthusiastically, the TEU and EMU in the face of strong opposition from within the RPR. Nonetheless, Europe was not a priority for Chirac and ambiguities in his EU policy were clear as he entered office. In particular, in contrast to his election promise, Chirac, along with his Prime Minister Alain Juppé, was willing to implement severe spending cuts so as to meet the Maastricht criteria on schedule.¹⁰¹⁴

These spending cuts met with considerable political and public opposition, and contributed to the social unrest that began during Chirac's first year in office as President. The extent of the unrest led Chirac, on the advice of Juppé, to dissolve Parliament and hold legislative elections one year earlier than expected. Their reasoning was that a win for the RPR-UDF list, to be led by the Prime Minister, would provide the government with the necessary legitimacy to pursue its unpopular reforms. This move seemed unnecessary and risky to some, given that the RPR group in the National Assembly held a solid relative majority. However, in holding early elections, Chirac also hoped to undermine the influence of his rival Edouard Balladur and diminish the sway of Philippe Séguin.¹⁰¹⁵ Although Séguin remained loyal to Chirac as President, the former opposed the Treaty of Amsterdam, the negotiation of which was

¹⁰¹¹ Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 1995", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/election-presidentielle-1995.htm>>.

¹⁰¹² Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 96; Jean-Philippe Tanguy, interview by telephone.

¹⁰¹³ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁰¹⁴ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰¹⁵ Jean-Louis Debré, *Tu le raconteras plus tard*, Robert Laffront, Paris, 2017.

underway.¹⁰¹⁶ In fact, some believed Séguin was positioning himself to contest the 2002 Presidential elections.

In an attempt to avoid a repeat of the disastrous legislative elections of 1993, the PS sought to present a united front by joining forces with other parties on the left. Jospin led the *Gauche plurielle* list, which included Chevènement's MDC. Despite the presence of Chevènement, Jospin advanced his pro-Europe credentials as he had done at the 1995 Presidential elections.¹⁰¹⁷ Yet, while the PS supported the adoption of the Euro, it distinguished itself from the RPR in calling for increased public spending and political controls over monetary policy. However, the PS was not without divisions on the Europe issue. Having campaigned for a 'yes' vote at the 1992 referendum, Jean-Luc Mélenchon opposed the Treaty of Amsterdam under negotiation. His *Gauche Socialiste* movement within the PS advanced an alternative EU policy, advocating a renegotiation of the TEU.¹⁰¹⁸ This marked a change in Mélenchon's positioning on the EU and signalled the pivotal role in opposing the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. Fabius and Emmanuelli also expressed concerns about the Treaty of Amsterdam before its ratification.

Chirac's risky strategy of holding early elections to reinforce the government's authority backfired. The elections resulted in a clear shift in popular support from the centre-right to the left, with the *Gauche plurielle* winning a resounding victory. The list won 312 seats, with the PS itself increasing its seats from fifty-seven to 250 in the National Assembly. The RPR lost almost half of its seats, falling from 257 to 140 seats. The UDF, too, lost many seats, falling from 215 to 113 seats.¹⁰¹⁹ Jospin was appointed Prime Minister, beginning the third period of cohabitation of the 5th Republic, which would endure until the 2002 legislative elections.

This third period of cohabitation was more harmonious than the two before it. This was partly because it began early in the Presidential term and so the electoral ambitions of Chirac and Jospin did not immediately come to the fore. Also, while the President was more focused on foreign policy, the Prime Minister concentrated on domestic affairs.¹⁰²⁰ Nonetheless, the Europe issue was a cause of some tension between Chirac and Jospin, with the former seeking to meet the Maastricht criteria on time and the latter opposing cuts in public spending. There

¹⁰¹⁶ Jean-Philippe Tanguy, interview by telephone.

¹⁰¹⁷ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁰¹⁸ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

¹⁰¹⁹ Laurent de Boissieu, "Assemblée nationale 1997", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/assemblee-nationale-1997.htm>>.

¹⁰²⁰ Frédéric Bozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237.

were divisions, too, within the government.¹⁰²¹ Jospin's pluralist left government included ministers from the far-left, including the PRG, MDC and PCF. Among them were a number of Eurosceptics, notably Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who was made Minister for the Interior. This Euroscepticism was contained, however, partly because of the demands of government discipline and partly because it was believed that taking a Eurosceptic stance would be unpopular with the public. While support for membership was falling, support for integration was higher among PS voters, who had voted overwhelmingly in support of the ratification of the TEU. However, as trade unions increasingly associated the EU with domestic problems such as employment, Eurosceptic mobilisation increased within the party and pressure mounted on the government to demand greater protections of workers' rights.¹⁰²² As a result, the PS government insisted upon the inclusion of an Employment Chapter in the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in October 1997.¹⁰²³

In opposition, divisions within the RPR over the Europe issue resurfaced. Séguin had finally succeeded Juppé as Président of the RPR but was disappointed by Chirac's lack of recognition of him. Having remained loyal to Chirac since 1993, Séguin once again joined forces with Pasqua to lead opposition to the signature of the Treaty of Amsterdam in October 1997.¹⁰²⁴ However, the anti-Amsterdam campaign only gained the support of 18 RPR *députés*, 25 per cent of the Parliamentary Party.¹⁰²⁵ This was considerably less than the proportion of RPR *députés* that had opposed the TEU. Séguin ultimately backed down and voted in support of the ratification of the Treaty.¹⁰²⁶ Pasqua, on the other hand, pursued his opposition to ratification.¹⁰²⁷ However, with a solid majority in the National Assembly, the government could be sure of ratifying the Treaty despite opposition. Jospin's popularity in the eyes of the public, which rarely fell below 60 per cent, encouraged unity within the PS.¹⁰²⁸

Séguin again entered into conflict with Chirac in spring 1998 when the former, with the support of Nicolas Sarkozy, RPR Secretary General, attempted to have RPR *députés* oppose a resolution on the adoption of the Euro. This act was interpreted as a challenge to Chirac's

¹⁰²¹ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁰²² Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁰²³ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

¹⁰²⁴ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰²⁵ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁰²⁷ Christian Lequesne and Olivier Rozenberg, "La ratification du Traité d'Amsterdam par la France: Une politisation paradoxale", AFRI, vol. 1, 2000.

¹⁰²⁸ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

leadership and marked the beginning of the end of Séguin's political career.¹⁰²⁹ Throughout this period, the public's perception of EU membership as a good thing continued to decline, falling below, and hovering around, 50 per cent from late 1996.¹⁰³⁰ This would serve to bolster Eurosceptics both within the governing alliance and the opposition, particularly in advance of the 1999 European Parliament elections.

Having presented a joint list at the three previous European Parliament elections, the RPR and the UDF presented separate lists in 1999. This move reflected divisions between the two parties, but notably within the RPR itself. As head of the RPR list, Philippe Séguin attempted without success to push the party towards adopting a more Eurosceptic position in advance of the elections.¹⁰³¹ Frustrated by his inability to influence the party's EU policy and fearful of the consequences this could have for the election's outcome, Séguin resigned as lead candidate and as President of the RPR in April 1999. He was succeeded by Nicolas Sarkozy as head of the *Union pour l'Europe* list just weeks before the June election.

Following his opposition to the ratification of the Treaty of Amsterdam, Pasqua broke with the RPR to present a joint list with Philippe de Villiers, whose candidature he had supported at the 1994 European Parliament elections.¹⁰³² This move could be viewed as an externalisation of Pasqua, who had been unsuccessful in changing the RPR's EU policy. Yet, he joined the RPR's successor party at its founding in 2002. Their *Rassemblement pour la France et l'indépendance de l'Europe* (RPFIE) list focused on the defence of national sovereignty and opposition to the free market, echoing much of Chevènement's criticism of the EU.¹⁰³³ Pasqua and de Villiers enjoyed the support of Nicholas Dupont-Aignan, a long-time and close associate of Séguin. Elected to the National Assembly in 1997, Dupont-Aignan had established the *Débout la République* (DLP) group within the RPR in February 1999 to call for a renewed emphasis on Gaullist principles, in particular national sovereignty.¹⁰³⁴

In contrast to parties on the centre-right, the left presented a united front, with their *Construisons notre Europe* list bringing together the PS, the MDC, and the PRG.¹⁰³⁵ The list was led by François Hollande, who had succeeded Jospin as First Secretary of the PS in 1997. Hollande was the first PS First Secretary to be elected by party members, following reforms

¹⁰²⁹ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-241.

¹⁰³⁰ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 45*, November 1996.

¹⁰³¹ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁰³² Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁰³³ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁰³⁴ Jean-Philippe Tanguy, interview by telephone.

¹⁰³⁵ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 61.

introduced by Jospin, which boosted his legitimacy in the eyes of supporters and changed the nature of competition for this key leadership role.

Unity on the left helped to ensure a victory for the PS list, which won 22 per cent of the vote. As at the 1997 legislative elections, a pluralist left list attracted greater public support. The PS' success was also due, in part, to divisions on the right. Pasqua and De Villiers' list came second, winning 13 per cent of the vote and thirteen seats. Divided and without its UDF allies, the RPR list won just 12.8 per cent of the vote and twelve seats. That the Eurosceptic RPFIE list won more seats than that of the RPR served as a stark lesson in the consequences of intra-party divisions. Also, had the RPR and UDF presented a joint list, as they had done at the three previous elections to the European Parliament, they might have combined their respective scores to win the election. The strong result for the RPFIE coincided with a decline in support for the FN, which won only 5.7 per cent of the vote.¹⁰³⁶ The FN was heavily divided at the time, which further aided the RPFIE in attracting the Eurosceptic vote.¹⁰³⁷

Beset by internal divisions, the nationalist and sovereignist movement within the RPR gained ground.¹⁰³⁸ Pasqua and de Villiers, like the UK Conservative Party's William Hague, considered their electoral success at the 1999 European Parliament elections to be a clear sign that the public wanted their politicians to adopt a more Eurosceptic position. Pasqua and de Villiers sought to build on their success by establishing a new party, the *Rassemblement pour la France* (RPF), later in 1999 with a view to contesting elections at the national level and pursuing de Gaulle's legacy.¹⁰³⁹ Dupont-Aignan briefly left the RPR to join the RPF. However, their collaboration was short-lived, with de Villiers resigning in 2000 to relaunch his MPF, established following the 1994 European Parliament elections, and Dupont-Aignan sitting as an independent *député* before joining the UMP at its founding in 2002.¹⁰⁴⁰ These movements reflected difficulties among Eurosceptics in agreeing upon a common programme, but also reflected leadership rivalries among the key players.

2.2.3. *The shock of the 2002 Presidential elections*

By the late 1990s, although the pro-integration consensus among mainstream French political parties was still present, diverging positions were increasingly visible. The consensus among

¹⁰³⁶ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 1999", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-1999.htm>>.

¹⁰³⁷ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁰³⁸ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁰³⁹ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

politicians was less solid than before, as was public support for EU membership. Typically, a reduction in political consensus on the Europe issue, especially within parties, serves to increase the influence of public opinion on the position of politicians.¹⁰⁴¹ In the context of reduced public support for EU membership, politicians undoubtedly paid more attention to public opinion on the Europe issue in advance of the 2002 Presidential elections.

Both Chirac and Jospin were candidates at the 2002 Presidential elections and both scored well in opinion polls: the public considered the period of cohabitation to have been a success. In contrast to 1995 Presidential elections, no primary took place within the PS to select the party's candidate, rather Jospin emerged as the natural choice. Jospin sought to appeal to the centre ground so as to capitalise on his success and popularity as Prime Minister. However, as Chirac also sought to appeal to the centre ground, the electorate found little to distinguish between the two incumbents. The contest therefore focused more on the characters of the candidates than their respective policies.¹⁰⁴²

Jospin's move to the centre angered some within the PS. Although a majority of the party supported his centre-left positioning, a strong and increasingly vocal minority opposed it. Mélenchon played an increasingly prominent role in leading this opposition. Further, the Europe issue was an on-going source of divisions on the left, especially in the context of the recent introduction of the single currency and the transfer of monetary policy-making to the EU level.¹⁰⁴³ As a result, the unity seen at the previous European and legislative elections collapsed and Jospin faced a number of competitors from the left at the first round of the Presidential elections, notably Chevènement. In contrast to the PS, and also to the Presidential elections of 1995, the RPR and the centre-right in general, remained united. Unity on the right was facilitated by the decision of Philippe de Villiers not to stand, despite his success at the 1999 European Parliament elections and his subsequent return to the National Assembly. However, de Villiers' absence limited the division of the Eurosceptic vote, which was to the advantage of both Chevènement and Le Pen.¹⁰⁴⁴

Chirac and Jospin sought to neutralise the Europe issue and avoid having it become a feature of the left-right cleavage. As a result, the issue was left to Eurosceptic politicians, and especially those on the far-right, to debate.¹⁰⁴⁵ Rather, crime and insecurity were the key themes

¹⁰⁴¹ Marco R. Steenbergen, Erica E. Edwards and Catherine E. de Vries, "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴² David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁰⁴³ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Mathias Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-49.

of the 2002 Presidential elections. While crime and insecurity, like the social divide that dominated the previous Presidential elections, were not directly linked to EU membership, Eurosceptics sought to associate the issues. Notably, in the context of the up-coming accession of Central and Eastern European states to the EU, the link was made between integration and insecurity, and, in particular, enlargement and the resultant immigration. Although almost three-quarters of the French public supported the up-coming enlargement, the majority of those supporters lacked enthusiasm.¹⁰⁴⁶ Notably, 34 per cent of the public believed that Turkey would join the EU in 2004.¹⁰⁴⁷ The FN directly linked the issues of insecurity and integration, and Le Pen went so far as to call, in April 2002, for a referendum on the withdrawal of France from the EU and the reintroduction of the Franc.¹⁰⁴⁸ In contrast, and perhaps to its detriment, the left sought to limit discussion of insecurity in an attempt to avoid legitimising, what it considered to be, xenophobic discourse.¹⁰⁴⁹

The turnout at the first round of the elections was the lowest of the 5th Republic, with moderate voters seemingly presuming Chirac and Jospin would both make it through to the second round. Chirac won the first round but, attracted just 19.9 per cent of the vote. Unexpectedly, it was Le Pen and not Jospin who came second. Le Pen won 17 per cent of the vote whereas Jospin won just 16.2 per cent.¹⁰⁵⁰ Although Le Pen had increased his popular support since the 1988 and 1995 Presidential elections (14.4 per cent and 15 per cent respectively), it was ultimately the fracture of the left that allowed him to achieve second place. The first round saw a record level of support – 42.5 per cent in all – for marginal parties on the far-right and the far-left, and for Eurosceptic parties in particular.¹⁰⁵¹ The far-right won 23.4 per cent of the vote and the far-left won just over 19 per cent.¹⁰⁵² Le Pen's focus on insecurity and immigration attracted voters. While some might have voted for Le Pen without necessarily sharing his views on European integration, many did share his Euroscepticism. In fact, Grunberg shows a strong correlation between Euroscepticism among voters and support for Eurosceptic parties, especially among hard Eurosceptics.¹⁰⁵³

¹⁰⁴⁶ European Commission, *Flash Eurobarometer 132/1*, September 2002, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁴⁹ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 2002", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/election-presidentielle-2002.htm>>.

¹⁰⁵¹ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵² Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 2002", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵³ Gérard Grunberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

At the second round, Chirac enjoyed the support of a *Front républicain*, which included voters on the centre- and far-left, to secure 82.2 per cent of the vote.¹⁰⁵⁴ Chirac's resounding victory reflected the perception among a strong majority of the public that Le Pen and the FN were not fit to govern. However, as many voters had supported Chirac only so as to block Le Pen, the President's legitimacy and authority were undermined. Moving forward, Chirac would have to pay close attention to the concerns of those who had voted for him to oppose the FN rather than in support of his programme. With the Convention on the Future of Europe getting underway, these concerns would influence the French position.

2.2.4. *The second Chirac Presidency*

In light of the result of the Presidential elections, the RPR took steps to ensure a Parliamentary majority for the President at up-coming legislative elections. To this end, the *Union pour la majorité présidentielle* (UMP) was established in April 2002, between the first and second rounds of the Presidential elections. The UMP constituted an umbrella alliance of parties and individuals on the centre-right, led by the RPR, which was absorbed by the alliance. The rallying of parties caused the collapse of the UDF, as members left to join the UMP.¹⁰⁵⁵ Due to its membership and the hasty manner in which it was established, the UMP brought together a wide range of views, including on European integration. Buffetot and Hanley claim that the creation of the UMP allowed the former RPR to dominate the right, and deprived sovereignists of their "blackmail potential."¹⁰⁵⁶ Séguin opposed the creation of the UMP, which he did not consider to be a Gaullist grouping. He refused to join the party and retired from politics later in 2002.

The UMP alliance won the subsequent legislative elections and, with 398 seats, was the first group on the right to win a majority of seats in the National Assembly since the time of the Gaullist UDR of 1968-73. Parties on the right that had chosen not to join the UMP alliance fared badly: notably, Pasqua's RPF and De Villiers' MPF received only a fraction of the popular vote. The PS lost a large number of seats and several high-profile members were among those who lost their seats in the National Assembly. The FN did less well than expected given their presence in the second round of the Presidential elections, winning no seats in the National

¹⁰⁵⁴ Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 2002", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵⁵ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Patrice Buffetot and David Hanley, "The normalization of French politics? The elections of 2002", *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, p. 142, cited in Helen Drake, "Jacques Chirac's Balancing Acts: the French Right and Europe", *op. cit.*, p. 305.

Assembly.¹⁰⁵⁷ The UMP achieved its objective of ensuring a Parliamentary majority for the President. It also succeeded, for the time-being, in concealing divisions on the right.

Chirac appointed Jean-Pierre Raffarin, formerly of the UDF, as Prime Minister. The majority of government ministers were formerly of the RPR, and key allies of Chirac were given important roles, meaning there was strong potential for government unity despite the breadth of membership of the UMP.¹⁰⁵⁸ Despite the low level of support for the FN at the second round of the legislative elections, Chirac and Raffarin heeded the concerns about insecurity expressed by voters during the Presidential election campaign and made the issue a key priority of the government.¹⁰⁵⁹ In doing so, the government legitimised, to a certain extent, Le Pen's campaign claims. Chirac and his government also considered delaying their objective of balancing the national budget by 2004, in line with EU rules, but eventually decided to pursue their target.¹⁰⁶⁰ This hesitation gave greater credibility to claims by opponents of the Euro that fulfilment of the convergence criteria was not in the national interest.

In November 2002, the *Union pour la majorité présidentielle* electoral alliance was transformed into a political party, the *Union pour un mouvement populaire* (UMP). Whereas Pasqua's RPF had refused to join the UMP electoral alliance, it joined the party upon its founding. Dupont-Aignan, who had left the RPR in 1999 to join the RPF before sitting as an independent, also joined the UMP. Together, Pasqua and Dupont-Aignan led an influential Eurosceptic wing within the new party. As a candidate for the party's leadership in November 2002, Dupont-Aignan's candidacy won 14.91 per cent of the vote.¹⁰⁶¹ This score indicates his sovereignist Eurosceptic positions enjoyed considerable support within the party. The newly established UMP was a broad church party in which it could prove difficult to silence dissidents such as Pasqua and Dupont-Aignan.

In opposition following the legislative elections, and with less than 25 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly, the PS was very much weakened. Following Jospin's resignation as Prime Minister, a number of party figures competed to succeed him as leader. The leading candidates were the incumbent First Secretary, François Hollande, Henri Emmanuelli, Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Laurent Fabius.¹⁰⁶² Hollande was re-elected as First Secretary, serving until 2008. Emmanuelli had hoped, as leader, to move the PS to the left. In

¹⁰⁵⁷ David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁶¹ Florence Haegel *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶² David Howarth and Georgios Varouxakis, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

September 2002, along with Jean-Luc Mélenchon, he established a new far-left faction called *Nouveau Monde*. Not only did *Nouveau Monde* seek to move the PS to the left, it adopted positions critical of the trajectory of European integration. Particular concerns were voiced about future enlargement of the EU. While Emmanuelli and Mélenchon did not oppose enlargement per se, they were concerned about the consequences for the political development of the EU of increasing membership. Further enlargement, they argued, could not take place without fundamental reform of the EU's institutions.¹⁰⁶³ Attempts by Emmanuelli and Mélenchon to bring change to the PS EU policy came around the opening of the Convention on the Future of Europe, at which institutional reform would be discussed. However, their moves also took place in a context of a sharp decline in public support for integration to just 44 per cent.¹⁰⁶⁴ It is also of note that *Nouveau Monde* was established shortly after Chevènement, who had sat in the National Assembly almost continually since 1973, lost his seat at the 2002 legislative elections.

In studying the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the ten-year period following the ratification and entry into force of the Treaty on European Union, this second sub-chapter has highlighted similarities and differences in positions and their consequences in the UK and France. While in both the UK and France parties revealed internal divisions over the TEU, parties responded differently to these divisions. In France, both the RPR and the PS successfully managed divisions over the TEU in the immediate aftermath of the Treaty's entry into force, either by inciting opponents of the Treaty to tow the party line (Séguin, Pasqua) or by externalising them (Chevènement). The practice of externalising opponents of the Treaty expanded as Chirac's position on integration evolved to be more openly supportive. This resulted in Pasqua and Dupont-Aignan leaving the RPR, before joining the UMP. While Eurosceptics made gains at European Parliament elections, their positions did not result in political gains at national elections or in terms of progression through the party hierarchy. It was made clear that Euroscepticism did not have its place in either the RPR or the PS.

In contrast, in the UK the Conservative Party did not succeed in having rebels tow the party line, but neither did it externalise them; rather, Euroscepticism was internalised. The number of Conservative MPs positioning as Eurosceptic grew and their Euroscepticism

¹⁰⁶³ Susan Milner, "For an Alternative Europe: Euroscepticism and the French Left Since the Maastricht Treaty", *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁶⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60*, December 2003.

hardened. Further, and in stark contrast to either the RPR or the PS, positioning as Eurosceptic became less of an impediment to climbing the party's ranks. In the final years of Major's premiership, certain vocal Eurosceptics were promoted, albeit in an attempt to maintain party unity. That hitherto neutral or even Europhile Conservative MPs adopted Eurosceptic positions, suggests strategy played a role in shaping ideology even before Major left office. The change of leadership in 1997 saw a drastic change in Conservative Party EU policy. Under Hague's leadership, positioning as Eurosceptic was no impediment to career advancement, and under the leadership of Duncan Smith, Maastricht rebels and Euro-rejects held some of the highest positions in the Shadow Cabinet. In fact, from 2001, *not* positioning as Eurosceptic appeared to impede individuals from advancing through the party's ranks. As the Conservatives' EU policy hardened, the party sought to increase the salience of the Europe issue in an attempt to make electoral gains in a context of growing public opposition to integration. Yet, despite public opinion, the party did not succeed in attracting substantial support due to its EU policy. The Conservative Party's increasingly vocal Euroscepticism did, however, have an impact on the positioning of the Labour Party on the Europe issue, and on the single currency in particular. Despite its strong parliamentary majority, the Europhile government was forced to tone-down its pro-EU discourse.

Conclusion

The Treaty on European Union marked a key step in the process of European integration, establishing the European Union, strengthening its institutional and policy-making mechanisms, and providing new rights for citizens. However, the Treaty was not welcomed by all. Public support for membership of the EC peaked shortly before or as negotiations began, and then fell as the process of ratification got underway and the salience of the Europe issue grew. Europe's politicians had, it seems, misjudged the public's response to the Treaty.¹⁰⁶⁵ The entry into force of the TEU marked the end of the permissive consensus, which resulted in more attention being paid to public opinion on European integration, an increase in the electoral importance of the Europe issue, and, in some states, the growth of political Euroscepticism. While there was consensus *between* the two main parties in both the UK and France in favour of ratification, there were divisions *within* those parties over the Treaty. The depth of divisions

¹⁰⁶⁵ Clifford Carrubba, "The Electoral Connection in European Union Politics", *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 63, no. 1, 2001.

varied and, in some instances, posed great challenges for the party leadership. What stands out in studying the main parties of the UK and France, is the nature and duration of these divisions, the motivations of politicians in positioning themselves, the ways in which parties dealt with them, and their consequences for the careers of the actors concerned.

In the UK, the Treaty on European Union marked a key juncture in the evolution of positions on European integration among politicians, more so than in France and possibly in any other member state. Although the level of support for integration among MPs evolved considerably over time, the signing and ratification of the TEU was a key driver of changing attitudes. On the whole, the attitudes of UK politicians became more negative, and the TEU was a particularly important factor in this. For politicians sceptical of the process or outcomes of European integration, the TEU was a step too far. For them, the EU established by the TEU was far from what the UK had signed up to in 1973. For some, even, the TEU was proof that the UK's politicians and public had been misled or deceived in 1973. The ratification of the TEU served both to reinforce and encourage Euroscepticism among politicians.¹⁰⁶⁶

For the Labour Party, which had abandoned its opposition to EC membership in the mid-1980s, the signing and ratification of the TEU was not a source of problematic divisions, even though there was a small number of opponents within the party. In fact, the hysteria around the TEU was confined to the Conservative Party. For the Conservative Party the changes brought about by the TEU went right to the heart of Conservatism, as they were expected to impact national sovereignty, prosperity and security.¹⁰⁶⁷ More specifically, Thatcherites considered integration, as provided for by the TEU, to be incompatible with the pursuit of Thatcher's liberal economic policies. Although Eurosceptic sentiment had been present and increasingly vocal within the Conservative Party since the late 1980s, in the eighteen months following the signature of the TEU the number of Conservative MPs who voted in opposition to the government increased six-fold, rising from seven to forty-two. The Maastricht rebels, whose attachment to their cause often surpassed party loyalties, could not be tamed by the traditional means of party discipline. This was particularly so given the government's slim majority, which rebels used to their strategic advantage. Although there were not many Eurosceptics in Major's Cabinet at the time, Eurosceptic backbenchers were highly organized and established a number of groups which served to maximize their influence. As rebels increased in number and determination, they prolonged the process of ratification. Their actions

¹⁰⁶⁶ Paul Taggart, "A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶⁷ Anthony Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

had considerable consequences for the government's EU policy and posed a serious threat to Major's leadership. The Maastricht rebellion coincided with, and undoubtedly served to accelerate, growing public opposition to EU membership. The divide that the Maastricht rebellion created within the party has been compared to that caused by the repeal of the Corn Laws in the 1840s and the tariff reform of the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁶⁸ The crisis around the ratification of the TEU in the UK not only damaged the Conservative Party's unity, it also had profound consequences for the UK's relationship with the EU. According to John Redwood, the TEU was a "watershed moment" in the UK's relationship with the EU.¹⁰⁶⁹

The divide within the Conservative Party revealed by the ratification of the TEU did not subside once the Treaty entered into force. Rather, the number of Conservative MPs identifying as Eurosceptic only increased, and in a number of cases strategic considerations appeared to influence ideological positioning. The number of Eurosceptics in Major's Cabinet grew with each reshuffle, his authority increasingly undermined until he was forced to resign to put an end to challenges to his leadership. Despite Major's re-election as party leader, positioning as Eurosceptic was much less an impediment to career advancement thereafter. Once in opposition, the Conservative Party elected the Eurosceptic William Hague as leader, who in turn was succeeded by the anti-EU Iain Duncan Smith. Both composed Shadow Cabinets which were predominantly Eurosceptic. Post-Maastricht and post-Major, being Eurosceptic appeared to be a prerequisite in order to advance through the party's ranks. This was all the more important given the role of the party's typically Eurosceptic members in electing the party leader from 1998.

The growing Euroscepticism of the Conservative Party took place in the context of growing public opposition to EU membership and the single currency, and the recent launch of two anti-EU parties. There was, therefore, potential for political gain, or loss, around the Europe issue. Yet the Conservative Party suffered heavy defeats at the 1997 and 2001 general elections, whereas the more Europhile Labour Party won landslide victories. The Conservative Party over-estimated the electoral gains to be made from adopting a Eurosceptic position where the Europe issue was of limited importance to the electorate. However, where European Parliament elections were concerned, this would change from 1999 when, in opposition, the Conservative Party's vocally Eurosceptic position carried it to victory. Although the EU issue continued to be of limited importance at general elections, the pro-EU Labour Party took heed of public

¹⁰⁶⁸ David Baker, Andrew Gamble and Steve Ludlam, "The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Division and British Ratification", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶⁹ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

opinion and toned down its Europhile discourse following the 1999 elections. Its increasing Euroscepticism did not result in electoral gains for the Conservative Party in the post-Maastricht period. However, Euroscepticism among party members and supporters increased, meaning vocally Eurosceptic MPs undoubtedly gave themselves an advantage in terms of ensuring their reselection and boosting their advancement through the party hierarchy. This is particularly relevant given the crucial role played by Conservative Party members, since 1998, in selecting the party leader. Also, as the general public's opposition to EU membership continued to grow, it would only be a matter of time before the Europe issue did become a competitive dimension between parties.

In France, the ratification of the TEU was a relatively swift process. The Treaty was ratified just seven months after its signature, and almost one year before it was ratified by the UK. Whereas the TEU was ratified by the UK Parliament alone, the Treaty was subject to a referendum in France. However, while the process of ratification was swift, it was not smooth. Despite this, it cannot be said that the TEU marked a key juncture in the evolution of positions on European integration among politicians to the extent that it did in the UK. The level of support for integration among French politicians has evolved somewhat over time, but not to the same extent as in the UK. Further, where attitudes have evolved among French politicians, they have tended to become more supportive of integration.

Among Mitterrand's motivations in calling the referendum on the ratification of the TEU was a desire to bring to the fore divisions within the RPR over the Europe issue, in the hope that the relatively unified PS would make political gains as a result. As expected, the referendum revealed deep divisions within the RPR, but also within the PS. However, once the TEU was ratified those divisions subsided for the most part. Where vocal opponents of the TEU did not tow the party line they were externalised, resulting in the establishment of a number of political parties with Eurosceptic positions on integration. The PS was the first to adopt this strategy, externalising Jean-Pierre Chevènement in 1993. The RPR sought to quieten opponents of the TEU, notably Philippe Séguin and Charles Pasqua, by promoting them within the party. Where this did not succeed in ensuring loyalty, however, vocal Eurosceptics on the centre-right were externalised as on the centre-left. The externalisation of Pasqua and also Nicolas Dupont-Aignan took place only once opposition to Treaty reform among RPR politicians had fallen and the salience of the Europe issue for the public, and the RPR's less Europhile supporters in particular, had declined.

While the TEU did not have a profound impact on the positions of mainstream politicians on integration and parties were successful in managing the internal divisions that

were revealed by ratification, divisions did nonetheless persist. Yet these divisions manifested themselves periodically rather than on an on-going basis. This contrasts with the situation in the UK where Eurosceptics remained vocal following the entry into force of the Treaty, focusing their efforts on preventing the adoption of the single currency. By externalising Eurosceptics and pushing their views to the margins of the political spectrum, the main French parties perhaps took a risk given declining support for integration among the public. However, individuals who ‘went it alone’, notably Chevènement, Pasqua, and de Villiers, rarely made political gains beyond the European Parliament elections. This is in keeping with Rozenberg’s contention that the EU position of a *député* does not impact his or her electoral success and does not aid career progression within a political party or government.¹⁰⁷⁰ This is not to say, however, that these individuals were not influential. The inclusion of Chevènement’s MDC in the left’s list at the 1997 legislative elections resulted in a resounding victory for the PS and Dupont-Aignan won considerable support for his candidacy for the leadership of the UMP in 2002. However, no prominent Eurosceptics, even once externalised from their party of origin, made the EU the defining issue of their career as did, for example, John Redwood, in the UK. It could be concluded that, despite falling support for EU membership among the French public, positioning as Eurosceptic in the post-Maastricht period did not, in itself, result in political gains either in terms of electoral success or advancement through the party ranks. Following the entry into force of the TEU, both the RPR and the PS made it clear that vocal Eurosceptics had no place in the party.

The tendency of the two main French political parties to externalise Euroscepticism following the ratification of the TEU stands in contrast to UK political parties, in particular the Conservative Party, which internalised Euroscepticism. A number of factors can explain this difference. The UK’s political system results in the dominance of two broad church parties, which must accommodate a wide range of viewpoints, and dissidents are difficult to silence. The internalisation of Euroscepticism in the Conservative Party took place in a context of relatively very low and declining levels of public support for EU membership. Further, a political offer for anti-EU voters existed in the form of UKIP. Although UKIP only made electoral gains, in terms of seats, at European Parliament elections from 1999 onwards, the threat of increasing popular support for UKIP was clear to the Conservative Party. The French political system, although dominated by the PS and the RPR in the post-Maastricht period, allowed for smaller parties to exert a degree of influence through participation in electoral

¹⁰⁷⁰ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l’Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, op. cit.

alliances and in government. The leadership of mainstream parties, and the majority of their politicians, were resolutely supportive of both the process and outcomes of European integration. Levels of attachment to Europe and the perception that European integration serves the French national interest were discussed in earlier chapters. Although French public support for EU membership was in decline from the late 1980s, it remained at around the EU average. There was therefore little incentive for French mainstream politicians to adopt Eurosceptic positions. However, in light of falling public support for EU membership, the tendency to externalise vocal Eurosceptics could be viewed as an electoral risk.

The following chapter will study the period around the attempted ratification of the Constitutional Treaty and the subsequent Lisbon Treaty. In doing so, it will determine whether the positions of parties on the Europe issue evolved further in light of declining public support for integration and whether political gains were made as a result.

Chapter 4

The Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, and the Positioning of Politicians on European Integration

Introduction

The process and outcomes of European integration evolved considerably with the entry into force of the Treaty on European Union. Further, the international context in which integration took place evolved markedly following the entry into force of the Treaty. The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (Constitutional Treaty), signed by member states on 29 October 2004, was an attempt to help the EU, its member states, and its citizens adapt to this new reality. The Constitutional Treaty resulted from the Convention on the Future of Europe. The purpose of the Convention was to reflect upon future European integration and find ways to bring the EU closer to its citizens, organise decision-making in an enlarged EU, and establish a new role for the EU in a multipolar world. The Convention produced a draft Constitution for the EU, which was presented to member states in July 2003. The Constitutional Treaty proposed to replace the existing Treaties, with the exception of the Euratom Treaty, with a single text and to merge the three pillars established by the TEU. The EU would be given legal personality and the supremacy of EU law over national law would be formally enshrined. The European Council would become an official institution of the EU, chaired by a President, and the role of EU Minister of Foreign Affairs would be established. The number of Commissioners would be limited to two-thirds of the number of member states. Like the TEU before it, the Constitutional Treaty provided for new domains of EU action, greater powers for the European Parliament, and increased use of qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU. It also sought to bring the EU closer to its citizens by introducing a citizens' initiative procedure and a system to involve national parliaments more closely in the decision-making process. For the first time, with the inclusion of an 'exit clause', reference was made to a member state leaving the EU. However, having been rejected in referenda in France and The Netherlands in spring 2005, the Constitutional Treaty did not enter into force. Instead, a period of reflection ensued before negotiations of an alternative treaty began in 2007.

The Lisbon Treaty, signed on 13 December 2007, was ratified by all member states and entered into force in December 2009. The majority of the institutional and policy changes provided for by the Constitutional Treaty can be found in the Lisbon Treaty. There are, however, some notable differences between the two Treaties. The Lisbon Treaty does not replace the existing Treaties, rather it amends them. As result, the EU is based on the two founding Treaties, the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and the Treaty on European Union. Unlike in the Constitutional Treaty, there is no article formally enshrining supremacy of EU law over national law. While the European Council became an official institution with a full-time President, the role of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy replaces that of Foreign Minister provided for by the Constitutional Treaty. Plans to limit the number of Commissioners were abandoned. While new domains of shared competences were introduced, the Lisbon Treaty provides for no new exclusive competences.

The Constitutional Treaty, had it been ratified, would have constituted a major step in the process of European integration. Its failure, rejected by two founding member states, was dramatic and consequential. Although the watered-down Lisbon Treaty advanced the process of integration, it did so in very a different context. Having peaked around the time of the ratification of the TEU, public support for EU membership declined thereafter. As negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty opened, just 48 per cent of Europeans believed their state's membership of the EU to be a good thing.¹⁰⁷¹ In spring 2007, as negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty began, this figure had increased to 57 per cent, but this was mostly due to higher levels of support for membership in the new member states of Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁷² Regardless, levels of support for EU membership were considerably lower than in spring 1991, when 72 per cent of Europeans felt that EU membership was a good thing. And this despite a prolonged period of economic growth and optimism following the successful introduction of the Euro in 2002 and the enlargement of the EU to include Central and Eastern European states in 2004. In fact, public support for the single currency quickly fell following its introduction,¹⁰⁷³ and support for enlargement in EU15 member states declined after the 2004 enlargement.¹⁰⁷⁴ The critical discourse of marginal anti-EU parties and Eurosceptic individuals within mainstream parties had been a feature of political debate on European integration since the period around the ratification of the TEU over a decade earlier. By the mid-2000s, this discourse

¹⁰⁷¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 67*, November 2007.

¹⁰⁷³ European Commission, *Flash Eurobarometer 139: The Euro, one year later*, November 2002.

¹⁰⁷⁴ European Commission, *Special Eurobarometer 255: Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*, July 2006.

had had time to impact public opinion and, in some cases, the positions of mainstream politicians on integration. The onset of the financial and economic crises from 2008, followed thereafter by the sovereign debt crisis, further impacted perceptions of the EU. In a context of economic insecurity, concerns about immigration, often associated with integration, grew. Popular support for hitherto marginal Eurosceptic and anti-EU parties increased and, in some member states, resulted in substantial electoral gains.

This chapter charts the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and notable individual politicians on European integration from the opening of the intergovernmental conference on the Constitutional Treaty in October 2003 to June 2016, when the UK public voted to leave the EU. To do so, substantial use is made of statements made by MPs and *députés* during the interviews. The first sub-chapter focuses on the negotiation and ratification of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. The second sub-chapter covers the six-year period following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty up to the UK's 2016 referendum. The chapter studies how parties and individual politicians positioned themselves on the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, how the Treaties impacted inter- and intra-party competition, and how parties managed divisions over the Europe issue. Substantial use is made of information gathered through the interviews with MPs and *députés*. This chapter, like those before it, questions the motivations of politicians in positioning themselves on the Europe issue. It investigates the role of strategy in shaping positions on the Treaties and seeks to determine whether parties or individual politicians made political gains as a result of their position.

It is shown that, while the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties did not provide for greater changes to the functioning of the EU than did the TEU, these Treaties had a more profound impact on the *positioning* of parties and individual politicians on integration than did the TEU. This chapter argues that, in the UK, while the positions of a committed core of hard-Eurosceptics were driven by ideological considerations, politicians were increasingly influenced by strategic considerations. In contrast, the positions of French politicians continued to be determined predominantly by ideological factors, with the notable exception of Laurent Fabius' campaign against the Constitutional Treaty. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty at referendum did have an impact on the positioning of politicians, who became more attentive to public opinion. Yet the bottom-up influence of public opinion had a limited impact on the EU positions of the two main political parties. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the salience of the Europe issue declined in France as it did following the ratification of the TEU. In the UK, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty served only to further increase the salience and political importance of the Europe issue. Divisions within the Conservative Party

between soft- and hard-Eurosceptics led, ultimately, to the holding of a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU. It is shown that whereas an inter- and intra-party consensus in support of European integration prevailed in France, the internalisation and hardening of Euroscepticism within the UK's Conservative Party, in the face of growing public opposition to EU membership, put an end to the already fragile inter-party consensus in support of integration.

1. From Laeken to Lisbon

At the close of their summit meeting in December 2001, heads of state and government made a declaration known as the Laeken Declaration on the Future of Europe. This declaration, made in the context of the imminent introduction of the single currency, the planned enlargement of the EU to 27 member states, and the changed international setting, announced the creation of a Convention on the Future of Europe. This Convention, which met between February 2002 and July 2003 and was presided by the former French President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, brought together representatives of the current and future member states to reflect upon the future objectives and institutional means of integration. Its key output was a draft 'Constitution for Europe', which was very much the basis of the Constitutional Treaty. This Treaty was then negotiated by member states from October 2003 and signed in October 2004. Of the EU's 27 member states, ten committed to holding a referendum on the Treaty's ratification. Although the Treaty was ratified by some member states, either by parliamentary vote alone or by referendum, the project was halted following the 'no' votes at referenda held in France and The Netherlands in spring 2005. The UK was due to hold a referendum, but this was cancelled. A 'period of reflection' ensued before negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty began in July 2007 and the new Treaty was signed in December 2007. Of the ten member states that had committed to holding a referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, only one, Ireland, held a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Neither France, The Netherlands, nor the UK held a referendum. The Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009.

The negotiation and (attempted) ratification of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties took place in a context quite different from that of negotiation and ratification of the TEU. The pro-integration consensus among European politicians was no longer as solid as it had once been. Anti-EU parties had been established and Eurosceptic factions had emerged within certain mainstream parties, diversifying political debate on the Europe issue. Public awareness of EU integration was greater following the public debate around the ratification of the TEU, as was

opposition to membership – the permissive consensus was no more. At the outset of negotiations in October 2003, just 48 per cent of the EU15 public perceived their state’s membership of the EC as a good thing.¹⁰⁷⁵ As negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty began in July 2007, the level of support in the EU27, had risen to 57 per cent due to higher levels of support in the newer member states.¹⁰⁷⁶ By the time the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in late 2009, public support had fallen to 53 per cent.¹⁰⁷⁷ Between 2000 and 2003, three referenda on EU issues – the adoption of the single currency in Denmark and Sweden, and the ratification of the Treaty of Nice in Ireland – had resulted in ‘no’ votes. With this, the potential for Eurosceptic or anti-EU parties and politicians to make political gains increased considerably.

The following sections present and analyse the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the negotiation and ratification of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. In the case of the UK, particular attention is paid to the debate around the Lisbon Treaty, whereas in the case of France the focus will be the debate around the Constitutional Treaty. It seeks to determine how the Treaties impacted inter- and intra-party competition, how parties managed divisions, and the motivations of parties and individual politicians in positioning themselves on the Treaties.

1.1. The UK’s missed referendum

Negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty opened as the Labour Party was half-way through its second term in government, having retained its strong majority at the 2001 general election. Although EU issue voting had had an impact on support for the Labour and Conservative Parties at the election, the former had not been punished by the electorate for its integrationist EU policy and the latter had not made notable gains.¹⁰⁷⁸ Popular support for UKIP at the general election had remained low. Having fallen markedly since the early 1990s, only 28 per cent of the UK public considered membership of the EU to be a good thing as negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty got underway. Moreover, 29 per cent of the public believed membership to be a bad thing. Support for EU membership in the UK was around 20 percentage points below the EU average.¹⁰⁷⁹

¹⁰⁷⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 67*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 72*, February 2010.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Catherine E. de Vries, “EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability? How European Integration Affects Parties’ Electoral Fortunes”, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁰⁷⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60*, *op. cit.*

Public opinion was certainly influenced by the increased salience and negativity of the debate around the Europe issue since the ratification of the TEU, driven not only by divisions within the Conservative Party but also by the growing presence of UKIP in the political sphere. Although the anti-EU party had not won any seats in the House of Commons, it held seats in the European Parliament and went on to increase its support at the 2004 and 2009 European elections. However, not only did soft and hard Eurosceptic parties and politicians influence public opinion, the bottom-up influence of public opinion increased considerably. It could be expected, therefore, that this would impact the position of the Labour government as it negotiated the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. This context undoubtedly also served to justify the Conservative Party's increasingly Eurosceptic EU policy and encourage those who sought to have the party go further in its opposition.

1.1.1. The Constitutional Treaty and Labour's changed tone

The UK government entered negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty in a relatively strong position. Given the outcome of the 2001 general election, it seemed the Labour government could pursue its integrationist EU policy without fear of domestic political consequences. Further, the UK had played an active role in the Convention on the Future of Europe with the UK diplomat, John Kerr, acting as Secretary-General of the Convention. The Constitutional Treaty signed by member states on 29 October 2004 corresponded to a great extent with the preferences of the UK government.¹⁰⁸⁰ The government announced negotiations to have been a success, and was keen to emphasise its role in ensuring the introduction of the yellow card system of guaranteeing the respect of the principle of subsidiarity and the creation of the position of a full-time president of the European Council.

However, during Blair's second term as Prime Minister there was a change in the tone of his discourse on Europe. This was particularly notable in a speech he gave in Warsaw in May 2003, as the Convention on the Future of Europe was on-going, in which he praised only the *past* achievements of European integration and insisted on the need for reform of the EU.¹⁰⁸¹ Blair spoke of the need for the EU to "change itself" and his desire for a "union of nations" as opposed to a "federal super-state." He repeatedly evoked the "national interest", albeit to insist that this was best ensured by EU membership.¹⁰⁸² In certain respects Blair's Warsaw speech

¹⁰⁸⁰ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁸¹ Katrin Milzow, "Europe and the European Union in the Discourse of Tony Blair", *La Grande-Bretagne et l'Europe. Ambivalence et pragmatisme*, Cahiers Charles V, no.41, 2006, p. 125.

¹⁰⁸² Tony Blair, *Speech in Warsaw*, 30 May 2003 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/may/30/eu.speeches>>.

echoed Thatcher's Bruges speech of September 1988 and signalled a move away from an openly Europhile position.

This changed tone could be accounted for by certain domestic and international factors. At the domestic level, the government was keen to keep the Europe issue low down the political agenda. Given that, at 29 per cent, public opposition to EU membership was higher than support (28 per cent), the government sought to avoid confrontation with populist Eurosceptics.¹⁰⁸³ Blair was also keen to avoid exposing the rift between himself and the Chancellor. Following a review of the five economic conditions, Brown announced in June 2003 that the government would not recommend the adoption of the Euro.¹⁰⁸⁴ This announcement essentially put an end to Blair's ambition of having the UK adopt the single currency and gave a European dimension to the divide between Blairites and Brownites. Brown's position was more in keeping with public opinion: opposition to the adoption of the single currency had risen to 65 per cent.¹⁰⁸⁵ Further, not only did Brown oppose the adoption of the single currency, he made greater use of Eurosceptic language.¹⁰⁸⁶ Strategic, political considerations – heeding public opinion and avoiding conflict with Brown – forced Blair to curtail his ambitions,¹⁰⁸⁷ which serves as an illustration of strategy shaping ideology. At the international level, UK relations with France and Germany in particular had been soured by divisions over military intervention in Iraq since March 2003. This situation also contributed to Blair's changed tone on integration. Blair referred to the Iraq War in his Warsaw speech to illustrate his insistence that future UK military action would never be subject to "Europe's permission".¹⁰⁸⁸

The Conservative opposition was led by Michael Howard from November 2003. Howard's Shadow Cabinet was composed predominantly of Eurosceptics and the party's position was one of full opposition to the Constitutional Treaty. Along with the Eurosceptic press, the Conservative opposition successfully pressurised the government to make the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty subject to referendum.¹⁰⁸⁹ On 20 April 2004, while negotiations were on-going, Blair announced that a referendum would be held on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. There was no legal argument for ratification to be

¹⁰⁸³ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*, p. 865.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸⁶ Chris Gifford, *op. cit.*, p. 866.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Carine Berberi, "La question de l'adoption de l'euro", *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Tony Blair, *Speech in Warsaw*, 30 May 2003, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸⁹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

subject to referendum, suggesting the decision to offer a referendum was essentially a political and strategic one.¹⁰⁹⁰

The 2004 European Parliament elections took place two months after Blair's promise of a referendum. The context was also of particular note because, shortly before the elections, ten states joined the EU, most of which were former Communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. This fifth enlargement had a great impact on the EU not only because of the number of states that joined at the same time, but also because the accession states were economically weaker and most were relatively new democracies. While the vast majority of the EU15 imposed restrictions on the free movement of workers from these new member states, the UK was one of just three member states to allow workers from the new member states to access its labour market. Like in most other member states, the UK public showed little enthusiasm for the 2004 enlargement, with just 31 per cent of respondents supporting the enlargement and 41 per cent opposing it. Despite this, public support for EU membership increased in 2004, from 29 per cent in spring to 38 per cent in autumn.¹⁰⁹¹

The relatively low levels of support for, and interest in, the EU among the UK public was reflected in the low turnout of just 38.2 per cent at the 2004 European Parliament elections, which was considerably lower than the EU average of 46 per cent. The Conservative Party won the elections, winning almost 27 per cent of the popular vote and 27 of the 75 seats. However, despite coming first, the party reduced considerably its share of both the popular vote and seats compared to the 1999 election. The Labour Party came second with almost 23 per cent of the vote, followed by UKIP, which beat the Liberal Democrats to win third place. UKIP markedly increased its share of the popular vote to 16.2 per cent and multiplied by four the number of seats it held.¹⁰⁹² Importantly, UKIP came second after the Conservative Party in one in three constituencies.¹⁰⁹³

1.1.2. The growing influence of UKIP

Following the European Parliament elections, Nigel Farage established and chaired the Independence/Democracy group in the European Parliament, which was active during the

¹⁰⁹⁰ Kai Oppermann, "The Politics of Avoiding Referendums on the Treaty of Lisbon", *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2013, p. 75.

¹⁰⁹¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 61*, July 2004; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 62*, May 2005.

¹⁰⁹² Adam Mellows-Facer, Richard Cracknell and Jessica Yonwin, "European Parliament elections 2004", *Research Paper 04/50*, House of Commons Library, 23 June 2004, p. 11 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp04-50/>>.

¹⁰⁹³ Karine Tournier-Sol, "La montée de l'UK Independence Party dans les années Blair", *op. cit.*, p. 36.

2004-09 term. MEPs from Philippe de Villiers' *Mouvement pour la France* and Italy's *Legha Nord* also sat within the group. At its establishment, the Independence/Democracy group had 38 MEPs, giving it a considerable voice within the European Parliament. Further, UKIP members were the most numerous within the group, giving UKIP and Farage a visible platform and a means to build political credibility.

European Parliament elections have long been considered to be second-order elections, contests that the electorate view as less important, with campaigns focusing on national issues and the electorate voting based on whether or not they are satisfied with the governing party.¹⁰⁹⁴ However, following the 2014 European Parliament elections, Sauger questioned whether this could still be considered to be the case.¹⁰⁹⁵ In so far as concerns the UK, it could be argued that for a considerable proportion of the UK electorate, given the steady rise in popular support for the single-issue UKIP, the European Parliament elections had by 2004 become first-order elections. Although the electorate did not necessarily consider these elections to be as important as general elections, the Europe issue seemed to be key in determining how the public cast their vote. Votes were cast for UKIP not simply as a manifestation of opposition to the governing party, but in support of UKIP's EU policy. Europe issue voting therefore had an impact on support for the Conservative and Labour Parties.

The results of the 2004 European Parliament elections signalled the growing relevance of UKIP within the UK party system. Although the party remained unlikely to win seats in the House of Commons, it nonetheless presented an electoral threat to the Conservative Party. Over time, UKIP had widened its programme in an attempt to present itself as a party of government and not merely a single-issue party. Particular attention was paid to the question of immigration, in keeping with the growing importance attached to this issue by the public. Further, UKIP differed from other hard Eurosceptic parties and movements, including those with whom it sat in the European Parliament, in that it supported economic liberalism and opposed protectionism. This could be explained by the fact that many of its members were former members of the Conservative Party.¹⁰⁹⁶ Former leader, Roger Knapman, was a Conservative MP from 1987 to 1997, and Nigel Farage was a member of the Conservative Party from 1978 to 1993. The high salience of the immigration issue and the overlap in economic policies with those of the Conservative Party served to draw Conservative supporters to UKIP: 45 per cent

¹⁰⁹⁴ Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁹⁵ Nicolas Sauger, "Elections de second ordre et responsabilité électorale dans un système de gouvernance à niveaux multiples", *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Pauline Schnapper. *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

of those who voted for UKIP at the 2004 European Parliament elections had voted for the Conservative Party at the 2001 general election.¹⁰⁹⁷ The risk to the Conservative Party was aggravated by the fact that, although its EU policy had certainly become more Eurosceptic, its message remained somewhat unclear due to intra-party divisions. Although Conservative Eurosceptics had sought to increase the salience of the Europe issue in an attempt to make political gains, the more salient the issue for the party, the more likely it was that intra-party divisions would be exposed.¹⁰⁹⁸ UKIP was therefore the one unambiguously hard Eurosceptic party.

The Europe issue was not a prominent feature of the May 2005 general election campaign.¹⁰⁹⁹ Despite increasing public opposition to EU membership and the promise of a referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, the issue was not regarded as particularly important by voters. The Labour government was keen to minimise the salience of debate on Europe as the leadership was wary of the negative political consequences of openly advocating further integration.¹¹⁰⁰ While the Labour Party's increasingly cautious position on the single currency was justified by the economic tests, political considerations were increasingly important in shaping the party's EU policy. Although opponents of the single currency continued to be a minority within the Parliamentary Party, the leadership was determined to present a united front. Further, not only was public opinion increasingly hostile towards integration and the Euro in particular, the business community and trade unions, having initially supported the adoption of the single currency, had become more sceptical.¹¹⁰¹ Labour's manifesto reflected the party's changed tone on EU integration by insisting upon the protection of "key national interests" and sovereignty, albeit while emphasising the benefits of EU membership and the role of the Constitutional Treaty in ensuring "the new Europe can work effectively."¹¹⁰²

Having learned lessons from William Hague's heavy defeat in 2001, the Conservative Party's election campaign, under the leadership of Michael Howard focused less directly on the EU but, rather, reflected voter concerns about (the associated issue of) immigration.¹¹⁰³

¹⁰⁹⁷ Karine Tournier-Sol, "La montée de l'UK Independence Party dans les années Blair", *op. cit.* pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁹⁸ David Baker, Andrew Gamble, Nick Randall, and David Seawright, "Euroscepticism in the British Party System: 'A Source of Fascination, Perplexity, and Sometimes Frustration'", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁹⁹ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997", *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹¹⁰⁰ David Baker, Andrew Gamble, Nick Randall, and David Seawright, "Euroscepticism in the British Party System: 'A Source of Fascination, Perplexity, and Sometimes Frustration'", *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰¹ Carine Berberi, "La question de l'adoption de l'euro", *op. cit.*, pp. 124-129.

¹¹⁰² Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 2005", pp. 83-84 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/13_04_05_labour_manifesto.pdf>.

¹¹⁰³ David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *Centre for European Reform*, May 2012, p. 14.

Immigration, along with crime, was considered by the public to be the most important issue facing the country at the time of the election.¹¹⁰⁴ However, although the Conservative Party's manifesto dedicated minimal space to EU questions, it presented a clear and decisive position on the two key Europe issues of the time. First, it set out the party's opposition to the Constitutional Treaty and promised, if elected, to hold a referendum on its ratification within six months of the general election. Second, the manifesto reiterated the party's opposition to the single currency, and promised not to adopt the Euro.¹¹⁰⁵

The election resulted in a third successive term in government for the Labour Party. However, the party's majority was considerably reduced, while the Conservatives increased their seats. Although UKIP failed, again, to win any seats at the 2005 general election, the party came fourth and continued to increase its share of the popular vote, winning 2.2 per cent of the vote compared to 1.4 per cent in 2001. Notably, the party achieved a high of 10.4% of the vote in one English constituency.¹¹⁰⁶ While overall support for UKIP indicates the electorate continued to attach little importance to the Europe issue at general elections, the party was building on its support, especially in Conservative-held constituencies.

1.1.3. The failure of the Constitutional Treaty

On 29 May, and then on 1 June, the French and Dutch publics respectively voted against the Constitutional Treaty. The results of these referenda meant the Constitutional Treaty would not enter into force unless the French and Dutch publics were to vote again favourably. The future of the ratification process was therefore unclear. While President Chirac called for ratification to continue and the Polish government announced its intention to hold a referendum as planned, the UK government announced on 6 June 2005 its decision to indefinitely postpone the planned referendum. The Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, stated in Parliament that there was "no point in proceeding at this moment".¹¹⁰⁷

The referendum would have been the first to be held in the UK on the Europe issue since 1975. The governing Labour Party supported the Constitutional Treaty and the opposition Conservative Party opposed it. As such, the campaign in the UK would have conformed to what Ben Crum refers to as the 'Competitive Model', and where parties are in competition they tend

¹¹⁰⁴ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 63*, September 2005.

¹¹⁰⁵ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997", *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹¹⁰⁶ Adam Mellows-Facer, "General Election 2005", *Research Paper 05/33*, House of Commons Library, 17 May 2005, p. 47 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp05-33/>>.

¹¹⁰⁷ Matthew Tempest, "British vote on constitution shelved", *The Guardian*, 6 June 2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jun/06/eu.politics>>.

to be more able to influence the position of their supporters. Of the ten member states that held or planned to hold a referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, the Conservative Party was one of just three opposition parties to oppose the Treaty. Further, the Conservative Party enjoyed a far greater share of the vote (32 per cent) than did the opposition parties in Poland and the Czech Republic that opposed the Treaty.¹¹⁰⁸ Had a referendum taken place and the Conservatives had remained united in their opposition to the Treaty, the party would, theoretically, have had great top-down influence over the Eurosceptic electorate. As such, it is reasonable to suppose that the UK public would have opposed ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. The Conservative Shadow Foreign Minister, Liam Fox, hailed the results of the French and Dutch referenda, announcing the Treaty to be “dead”.¹¹⁰⁹ However, hard Eurosceptics, who opposed not only the Treaty but also the UK’s membership of the EU, undoubtedly felt a deep sense of disappointment at having been denied the opportunity to express their opposition. In fact, a key consequence of the French and Dutch ‘no’ votes was that they awoke European publics to the idea that they could directly influence the future of integration.¹¹¹⁰

Blair showed his awareness of growing public ambivalence and hostility towards the EU in a speech to the European Parliament on 23 June 2005, in advance of the UK taking over Presidency of the EU on 1 July. In this speech, Blair claimed to be “a passionate pro-European” and said that he “would never accept a Europe that was simply an economic market.” Nonetheless, he called for the EU to “renew” and contended that “in most member states it would be hard today to secure a yes for it in a referendum.”¹¹¹¹ The UK’s presidency of the EU during the second half of 2005 reflected this desire for a strong but reformed EU. The UK announced its priorities to be the future financing of the EU, economic reform and social justice, security and stability, and Europe’s role in the world. The UK succeeded in achieving a number of its objectives, including the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey. However, Blair drew much criticism at home by agreeing to a reduction in the UK’s rebate in return for a

¹¹⁰⁸ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72.

¹¹⁰⁹ Matthew Tempest, “British vote on constitution shelved”, *op. cit.*

¹¹¹⁰ Nick Startin and André Krouwel, “Euroscepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and Dutch Rejections of the EU Constitution”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.51, no.1, 2013, p. 81.

¹¹¹¹ Tony Blair, *Speech to European Parliament*, 23 June 2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/jun/23/speeches.eu>>.

fundamental review of EU income and expenditure.¹¹¹² Unsurprisingly, Blair was accused of “surrender” by Conservative Eurosceptics.¹¹¹³

1.1.4. Cameron’s ‘modern’ Euroscepticism

Following the Conservative Party’s third consecutive defeat at the 2005 general election, Michael Howard resigned and called a leadership election. Four candidates contested the leadership: David Cameron, David Davis, Liam Fox, and Kenneth Clarke. In contrast to the previous contest held in 2001, which saw the Europhile Kenneth Clarke reach the final round against the Eurosceptic Iain Duncan Smith, the elimination of Clarke and the arrival in first place of Eurosceptic David Davis at the first ballot reflected the fact that the party was far more united in its Euroscepticism. The final parliamentary ballot saw David Davis and David Cameron pass to the members’ vote.

As part of his campaign, Davis promised that, if the Conservative Party won the next general election under his leadership, he would hold two referenda on the EU. The first referendum would be to ensure a mandate to negotiate the repatriation of certain powers from the EU, and the second would be to confirm that the government had achieved the will of the people through negotiations.¹¹¹⁴ Kenneth Clarke claimed Davis’ promise was made in an attempt to “whip up our core vote.” Further, Clarke made clear that, in his opinion, such focus on “right-wing issues” would result in the Conservative Party failing to win the next general election.¹¹¹⁵

A moderniser, Cameron sought to convince Conservative MPs and party members of his Euroscepticism without allowing it to define him. He promised during his campaign that, if elected party leader, he would seek an exemption for the UK in the domain of social policy and labour law, and would withdraw Conservative MEPs from the EPP group of the European Parliament.¹¹¹⁶ This promise appeared to be enough to convince Conservative MPs and members of his Euroscepticism, as he won the second ballot of MPs and was elected by two-thirds of party members. During interview, John Redwood noted that he had voted for Cameron in 2005, believing him to be a Eurosceptic. He was satisfied by Cameron’s pledge to take

¹¹¹² Heinrich Best, György Lengyel and Luca Verzichelli, “European Integration as an Elite Project: An Introduction”, *op. cit.*

¹¹¹³ Nicholas Watt and Michael White, “Blair accused of sellout over EU rebate deal”, *The Guardian*, 2 December 2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/dec/02/uk.topstories3>>.

¹¹¹⁴ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997”, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹¹¹⁵ Matthew Tempest, “Davis pledges two EU referendums”, *The Guardian*, 2 November 2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/nov/02/toryleadership2005.conservatives>>.

¹¹¹⁶ Agnès Alexandre-Collier, “Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997”, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

Conservative MEPs out of the EPP as this was all he could realistically do as leader of the opposition, and this was more than Howard, Duncan Smith, or Hague before him had done.¹¹¹⁷ Europhile Conservative MP, David Curry, contended that Cameron's decision to take the party's MEPs out of the EPP went against the national interest as Cameron himself saw it and was done so as to "give comfort to his enemies."¹¹¹⁸

The Conservative Party of which David Cameron took the leadership in December 2005 was the most Eurosceptic it had ever been and very few of its MPs would have been willing to openly defend the EU. As a result, divisions within the Parliamentary Party over the Europe issue were less violent than in the past as the majority of its MPs were by then Eurosceptic.¹¹¹⁹ The intra-party divisions over the Europe issue that had been a key challenge for the party leadership, especially John Major, appeared to be a thing of the past. David Cameron's Shadow Cabinet was, like those of his three predecessors in opposition, composed predominantly of Eurosceptics. Following a four-year period on the backbenches, William Hague returned to the frontbenches as Shadow Foreign Secretary.¹¹²⁰ However, although an opponent of further transfers of sovereignty and an advocate of reform, Hague affirmed his support for the UK's membership of the EU. Hard Eurosceptic leadership rivals David Davis and Liam Fox retained their positions in the Shadow Cabinet, although Fox was demoted to Shadow Defence Secretary.¹¹²¹ Yet, although the Cabinet retained its Eurosceptic bias, the election of a moderniser as leader moved the party towards the centre. Despite his own Euroscepticism, Cameron was keen to avoid the Europe issue being of great salience as he was conscious that this could cost the party the support of centrist voters.¹¹²² The voice of vocal Eurosceptics was curtailed and it appeared that, with Cameron as party leader, hard Eurosceptics would not advance through the party's ranks. However, the result was to free up political ground on the right of the Conservative Party, which was to the advantage of UKIP.¹¹²³

It was in this context that the campaign to have the UK leave the EU began to take shape. The Better Off Out campaign was launched by the Freedom Association in 2006. The campaign enjoyed the patronage of Conservative peer, Norman Tebbit and the support of

¹¹¹⁷ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

¹¹¹⁸ Michael White, "EU threatens to wreck Cameron's honeymoon", *The Guardian*, 2 June 2006, cited in Agnès Agnès Alexandre-Collier, "Les Conservateurs face à la question européenne depuis 1997", *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹¹¹⁹ David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹¹²⁰ UK Parliament, "Parliamentary Career: Lord Hague of Richmond" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/379/career>>.

¹¹²¹ UK Parliament, "Parliamentary Career: David Davis" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/373/career>>; UK Parliament, "Parliamentary Career: Liam Fox" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/223/career>>.

¹¹²² David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹¹²³ Karine Tournier-Sol, "La montée de l'UK Independence Party dans les années Blair", *op. cit.*, p. 45.

members of UKIP. The Conservative Party leadership warned MPs against joining the group as its campaign went against party policy.¹¹²⁴ The salience of the ‘leave’ message was boosted further by the election, in September 2006, of Nigel Farage as leader of UKIP following Roger Knapman’s decision to step down. Bold and media-savvy, Farage ensured greater attention was paid to the Europe issue. Further, as leader of the Independence/Democracy group in the European Parliament since 2004, he had a credible platform from which to transmit his message.

1.1.5. The Treaty of Lisbon

The period of reflection that followed the French and Dutch no votes allowed time for a change of government and in the UK, with Gordon Brown succeeding Blair as Prime Minister shortly before official negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty got underway in June 2007. Brown became Prime Minister following Blair’s decision to step down, in keeping with a long-held agreement between the two men, and not following a general election. Given that Brown had served as Chancellor of the Exchequer for the previous ten years, and had thus been closely associated with key EU policy decisions, it seemed unlikely that his government’s policy would diverge greatly from that of his predecessor.¹¹²⁵ However, as Chancellor, Brown had shown himself to be less enthusiastic about EU integration than Blair and his position did not change as Prime Minister. Brown’s preference was for a ‘global Britain’ and, in this respect, his views were similar to those of the party leaders of the 1960s and 1970s, Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. Brown tended to highlight what he perceived to be the EU’s failings and was particularly critical of the EU’s failure to carry out the economic reforms he considered necessary in a globalised world. Schnapper describes Brown as “cautiously and unenthusiastically pro-European”.¹¹²⁶

The common desire of EU governments to avoid referenda on the successor to the Constitutional Treaty worked to the advantage of those member states seeking to justify not holding a referendum even though they had held, or promised to hold, one on the Constitutional Treaty.¹¹²⁷ The UK was therefore in a strong position to seek concessions from its partners during negotiations in order to avoid a referendum. The UK secured an extension of the its opt-

¹¹²⁴ BBC, “Tebbit supports EU exit campaign”, 30 March 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6511701.stm>

¹¹²⁵ Pauline Schnapper, “Le Royaume-Uni et l’Europe: Toujours un Malentendu?”, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹¹²⁶ Pauline Schnapper, “The Labour Party and Europe from Brown to Miliband: Back to the Future?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015, p. 158.

¹¹²⁷ Kai Oppermann, “The Politics of Avoiding Referendums on the Treaty of Lisbon”, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

out in the field of justice and home affairs to include police and criminal justice cooperation, with the possibility of opting in on an ad hoc basis, and a delay until 2014 in the extension of the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice to include measures agreed to before 2009. The UK also negotiated a written guarantee that the European Charter of Fundamental Rights could not be used to alter UK labour law. The desire of the Brown government to secure opt-outs and guarantees stood in contrast to the position adopted by the Blair government, and notably during negotiations of the Amsterdam Treaty, where the UK cancelled its opt-out of the Social Chapter. This serves to illustrate how the changed leadership of the Labour Party and the context of increasingly hostile opinion among political opponents and the public impacted the government's position. Although support for membership had risen to 39 per cent, it remained approximately 20 percentage points below the EU average. More importantly, by late 2007, 30 per cent of the UK public believed EU membership to be a bad thing.¹¹²⁸

Brown signed the Treaty of Lisbon on 13 December 2007. However, he made clear his ambivalence by missing the official ceremony and signing the Treaty after all other leaders. Further, he made no effort to promote the benefits of the Treaty.¹¹²⁹ Like the leaders of nine of the ten member states that had committed to holding a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, Brown opted to ratify the Treaty by parliamentary vote alone; given public opinion on EU integration, the reasons for not holding a referendum were evident. Brown argued that the Treaty did not entail a transfer of sovereignty great enough to justify the holding of a referendum and insisted upon the major concessions that had been accorded to the UK. This also allowed Brown to present negotiations as a victory for the UK national interest.¹¹³⁰ He nonetheless faced strong domestic criticism by opting for parliamentary ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Cameron, as leader of the opposition, demanded that the Treaty be ratified by referendum, arguing that its provisions differed little from those of the Constitutional Treaty.¹¹³¹ Further, although there was no tradition of holding such referenda in the UK, given that a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty had been promised, there was an expectation among the public that a vote would be offered on the reform treaty. It is understandable, therefore, that distrust in the government rose around this time, with 72 per cent of the UK public claiming they 'tend not to trust' the government.¹¹³² Nonetheless, the Lisbon Treaty attracted much less

¹¹²⁸European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 67*, *op. cit.*

¹¹²⁹Pauline Schnapper, "The Labour Party and Europe from Brown to Miliband: Back to the Future?", *op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹¹³⁰Kai Oppermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 81.

¹¹³¹Pauline Schnapper, "The Labour Party and Europe from Brown to Miliband: Back to the Future?", *op. cit.* p. 126.

¹¹³²European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 69*, July 2008.

public attention than the Constitutional Treaty had done. With a solid majority, the government could be confident that Parliament would vote in support of ratification. Further, the electoral calendar worked in Brown's favour. With a general election not due for another three years, Brown could allow himself to pay limited attention to public opinion.¹¹³³

On 11 March 2008, the House of Commons voted by 346 to 206 to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. Although the Labour Party remained relatively united in support of the Treaty, ten of its MPs voted against ratification. Opponents were mostly on the left of the party and included the future party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and future Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell. In contrast to the Labour Party, the Conservative Party was highly united in its opposition to the Treaty of Lisbon, with just three of its MPs, including Kenneth Clarke, voting in support of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.¹¹³⁴ Although the Treaty was ratified by Parliament, the vote was far from decisive and a clear divide remained between the two main political parties. The rejection of the Treaty by the Irish public at the referendum held on 12 June 2008 gave the UK's opponents of the Treaty reason to hope that their battle was not over. The Conservative opposition called, without success, for the UK's ratification process to be frozen in light of the result. The House of Lords voted in favour of ratification, despite attempts by Conservative members to have ratification be subject to a referendum. The Treaty received Royal Assent within a week of the Irish referendum.¹¹³⁵

Of Labour MPs who responded to the questionnaire, 50 per cent signalled that their support for EU membership had evolved around the time of the signing and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, and in most cases Labour MPs became more supportive of membership at that point. Conservative MPs who responded to the questionnaire tended to identify the ratification of the TEU as the key event that had impacted their attitudes towards integration. However, the Lisbon Treaty, and in particular the decision to ratify the Treaty without holding a referendum, had a profound and long-lasting impact on attitudes towards the EU within the party. Conservative MP, Desmond Swayne, claimed that "denying the people a referendum on Lisbon has informed the Conservative trajectory ever since."¹¹³⁶ Conscious of the deception felt by a considerable proportion of the public and more united on this issue than it had been on previous

¹¹³³ Kai Oppermann, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹¹³⁴ Hansard, "European Union (Amendment) Bill", 11 March 2008 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2008-03-11/division/080311140000605/EuropeanUnion\(Amendment\)Bill?outputType=Party#party-yesConservativeAyes](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2008-03-11/division/080311140000605/EuropeanUnion(Amendment)Bill?outputType=Party#party-yesConservativeAyes)>.

¹¹³⁵ Vaughne Miller, "The Treaty of Lisbon: an Uncertain Future", *Research Paper 08/66*, House of Commons Library, 30 July 2008 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp08-66/>>.

¹¹³⁶ Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

questions of integration, the Conservative Party was determined to secure a public vote on the UK's relationship with the EU. The Conservative Party leadership therefore continued its fight to have the Lisbon Treaty put to referendum in the UK. By this point, Mair's claim that "the parties that contest elections" would seek to "push [the Europe issue] to the shadows" clearly no longer applied to the Conservative Party.¹¹³⁷

The 2009 European Parliament elections took place as the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon was still on-going in certain member states. Despite the heightened salience of the Europe issue due to the ratification process, turnout in the UK fell to less than 34.5 per cent, which was again considerably lower than the EU average of 43 per cent. The Conservative Party won the elections, winning over 27.7 per cent of the popular vote and 25 of the UK's 72 seats. Although the Conservatives lost two seats, this was essentially due to the reduction in the number of seats allocated to UK MEPs. UKIP continued on its trajectory and increased both its share of the popular vote and seats. The party came second in terms of the popular vote, winning 16.5 per cent of the vote, and joint second with the Labour Party in terms of seats won. UKIP achieved its best scores in regions generally considered to be Conservative strongholds, although it also increased its share of the vote in traditional Labour strongholds.¹¹³⁸ Given that for the UK electorate, European Parliament elections were more and more viewed as first-order elections at which they could express their position on integration, EU issue voting had an increasingly important impact on support for the Conservative and Labour Parties.

In accordance with the promise Cameron made during the 2005 Conservative Party leadership contest, Conservative MEPs left the EPP following the elections. They established a new, soft Eurosceptic political group, the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, with MEPs from Poland's Law and Justice Party and the Czech Republic's Civic Democratic Party.¹¹³⁹ While Conservative MEPs stood out from their EPP colleagues in terms of attitudes towards integration, this move cannot be explained in terms of national interest. In leaving the EPP, the Conservative Party lost its influence within the European Parliament's largest political group and Cameron, as leader of the opposition and later as Prime Minister, could no longer attend EPP Summits ahead of meetings of the European Council. The move can best be accounted for by political strategy, making this a further example of strategy shaping the ideology of the Conservative Party. The move allowed the Conservative Party to position itself

¹¹³⁷ Peter Mair, "Political Opposition and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹¹³⁸ Adam Mellows-Facer, Richard Cracknell and Sean Lightbown, "European Parliament Elections 2009", *Research Paper 09/53*, House of Commons Library, 17 June 2009 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp09-53/>>.

¹¹³⁹ Simon Usherwood and Nick Startin, "Euroscepticism as a Persistent Phenomenon", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

as unambiguously Eurosceptic, which, it was hoped, would help it regain credibility in the eyes of Eurosceptic members and voters, and reduce the risk of losing further support to UKIP. Yet, not all Conservative MPs supported the decision, with Mark Pritchard confirming the move was “merely a sop to Eurosceptics.”¹¹⁴⁰ In fact, the decision to leave the EPP can best be accounted for as part of Cameron’s strategy of appeasing Eurosceptics within the Conservative Party in order to secure his own position within the party.

Boosted by his party’s win at the European Parliament elections, Cameron indicated in advance of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty that, if elected at the general election the following year, his government would hold a referendum on the ratification of the Treaty. Cameron was also under continuing pressure from his party’s Eurosceptic MPs and an increasingly Eurosceptic public. His promise was very much made in an attempt to conceal growing intra-party divisions over the Europe issue.¹¹⁴¹ Cameron hoped that the Eurosceptic Czech President, Vaclav Klaus, would refuse to sign the Treaty and delay its entry into force making his promise feasible. However, following a ‘yes’ vote at the second Irish referendum held on 2 October 2009, Klaus signed the Lisbon Treaty thus allowing its entry into force.

With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, hopes of a referendum were ended. However, the injustice and anger among politicians and the public at the decision to ratify the Treaty by Parliamentary vote alone did not subside. Rather, the sentiment crystallised and this point marked a critical juncture in the evolution of attitudes towards, and positions on, integration and membership. Had a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty taken place, given Conservative opposition to the Treaty and growing Euroscepticism among the public, a ‘no’ vote could well have resulted. This would have either allowed the UK to renegotiate the terms of the Treaty or caused the Treaty to fail as the Constitutional Treaty had done. Given the difficulties encountered by member states in revising the Treaties, further reform in the near future was unlikely. This meant that the opportunity for Eurosceptics to renegotiate the UK’s relationship with the EU through Treaty reform, or to block Treaty reform entirely, had been missed. Had the Treaty been ratified following a ‘yes’ vote at a referendum, the disappointment of opponents of the Treaty might not have crystallised as it did, becoming a basis of anti-establishment sentiment.

In contrast to France, where it was also decided not to hold a referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon despite the fact that a referendum was held on the Constitutional Treaty, a consensus between the main political parties on the Treaty of Lisbon did not exist in the UK. As leader of

¹¹⁴⁰ Mark Pritchard, interview in person.

¹¹⁴¹ Pauline Schnapper. *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?*, *op. cit.* p. 119.

a Conservative Party united in its opposition to the Treaty of Lisbon, Cameron went to great lengths to reassure his party of his own Euroscepticism. In his attempts to appease harder Eurosceptics and secure his own position within the party, Cameron legitimised those who questioned the UK's membership of the EU, boosted their credibility and emboldened them. An Ipsos Mori poll showed that by March 2008 54 per cent of the public was in favour of an in-out referendum. Further, the public had a preference for an in-out referendum over one on the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.¹¹⁴² It was in this context that, having lost the battle against the Treaty of Lisbon, emboldened Conservative hard Eurosceptics turned their focus to securing a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU.

1.2. France's 'non'

Negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty opened during Jacques Chirac's second term as President. Although the President had been re-elected with an overwhelming majority, and the UMP once again held a solid majority of seats in the National Assembly, this was due in no small part to the *Front républicain* that was mounted in response to Jean-Marie Le Pen getting through to the second round of the 2002 Presidential elections. Chirac was therefore more vulnerable to the opinion of a disappointed public and mindful of increasing popular support for the FN. In opposition, the PS was in shock following the failure of its candidate to make it through to the second round of the 2002 Presidential election, with various factions seeking to influence the party's strategy.

As in the UK, support among the French public for EU membership had fallen since the early 1990s. As negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty opened, just 44 per cent of the public believed membership to be a good thing, down from 52 per cent a year earlier. Further, opposition to membership had increased from 13 per cent to 17 per cent.¹¹⁴³ While opposition to integration was far less than in the UK, the trend was nonetheless troubling for Europhile politicians. Increasing opposition was reflected in increased support for the FN at the 2004 European Parliament elections. However, unlike in the UK where support for UKIP only increased, support for the FN as a manifestation of opposition to EU membership did not establish itself. Again in contrast to the UK, where the bottom-up influence of negative public opinion had considerable influence over the positions of both the Conservative and Labour

¹¹⁴² Ipsos Mori, "EU Referendum Survey", 3 March 2008 <<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/eu-referendum-survey>>.

¹¹⁴³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer* 58, March 2003 <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb58/eb58_en.pdf>; European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer* 60, *op. cit.*

Parties, French public opinion seems to have had limited impact on the EU policies of either the UMP-LR or PS.

1.2.1. The Constitutional Treaty and the failed referendum

The French government entered negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty in a relatively strong position. With the UMP having won a solid majority of seats in the National Assembly at the 2002 legislative elections, the government could be sure of Parliamentary support. Further, as the Convention on the Future of Europe had been presided by the former French President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, French interests had surely been considered in the preparation of the first draft of the Treaty. France played an active role in negotiations and called for the draft Treaty, as prepared by the Convention, to be adopted without any revisions. Unlike the UK, France sought neither concessions nor opt-outs during the IGC.¹¹⁴⁴

Despite the return of Eurosceptics Charles Pasqua and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan with the creation of the wider UMP in November 2002, the party remained relatively united during negotiations of the Constitutional Treaty. However, although the UMP was united in its support for the provisions of the Constitutional Treaty, the context of declining public support for EU membership could not be ignored. Whereas in the UK the single currency was a key cause of concern, among the French public the future enlargement of the EU met considerable opposition. Six months before the accession of ten member states to the EU, like many politicians, 55 per cent of the French public opposed further enlargement, the highest rate of opposition among member state publics. Moreover, this opposition was rising.¹¹⁴⁵

In opposition, the PS was bruised following the 2002 Presidential elections at which its candidate, Lionel Jospin, was eliminated at the first round. The PS was divided over the future direction of the party and various figures were competing to take the lead. While the PS leadership supported the Constitutional Treaty, this posed a strategic problem as 'colluding' with the government diminished the possibilities to criticise the government's policy.¹¹⁴⁶ Further, certain provisions of the Treaty under negotiation caused concern within the PS. Opponents were most concerned about the perceived threat to France's social model. In the

¹¹⁴⁴ Hussein Kassim, "France and the European Union under the Chirac Presidency", in Alistair Cole, Patric ; Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 4*, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

¹¹⁴⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 60.1*, October 2003.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*

context of rising unemployment and enlargement, concerns about the movement of workers were brought to the fore.¹¹⁴⁷

The 2004 European Parliament elections took place as Treaty negotiations were underway and shortly after the fifth enlargement, which was much opposed by the French public. It might have been expected that the public would voice its discontent, both with Chirac and EU enlargement, at the elections by turning out in greater numbers. However, as in many member states, the trend of declining turnout continued in France, with just 42.8 per cent of the electorate voting. As in 1999, the PS won the elections. The party increased its support to 28.9 per cent of the popular vote, winning 31 of the 78 seats. The PS arrived far ahead of the UMP, which, although it came second, won just 16.6 per cent of the vote and 17 seats.¹¹⁴⁸ As at the March regional elections, at which the UMP won only two of France's twenty-two mainland regions, the result of the European Parliament elections reflected the drastic decline in the governing party's popularity. It is notable that whereas the FN arrived in eighth place at the 1999 European Parliament elections, the party came fourth in 2004, increasing both its seats and popular support to almost 10 per cent. While increasing electoral support for the FN correlated with growing public concern about integration and mirrored increasing electoral support for UKIP in the UK, given the wider programme of the FN, the result cannot be interpreted as manifestation of opposition to the EU. Rather, in keeping with the second-order election theory, the outcome of the 2004 European Parliament elections in France can be viewed as a manifestation of support for, or opposition to, the governing party.¹¹⁴⁹

During a speech given on 14 July 2004, Chirac announced that a referendum would be held on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. Given that a referendum had been held on the TEU in 1992, a precedent of ratifying fundamental Treaty revisions by referendum had been established. However, as there was no legal requirement for a referendum, as in the UK, the decision was motivated by political or strategic factors.¹¹⁵⁰ The idea of holding a referendum had been voiced by Convention chair, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and quickly drew attention and support. Subject to competition from the left and also within the UMP, notably from Nicolas Sarkozy, Chirac had little choice but to offer the public a vote.¹¹⁵¹ Further, like Mitterrand in

¹¹⁴⁷ Nick Startin and André Krouwel, "Euroscepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and Dutch Rejections of the EU Constitution", *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹¹⁴⁸ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 2004", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-2004.htm>>.

¹¹⁴⁹ Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1997, pp. 87-90.

¹¹⁵⁰ Kai Oppermann, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹¹⁵¹ Nicolas Sauger, Sylvain Brouard and Emiliano Grossman, *Les Français contre l'Europe? Les sens du référendum du 29 mai 2005*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2007, p. 36.

1993, by holding a referendum Chirac hoped to bring to the fore divisions within the opposition PS.¹¹⁵² Yet, at the time of Chirac's announcement, public perception of EU membership as a good thing was just 43 per cent, considerably lower than in 1992.¹¹⁵³ Further, and ultimately more importantly, the President and the government were highly unpopular and the social climate was strained.¹¹⁵⁴ It was therefore essential that the governing party present a united front in order to maximise its influence over the public and ensure adequate support for the Treaty. As the governing party that signed the Treaty, the UMP was under pressure to ensure a 'yes' vote, making internal opposition easier to curb.¹¹⁵⁵

In November 2004, shortly after the signature of the Constitutional Treaty, Nicolas Sarkozy was elected President of the UMP, securing 85 per cent of votes.¹¹⁵⁶ While this was a resounding victory, of note is that Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, leader of the sovereigntist *Débout la République* (DLR) faction, won over 9 per cent of votes.¹¹⁵⁷ Although Dupont-Aignan won less support than in 2002, his score was nonetheless reflective of on-going concerns within the UMP about European integration. This was particularly important given the context of declining public support for the EU and opposition to the recent enlargement. Dupont-Aignan and his faction, which counted approximately twenty members, led opposition to the Constitutional Treaty within the UMP. However, Dupont-Aignan's campaign had little impact within the UMP and the party succeeded in remaining relatively united in support of the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. While party unity was facilitated by the responsibilities of government, the situation nonetheless stood in contrast to the deep intra-party divide revealed by the ratification of the TEU in 1992.

Having won the March regional elections and the European Parliament elections of May, the PS was in a strong position and the party's leader, François Hollande, had begun to make clear his Presidential aspirations. The PS declared its support for the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, meaning France conformed to Crum's 'collusive model'. This stands in contrast to the UK, where the two main parties had diverging positions. Adopting the same position as the party in government denied the PS the opportunity to criticise the government. However, Crum also shows that where an opposition party 'colludes' with the government

¹¹⁵² Nick Startin and André Krouwel, "Euroscepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and Dutch Rejections of the EU Constitution", *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹¹⁵³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 61*, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁵⁴ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹¹⁵⁵ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹¹⁵⁶ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹¹⁵⁷ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

intra-party divisions are more likely.¹¹⁵⁸ Sauger adds that divisions over Europe are typical in established parties in opposition that lack strong leadership.¹¹⁵⁹

Just as Mitterrand's plan to divide the opposition RPR over the ratification of the TEU paid off, so too did Chirac's plan to divide the PS. In September 2004, Hollande's number two, Laurent Fabius, controversially announced his opposition to the Treaty. Although presented as an ideological opposition to the provisions of the Treaty, this move by the former Prime Minister and PS First Secretary was driven by strategic considerations and signalled his leadership aspirations. Fabius hoped to gather the support of opponents of the Treaty on the left of the party and beyond, and he sought to exploit divisions between the party's elite and its supporters/members in order to advance his own position within the party.¹¹⁶⁰ He adopted this strategy despite having led PS support for the ratification of the TEU in 1992 and having shown himself to be firmly on the centre-left during his terms as Prime Minister (1984-86) and Finance Minister (2000-02).

Public support for EU membership increased to a high of 56 per cent in Autumn 2004,¹¹⁶¹ meaning Fabius' strategy was risky as well as costly to his personal image.¹¹⁶² Some within the PS considered his position to be opportunistic. During interview, Catherine Quéré claimed that the position adopted by Fabius in opposition to the Treaty was not based on convictions. Rather, it was a case of political posturing in order to create for himself "*une raison d'exister*."¹¹⁶³ Like Quéré, Christophe Premat contended that Fabius was not driven by "*une grande conviction profonde*."¹¹⁶⁴ Dominique Raimbourg claimed Fabius' stance was "*une opposition artificielle*" and "*une position de carrière*."¹¹⁶⁵ It seems Fabius' 'ideology' was driven very much by strategic considerations. His position was also risky as the PS hoped to return to government in 2007, perhaps with him as President, and would thus have to implement the Treaty if it were ratified. Fabius tarnished his image not only among PS colleagues, but also among European politicians alongside whom he hoped to sit in the European Council.

Hollande decided to put the question of ratification to party members by way of a referendum, held on 1 December 2004. The aim was to legitimise the official position of the party and to strengthen Hollande's leadership.¹¹⁶⁶ Ratification was supported by 58.9 per cent

¹¹⁵⁸ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁵⁹ Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Idem.*

¹¹⁶¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 62*, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶² Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l'Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.* p. 244.

¹¹⁶³ Catherine Quéré, interview in person.

¹¹⁶⁴ Christophe Premat, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁶⁵ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁶⁶ Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", *op. cit.*, p. 67.

of those who voted. While this result was undoubtedly disappointing for Fabius, at more than 40 per cent, opposition to the Treaty was high enough to justify him pursuing the ‘no’ campaign. Fabius’ credibility was also maintained due to the fact that 61 of the party’s 141 *députés* voted against ratification. The extent of the divide within the PS was similar to that within the RPR in 1992 in terms of the proportion of *députés* supporting the ‘no’ campaign, and presented a serious problem of party discipline for Hollande. In response to the deep intra-party divide, Hollande insisted that PS *députés* owed their loyalty to the party. While he was prepared to accept that opponents of the Treaty abstain on the parliamentary vote, he would not tolerate ‘no’ votes. As a result, on 1 February 2005, 87 of the party’s *députés* voted in favour of the Treaty’s ratification and 51 abstained. No PS *députés* voted in opposition to ratification.¹¹⁶⁷ The vote was carried by 450 to 34.¹¹⁶⁸

Despite the result of the internal referendum and the parliamentary vote, opposition to the Treaty remained within the PS. While Hollande led the party’s official ‘yes’ campaign, Fabius led the ‘no’ campaign. Notably, Henri Emmanuelli and Jean-Luc Mélenchon joined Fabius in campaigning against the Constitutional Treaty.¹¹⁶⁹ Both Emmanuelli and Mélenchon were high-ranking party elites; the former had been First-Secretary between 1994 and 1995, and the latter was a long-serving Senator. Like Fabius, both men had supported the ratification of the TEU in 1992. In contrast to Fabius, however, Emmanuelli and Mélenchon were firmly and consistently on the left-wing of the party, which meant their opposition to the Constitutional Treaty seemed genuinely ideological as opposed to opportunistic. The opposition of Emmanuelli and Mélenchon to the Constitutional Treaty reflected growing unease on the left of the party.

Given the level of opposition to the Treaty among PS politicians at the time, it is perhaps surprising that few PS respondents to the questionnaire cited this period as the point at which their attitude towards French membership of the EU evolved. On the one hand, this would seem to confirm that opposition was to the provisions of the Treaty and not to the process of integration per se, and that the revisions made in the Lisbon Treaty appeased concerns. On the other hand, it could confirm that opposition to the Treaty among PS politicians was a manifestation of discontent with the direction the party was moving in as opposed to a sign of profound concerns about integration. During interview, Quéré accounted for the high level of

¹¹⁶⁷ Olivier Rozenberg, *Les députés français et l’Europe. Tristes hémicycles?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 245, 248-249.

¹¹⁶⁸ Assemblée nationale, “Analyse du Scrutin no. 707 – Séance du 1 février 2005” <<https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/scrutins/jo0707.asp>>.

¹¹⁶⁹ Nicolas Sauger, Sylvain Brouard and Emiliano Grossman, *Les Français contre l’Europe ? Les sens du référendum du 29 mai 2005*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

support for the ‘no’ campaign among PS politicians by claiming that, while some on the left of the party opposed the Treaty due to genuine concern about certain provisions, the opposition of others was motivated by “*un rejet de la direction du parti.*” In particular, Quéré noted that some within the PS were quite shocked by, and opposed to, “*le couple Hollande-Royal.*”¹¹⁷⁰ While the opposition of some PS politicians, such as Emmanuelli and Mélenchon, seemed to be motivated by ideological considerations, it is also clear that Fabius was not alone within the PS in being driven by strategic considerations.

At 69.37 per cent, turnout at the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty was slightly lower than at the referendum on the TEU thirteen years earlier.¹¹⁷¹ The Treaty was rejected by 54.67 per cent of voters. Whereas less than 42 per cent of PS members had opposed the Treaty at the internal referendum of December 2004, the majority of PS-supporting voters rejected the Treaty at the May 2005 referendum. This revealed a divide between the party’s members (both activists and politicians) and its supporters, and thus introduced a new dividing line within the party.¹¹⁷² In addition to rejecting provisions considered too economically liberal, PS supporters were reluctant to support Chirac again, having been forced to do so in 2002.¹¹⁷³ In contrast, over two-thirds of UMP supporters voted in favour of the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.¹¹⁷⁴ Those UMP supporters who opposed the Treaty tended to cite the accession of Turkey as a reason for their position.¹¹⁷⁵ This situation marked a clear evolution in attitudes since the referendum of 1992 at which two-thirds of RPR supporters voted against the ratification of the TEU. That the party spoke with one voice in support of the Treaty undoubtedly served to boost support among its voters. However, that support for the Treaty was high among voters surely also served to discourage dissent within the UMP.

Although the official positions of the two main parties conformed to the ‘collusive model’, the fact that the PS divided so heavily and the party’s ‘no’ campaign gained much attention meant that there were also features of the ‘competitive model’ in the campaign. Crum shows that competitive settings are more conducive to second-order voting, where the public tends to vote with or against the government, as opposed to voting on the issue at stake.¹¹⁷⁶ Because the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty was considered by many as a second-

¹¹⁷⁰ Catherine Quéré, interview in person.

¹¹⁷¹ Laurent de Boissieu, “Référendum: Constitution européenne (2005)”, *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/referendum-2005.htm>>.

¹¹⁷² Frédéric Sawicki, “Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left”, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹¹⁷³ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

¹¹⁷⁴ Nicolas Sauger, “Attitudes towards Europe in France”, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹¹⁷⁵ Marion Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ben Crum, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

order referendum, the outcome can be interpreted as a rejection of the policies of President Chirac and his government rather than a rejection of EU integration. This is confirmed by Ipsos polling data, which showed discontent with the socio-economic situation in France to be the most common motivation of ‘no’ voters in general. However, whereas the socio-economic situation was the most common motivation of PS supporters who voted ‘no’, the one-third of UMP supporters who rejected the Treaty most commonly cited opposition to Turkish accession to the EU as the main reason for voting against the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.¹¹⁷⁷

In certain respects, the divide within the PS over the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty resembled the divide within the Conservative Party over the TEU. Both parties divided deeply when forced to take a position on the Treaties. Opposition to the official party position was vocal in both cases and posed a challenge to the parties’ leaders. However, there were also notable differences between the two ‘rebellions.’ Whereas the PS was in opposition in 2005 (as was the RPR in 1992), the Conservative Party was in government at the time of the ratification of the TEU. This is important, as a party in government will usually remain united so as to avoid the embarrassment of failing to ratify a treaty signed by its leader. Another difference was the high profile of the leader of the ‘no’ campaign within the PS. Whereas Fabius was a former Prime Minister and former First Secretary of the party, the UK’s Maastricht rebels were all backbenchers. The PS leadership was successful in containing the parliamentary rebellion by having opponents abstain rather vote against the Treaty at the National Assembly vote. This contrasts with Conservative opponents to the TEU who defied the party whip in growing numbers. Like RPR opponents of the TEU, PS politicians opposed the provisions of the Constitutional Treaty and not the process of integration per se, which stands in contrast to the UK’s Maastricht rebels who were ideologically opposed to integration. Although Emmanuelli and Mélenchon were also driven by ideological opposition, Fabius’ position was opportunistic, adopted as a strategy to advance his standing within the party.

1.1.2. The aftermath of the referendum shock

Although periodic crises have been a feature of the French relationship with European integration, the outcome of the May 2005 referendum signalled the beginning of a “new phase,”

¹¹⁷⁷ Ipsos, “Referendum 29 mai 2005: les sondages sortis des urnes comparatif 29 mai 2005/20 septembre 1992” <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/referendum-29-mai-2005-le-sondage-sorti-des-urnes>>, cited in Nick Startin and André Krouwel, “Euroscepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and Dutch Rejections of the EU Constitution”, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

a state of “malaise” in France-EU relations.¹¹⁷⁸ Sauger claims, however, that the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the French public “had more consequences on the European scene than on the French political landscape.”¹¹⁷⁹ While this is certainly true, the French ‘no’ vote had immediate repercussions for domestic politics that should be taken into consideration here. The result of the referendum was a severe blow to President Chirac, who had initiated the referendum, and the government. Surveyed in the weeks following the referendum, just 24 per cent of the public trusted Chirac as President and only 22 per cent trusted Jean-Pierre Raffarin as Prime Minister.¹¹⁸⁰ The latter resigned and was succeeded by Dominique de Villepin.

For the PS, the victory of the ‘no’ campaign meant the deep intra-party divide would take longer to heal. Hollande’s leadership was severely undermined by the result, particularly given his decision to put the question of ratification to an internal referendum in December 2004. Yet, the divide was viewed by some as a means of opening up the discussion on the future of the PS. Stéphane Saint-André, who was a member of the PS until 2008, referred to this period as “*un moment de clarté, nécessaire pour le parti.*”¹¹⁸¹ A key strategy adopted by the First-Secretary in order to hold the party together was the decision not to punish those who had campaigned for a ‘no’ vote.¹¹⁸² The aim was to neutralise, rather than externalise, the key individuals concerned. This marked a difference with previous divisions over the Europe issue, notably that around the ratification of the TEU, which resulted in the prompt externalisation of Chevènement. Fabius and Emmanuelli remained in the party, as did Mélenchon, although only until 2008. For Catherine Quéré, it is “*grace aux qualités de François Hollande*” that the PS recovered from the divisions of 2005.¹¹⁸³ Hollande’s task of restoring order was somewhat facilitated by the fact that Fabius’ opposition to the Constitutional Treaty was perceived quite widely within the PS as having been opportunistic.¹¹⁸⁴ At the PS congress in Le Mans in November 2005, Hollande was successful to a certain extent in appeasing divisions and managed to have delegates unite in support of one sole conference motion.¹¹⁸⁵ Yet, having successfully raised his profile during the referendum campaign, in January 2006 Fabius

¹¹⁷⁸ Emiliano Grossman, “Introduction: France and the EU: from opportunity to constraint”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 14, no. 7, 2007.

¹¹⁷⁹ Nicolas Sauger, “Attitudes towards Europe in France”, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁸¹ Stéphane Saint-André, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁸² Frédéric Sawicki, “Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left”, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹¹⁸³ Catherine Quéré, interview in person.

¹¹⁸⁴ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁸⁵ Andrew Knapp and Frédéric Sawicki, “Political Parties and the Party System”, in Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 4*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

confirmed his leadership ambitions by announcing his intention to seek the PS nomination for the 2007 Presidential elections.

Before the 2000s, the question of European integration had not constituted a basis of competition within or between parties on the French left.¹¹⁸⁶ However, according to Dominique Raimbourg, an important consequence of the ‘no’ vote and, in particular, the high level of opposition to the Treaty among PS supporters, was that the party and its individual politicians showed greater “*prudence*” and became more attentive of public opinion on the Europe issue.¹¹⁸⁷ Chantal Guittet warned that “*l’élite politique devraient faire plus d’attention aux soucis du peuple.*”¹¹⁸⁸ More generally, an important consequence of the failure to ratify the Constitutional Treaty was the politicisation of the Europe issue. This could be seen both on the left and the right of the political spectrum and among pro-EU and Eurosceptic political actors alike.¹¹⁸⁹ With the Treaty’s failure, the Europe issue moved up the political agenda. The FN sought to take advantage of this by adopting an increasingly anti-EU discourse in an attempt to attract the support of blue-collar opponents of the Treaty.¹¹⁹⁰

Yet, despite the activism of politicians and the interest shown by the public in the Constitutional Treaty, French politics returned to normal not long after the referendum. The Europe issue fell in salience and attention turned to other issues in the context of the up-coming Presidential elections.¹¹⁹¹ The existence of a consensus within and between French mainstream parties in support of the process of European integration, if not all of its outcomes, neutralised the issue, meaning it did not become a basis of political competition.¹¹⁹² Further, compared to other issues, the public attached little importance to the EU and showed little interest in the matter beyond referendum campaigns, which most mainstream politicians recognised.¹¹⁹³ That the majority of the public who opposed the Constitutional Treaty had done so to signal their discontent with the socio-economic situation reflected the relative lack of importance attached to the Europe issue by the public. These factors could explain why the negative outcome of the referendum had a limited impact on mainstream politicians in terms of their positions on integration. In so far as France was concerned, and in contrast to the UK, Mair’s claim that “the

¹¹⁸⁶ Nicolas Sauger, “Attitudes towards Europe in France”, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹¹⁸⁷ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁸⁸ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone.

¹¹⁸⁹ Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

¹¹⁹⁰ Nick Startin and André Krouwel, “Euroscepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and Dutch Rejections of the EU Constitution”, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹¹⁹¹ Craig Parsons, “Puzzling out the EU role in national politics”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 14, no. 7, 2007, p. 1140.

¹¹⁹² Nicolas Sauger, “Attitudes towards Europe in France”, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

parties that contest elections” would seek to “push [the Europe issue] to the shadows” held true.¹¹⁹⁴ Further, while intra-party divisions over the Europe issue, this time within the PS, had presented a great challenge for party leaders they were quite quickly glossed over after the referendum. This could be seen during the PS primaries in advance of the 2007 Presidential elections and, in particular, the campaign of Laurent Fabius.

Like the ratification of the TEU for the UK, the Constitutional Treaty referendum marked a key juncture for France in terms of its relationship with the EU, with the campaign revealing profound divisions within the PS and the negative outcome discrediting the governing UMP. Yet the failure to ratify the Treaty had a limited impact on the policies and politics of the two main parties. Even though Fabius remained in the PS and pursued, for a short time, his leadership ambitions, his policies were not internalised by the party. As will be seen below, Mélenchon, who refused to fall into line, was externalised in 2008. This stands in contrast to the consequences of the UK’s (unsuccessful) Maastricht rebellion for the policies and politics of the Conservative Party in particular. Even though the TEU was eventually ratified in the UK, the Conservative Party internalised the arguments made during the ratification process and allowed these to influence party policy from then on.

Despite the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty just two years earlier and the fact that negotiations of its successor were underway, the Europe issue held relatively little importance for the electorate at the time of the 2007 Presidential elections. Just 1.5 per cent of the electorate considered the issue to be the most important and 3 per cent considered it the second most important issue at the time.¹¹⁹⁵ This allowed candidates to focus their campaigns on other issues more important to the public and, in the case of the PS, less internally divisive.

Sarkozy was the only UMP candidate for the 2007 Presidential elections, and his nomination won the support of 98.4 per cent of party members.¹¹⁹⁶ He succeeded in presenting himself as an “outsider”,¹¹⁹⁷ despite having been Interior Minister since June 2005, which was important given growing anti-establishment sentiment. The issues of immigration and national identity were a key focus of Sarkozy’s campaign,¹¹⁹⁸ reflecting increasing public concern for these issues. Nonetheless, many other issues, including the economy, housing and even

¹¹⁹⁴ Peter Mair, “Political Opposition and the European Union”, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹¹⁹⁵ Richard Nadeau, Eric Bélanger, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Bruno Cautrès, Martial Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹¹⁹⁶ Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *Les partis politiques. Vie politique française*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹¹⁹⁷ Jonah D. Levy, Alistair Cole and Patrick Le Galès, “From Chirac to Sarkozy: A New France?”, in Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 4*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹¹⁹⁸ Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj, “From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?”, in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (eds.), *Developments in French Politics Five*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

pensions, were considered more important than immigration at the time of the elections.¹¹⁹⁹ The result of the referendum had naturally damaged France-EU relations and diminished the French influence within the institutions.¹²⁰⁰ Sarkozy claimed he would regain French influence within the EU and sought to have the UMP take ownership of the Europe issue. He reassured France's European partners by making it clear that, if elected, he would ratify the successor to the Constitutional Treaty by Parliamentary vote alone, and not by referendum.¹²⁰¹ While this was a political risk, it should be recalled that over two-thirds of UMP supporters voted in favour of the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.¹²⁰² Further, under his leadership since 2004, the role of Eurosceptics groups within the party had diminished, allowing Sarkozy to feel confident of sufficient support within the UMP to allow the Treaty to be ratified. Sarkozy was nonetheless critical of EU enlargement, reflecting public concerns about immigration and Turkish accession in particular.

Despite events of 2005, the PS approached the Presidential election seemingly united. Ségolène Royal was elected by party members as the PS candidate, winning 60 per cent of the vote against her rivals Laurent Fabius and Dominique Strauss-Kahn.¹²⁰³ Fabius, the only candidate to have opposed the Constitutional Treaty, received the least support of the three candidates, winning just 18.6 per cent of the vote. Although Fabius was supported by Mélenchon, the candidate clearly failed to mobilise the 40 per cent of party members who had opposed the Treaty. The outcome of the PS primary put an end to his Presidential aspirations.¹²⁰⁴ The result confirmed that Fabius had been neutralised and suggested that intra-party differences over EU policy had, to a certain extent, been resolved. Nonetheless, Royal seemed divided between her party's priorities and a desire to draw support from voters attracted by Sarkozy's focus on law and order, and immigration.¹²⁰⁵ On Europe Royal was ambiguous, seeking to please both supporters and opponents of the Constitutional Treaty.¹²⁰⁶ Notably, and in contrast to Sarkozy, Royal promised to hold a referendum on the ratification of a treaty to

¹¹⁹⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 67*, *op. cit.*

¹²⁰⁰ Hussein Kassim, "France and the European Union under the Chirac Presidency", *op. cit.*, p. 258.

¹²⁰¹ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹²⁰² Nicolas Sauger, "Attitudes towards Europe in France", *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹²⁰³ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹²⁰⁴ Nicolas Sauger, Sylvain Brouard and Emiliano Grossman, *Les Français contre l'Europe ? Les sens du référendum du 29 mai 2005*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹²⁰⁵ Bruno Cautrès with Alistair Cole, "The 2007 French Elections and Beyond", in Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy (eds.), *Developments in French Politics 4*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹²⁰⁶ Craig Parsons, "Puzzling out the EU role in national politics", *op. cit.*, p. 1140.

replace the failed Constitutional Treaty.¹²⁰⁷ This was essential so as to avoid a further divide within the party and alienating supporters who had opposed the Constitutional Treaty.

Nicolas Sarkozy won both the first and second rounds of the Presidential election, with 53.06 per cent of the popular vote at the second round. At almost 84 per cent, the turnout at the second round was particularly high.¹²⁰⁸ While Sarkozy retained the support of centre-right voters, he succeeded in winning back many voters on the right who had transferred their support to the FN over the years.¹²⁰⁹ The effects of the 2005 referendum could be seen in voting patterns at the Presidential elections. A correlation could be observed between support for integration and support for Nicolas Sarkozy, suggesting EU issue voting had contributed to his victory. This was a change from the Presidential elections of both 2002 and 1995 at which Europhiles were more likely to support the PS candidate. Nonetheless, that Sarkozy had won the support of those who had previously voted for the FN indicates that his criticism of EU enlargement, in a context of growing public concern about immigration, reassured this section of the electorate. Sarkozy had succeeded in taking ownership of the Europe issue, a boost as he entered negotiations of the Treaty of Lisbon.¹²¹⁰ During his acceptance speech, Sarkozy declared that “*la France est de retour en Europe*”.¹²¹¹ He was undoubtedly referring to the consequences of the French rejection of the Constitutional Treaty for France’s standing within the EU. Sarkozy made clear his determination to see France regain its leadership role within the EU and ensure the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.¹²¹²

The FN’s Jean-Marie Le Pen came fourth at the first round of the Presidential elections, winning less than 11 per cent of the popular vote, considerably less than at the first round in 2002. With his focus on immigration and national identity, Sarkozy succeeded in attracting FN supporters, who believed he would be more able than Le Pen to implement the security policy they hoped for. In fact, 40 per cent of those who voted for the FN at the 2007 Presidential elections had not voted for Le Pen in 2002,¹²¹³ indicating the party attracted voters from elsewhere, notably the left.

The UMP group won a solid majority at the subsequent legislative elections, winning 320 of the 577 seats. Sarkozy appointed François Fillon as Prime Minister and, despite the party

¹²⁰⁷ Helen Drake, “France and the European Union”, *op.cit.*, p. 221.

¹²⁰⁸ Bruno Cautrès with Alistair Cole, “The 2007 French Elections and Beyond”, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹²⁰⁹ Jonah D. Levy, Alistair Cole and Patrick Le Galès, “From Chirac to Sarkozy: A New France?”, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹²¹⁰ Richard Nadeau, Eric Bélanger, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Bruno Cautrès, Martial Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

¹²¹¹ Nicolas Sarkozy, *Acceptance speech*, Paris, 6 May 2007 <https://www.liberation.fr/france/2007/05/06/le-discours-de-nicolas-sarkozy_9889>.

¹²¹² Helen Drake, “France and the European Union”, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹²¹³ Nonna Mayer, “Encadré: L’électorat Le Pen de 1984 à 2007”, in Antonin Cohen, Bernard Lacroix and Philippe Riutort (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 441-443.

having won a strong majority, Sarkozy and Fillon appointed a *gouvernement d'ouverture*, which included members from various parties.¹²¹⁴ As at the 2002 legislative elections, the FN won no seats in the National Assembly. Particularly notable is that its share of the popular vote decreased drastically between 2002 and 2007, reflecting again the extent to which Sarkozy and the UMP had been successful in attracting the support of voters on the far-right.

Sarkozy's victory constituted the third successive loss for the PS. Despite having presented a relatively united front at the Presidential elections, the party remained divided over its future direction. The image of the PS, tarnished by events of 2005, stood in contrast to that of the governing UMP.

1.2.3. *The Treaty of Lisbon*

A key concern of the French government, like that of the UK, was to ensure that the Treaty that resulted from the negotiations would not have to be put to referendum. Along with its EU partners, the French government sought to de-constitutionalise the Treaty of Lisbon. The common desire of EU governments to avoid the holding of referenda on the Treaty worked to the benefit of France, as it did for the UK, increasing its ability to negotiate concessions.¹²¹⁵ Negotiations got underway shortly after Sarkozy's election as President. He was very active in proposing revisions to the successor of the Constitutional Treaty and allowed himself to take credit for the signature of the Treaty of Lisbon just a few months later, on 13 December 2007. Notably, Sarkozy sought to have the EU become more protective of its citizens and workers, and was successful in removing from the Treaty reference to undistorted competition within the Single Market. He made clear his concerns about the prospect of future enlargement, particularly to include Turkey, concerns which reflected those of the French public.¹²¹⁶

The Treaty of Lisbon was in most respects the same as the treaty it replaced, meaning its ratification without referendum could be challenged as undemocratic.¹²¹⁷ Sarkozy thus ran a political risk in pushing ahead with Parliamentary ratification, as he had promised to do. As in the UK, it was argued that this revised Treaty did not bring about enough change to justify holding a referendum. Also as in the UK, with national elections not due for a number of years, the government could essentially ignore public opinion.¹²¹⁸ A key difference, however, was that

¹²¹⁴ Robert Elgie, "The French Presidency", *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹²¹⁵ Kai Oppermann, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹²¹⁶ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, pp. 220-221.

¹²¹⁷ Fabio Liberti, "Le «retour» de la France dans le processus européen?", *Revue internationale et stratégique*, vol. 1, no. 77, 2010, p. 170.

¹²¹⁸ Kai Oppermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

Sarkozy had campaigned in favour of parliamentary ratification during the Presidential election campaign, giving him a democratic mandate to avoid a referendum. Nonetheless, the decision to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon by parliamentary vote alone came up against criticism. While on-going divisions within the PS muffled opposition to ratification by Parliamentary vote alone,¹²¹⁹ both Emmanuelli, in the National Assembly, and Mélenchon, in the Senate, argued against the Treaty's ratification.

The decision to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon by parliamentary vote alone was also criticised from within the UMP. In fact Sarkozy's announcement that a referendum would not be held had provoked the departure of Nicolas Dupont-Aignan from the UMP in January 2007. According to his former spokesperson, Jean-Philippe Tanguy, Dupont-Aignan considered the decision not to hold a referendum to be "*une trahison*", as it constituted the non-respect of the will of the people as expressed at the 2005 referendum.¹²²⁰ Even today there is criticism of the decision to ratify the Treaty without a referendum with the LR. Damien Abad stated his belief that a referendum ought to have been held, and analysed that "*les français n'ont jamais accepté que nous ne les avons pas écoutés en 2005.*"¹²²¹ Abad's impression is in keeping with the increase in the levels of distrust of the government among the French public following the ratification of the Treaty in February 2008, when two-thirds of the public claimed they did not trust the government.¹²²²

The Treaty of Lisbon was successfully ratified by the National Assembly on 7 February 2008 by 336 votes to 52.¹²²³ UMP *députés* voted overwhelmingly in support of the Treaty. Having left the party a year earlier, Dupont-Aignan voted against ratification. Divisions manifested themselves within the PS, although not nearly to the extent that they did in 2005. With 121 votes in favour, 25 PS *députés* voted against the Treaty and 17 abstained. Emmanuelli voted against ratification, as did Mélenchon in the Senate. Fabius was one of 42 PS *députés* absent at the vote. While he was not prepared to adopt the party's official position – to do so would be hypocritical – neither was he willing to openly oppose it, indicating both the insincerity of his position in 2004-05 and the fact that he had been successfully neutralised by the party leadership.

¹²¹⁹ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹²²⁰ Jean-Philippe Tanguy, interview by telephone.

¹²²¹ Damien Abad, interview in person.

¹²²² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 69*, *op. cit.*

¹²²³ Assemblée Nationale, "Analyse du Scrutin no. 83 – Séance du 7 février 2008" <<https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/13/scrutins/jo0083.asp>>.

Given concerns about the Treaty of Lisbon within the PS one might expect the period around its signature and ratification to have been a point at which attitudes within the PS towards French membership of the EU evolved. Yet this was not the case. As with the Constitutional Treaty, few PS respondents to the questionnaire cited the period around the Treaty of Lisbon as the point at which their attitude towards French membership of the EU evolved. Again, this would suggest that concerns about specific provisions of the Treaty were not enough to have respondents call into question their support for integration per se.

Following the swift ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, France held the rotationary presidency of the EU during the second half of 2008. This served as the perfect opportunity for Sarkozy to prove that France truly was “*de retour en Europe*.”¹²²⁴ The period was marked by a number of crises, notably the conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia, and the onset of the financial crisis. Further, shortly before France assumed the Presidency, the Irish public rejected the Treaty of Lisbon at referendum, bringing to the fore concerns about the Treaty’s reforms.¹²²⁵ However, the context of crisis allowed France, and President Sarkozy in particular, to assume to the full the leadership role that the Presidency entails. This was particularly important in the context of up-coming elections to the European Parliament.

During this time, divisions within the PS were on-going. Differences over the future direction of the party were evident at the November 2008 Congress held in Reims at which members struggled to choose a successor to Hollande. After many votes, Martine Aubry was elected First Secretary.¹²²⁶ Notably, despite the neutralisation of Fabius, divisions remained apparent between the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ camps, and some appeared unable to forgive Laurent Fabius and his supporters. Following the Congress, Jean-Luc Mélenchon left the PS in November 2008 and in February 2009 he established the *Parti de Gauche*.¹²²⁷ His decision was motivated by a desire to establish a party truly on the left, which he did not consider the PS to be. His move was also driven by his on-going opposition to the Treaty of Lisbon, the entry into force of which he hoped to stop, and his determination to bring about fundamental reform of the EU. It should also be noted that Mélenchon left the PS after the 2007 Presidential elections had shown that the FN was attracting support from among traditional supporters of the left. While ideological differences certainly underpinned Mélenchon’s departure from the PS, he arguably sought to mobilise the discontent of Eurosceptic voters on the left for his own political

¹²²⁴ Nicolas Sarkozy, *Acceptance speech*, Paris, 6 May 2007, *op. cit.*

¹²²⁵ Helen Drake, “France and the European Union”, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-223.

¹²²⁶ Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *op. cit.*, p.125.

¹²²⁷ Eric Agrikoliansky, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

gain. Although Mélenchon left the PS over three years after the Constitutional Treaty referendum, his departure nonetheless was an externalisation, similar to that of Chevènement in 1993, for failing to yield to official party policy.

Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Dupont-Aignan decided to establish *Debout la République* as a separate political party. The party was founded in November 2008, at the same time as Mélenchon left the PS. The departure of Dupont-Aignan constitutes a further example of a mainstream party externalising a vocal opponent of official party EU policy. Following the ratification of the TEU, the Treaty's key opponents, Séguin and Pasqua, remained in the party. While Séguin was successfully neutralised, Pasqua continued to cause problems, supporting and then fielding a separate list at European Parliament elections. However, opposition within the RPR and among its supporters to the TEU was much higher than to the Constitutional or Lisbon Treaties. From the early 1990s, the RPR-UMP's position on European integration evolved markedly. In fact, the UMP had come to be seen as the party of Europe, meaning there was no place for outspoken Eurosceptics such as Dupont-Aignan within the party. Again, the externalisation of vocal critics of the Treaty of Lisbon by the two main political parties stands in contrast to the situation in the UK. Whereas French mainstream parties pushed opponents to the margins of the party system, opposition to the UK government's decision to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon without a referendum was internalised, in particular by the Conservative Party.

With the Treaty of Lisbon having been ratified by the French Parliament over a year earlier, the salience of the Europe issue had declined by the time of the 2009 European Parliament elections. This was again reflected in the low turnout of just 40.6 per cent, down 2 percentage points since 2004. The UMP won the elections, increasing its share of the vote to almost 28 per cent and winning 29 of France's 72 seats. The PS came a distant second, with its share of the vote falling to just 16.5 per cent and winning 14 seats. Mélenchon's newly-founded *Parti de Gauche* contested the elections for the first time, presenting a joint list with the PCF. The list won 6 per cent of the vote and Mélenchon was elected to the European Parliament. Dupont-Aignan's DLR also presented candidates for the first time but did not win enough support to enter the European Parliament. The FN won just 6.3 per cent of the vote and three seats, considerably less than in 2004.¹²²⁸ It appeared that, in 2009, the French public continued to view European Parliament elections as second-order elections. As such, the outcome of these

¹²²⁸ European Parliament, "2019 European Elections" <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/fr/resultats-nationaux/france/2009-2014/session-constitutive/>>.

elections could be viewed as a manifestation of support for the governing UMP.¹²²⁹ The result perhaps also indicates the UMP had achieved its objective of taking ownership of the Europe issue. Given the success of the PS at the previous European Parliament elections, the result could also be a sign of the damage that had been done to the party's image, on the Europe issue in particular, in the eyes of the public. That the French electorate continued to treat European Parliament elections as second-order elections stands in contrast to the UK, where the public had begun to use the European Parliament elections to express their concerns about, and opposition to, EU integration. In the UK, while the soft Eurosceptic opposition Conservative Party came in first place, UKIP came second, having increased support since 2004.

1.2.4. The limits of FN influence

Whereas popular support for the UK's UKIP increased consistently at European Parliament elections from 1994 on, popular support for the FN at European Parliament elections has been relatively inconsistent. This would seem to confirm, in keeping with the second-order election theory, that votes cast in favour of the FN at European Parliament elections were still, in 2009, a vote in opposition to the party in government, or the established political elite in general, as opposed to a manifestation of opposition to EU membership. At Presidential elections, except in 2007, the FN has increased its share of the popular vote quite consistently since 1988. However this increase in support does not indicate approval of its Eurosceptic position, which is a secondary issue for the party, but rather its focus on national identity, immigration, and security. Rising support for the FN was therefore viewed by other parties as a barometer of public concern about these issues. This can explain the limited impact of increasing support for the FN on the Europe policies of either the UMP or the PS. Rather than bringing about a shift in mainstream positions on European integration, the FN succeeded in keeping the immigration issue centre-stage during the Sarkozy Presidency. This contrasts with the reaction of the mainstream parties in the UK, and especially the Conservative Party, to rising support for UKIP. Electoral support for the essentially single-issue party was considered as a measure of public opposition to EU membership. However, the securitisation of immigration and integration policy during Sarkozy's Presidency brought the French government into direct conflict with the EU for non-respect of the principles of free movement and the rights of migrants.¹²³⁰ This had the effect of strengthening the association of the immigration and Europe issues.

¹²²⁹ Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-90.

¹²³⁰ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 225.

In analysing the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the negotiation and ratification of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, this first sub-chapter has again shown that, while there were certain similarities between the UK and France in terms of the impacts on political competition, there were also many differences. Both the UK and France planned and/or held a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, and for both governments, political pressure was a factor in the decision to hold a public vote. Whereas, in the UK the two main parties conformed to the ‘competitive model’, making the Constitutional Treaty the object of inter-party competition, in France the two main parties supported the Treaty’s ratification, conforming with the ‘collusive model’. Whereas the Treaty was not the basis of intra-party competition in the UK, in France the PS divided deeply, the division driven somewhat by the party’s ‘collusion’ with the governing UMP, resulting in the question becoming a matter of intra-party competition. The position of Laurent Fabius, who led PS opposition to the Constitutional Treaty, was clearly underpinned by strategic considerations. The role of strategy in determining the positions of politicians was also evident in the UK, where strategic considerations caused a change in the tone of the Labour Party’s discourse on the EU and led David Cameron to position himself as firmly Eurosceptic in order to win the leadership of the Conservative Party. However, whereas Cameron’s position on the EU enabled him to make a clear political gain, Fabius’ opposition to the Constitutional Treaty did not bring any gain, rather the contrary.

Neither the UK nor France held a referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon. However, whereas Sarkozy announced during the election campaign preceding the opening of negotiations that the Treaty would not be put to referendum, Brown argued after signing the Treaty that the reform provided for did not necessitate a public vote. The UK government’s decision was considered to lack legitimacy and generated considerable anger. The ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon by the UK Parliament laid bare on-going inter-party divisions and competition on the question of Treaty reform, with the vote being unconvincingly close. The result reflected the absence of a mainstream consensus in support of integration, indicating the very question of EU membership could become a basis of inter-party competition. In contrast, the Treaty was ratified by a resounding majority of those present in the National Assembly, reflecting the return of a consensus. In particular, the outcome of the vote confirmed the success of the PS and, to a lesser extent, the UMP leadership in containing and neutralising opposition to Treaty reform. Those members of the PS and UMP, namely Mélenchon and Dupont-Aignan, who failed to fall into line were externalised by their respective parties. That the UMP pushed out Dupont-Aignan signalled that such a vocal Eurosceptic had no place in the party.

In both the UK and France, events took place in a context of increasing public opposition to EU membership and concerns about growing support for hard Eurosceptic parties. However, whereas the trend in French public opinion on EU membership was undoubtedly worrying, the level of opposition in the UK was not only much higher, so too was the increasing rate of this opposition. Furthermore, although UKIP was unlikely to enter Parliament due to the UK's highly majoritarian electoral system, the consistent rise in support for this essentially single-issue party could be, and was, interpreted as a vote against EU membership. As a result mainstream parties, and the Conservative Party in particular, adapted their EU policy in an attempt to counter the perceived threat posed by UKIP. In France the FN had reached the second round of the 2002 Presidential elections and had already held seats in Parliament. Yet although the FN was heavily critical of the EU its focus was much wider, meaning any increase in electoral support for the party was not interpreted as a vote against EU membership but rather as a vote against the government or established parties in general.

Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, while the salience of the Europe issue declined in France, its importance only grew in the UK. The second part of this chapter will study the evolution of political competition around the Europe issue following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2. The political consequences of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties

The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009 over two years after its signature, and over four years after the signature of the Constitutional Treaty. During those years the economic situation changed drastically and with it the political situation. The financial crisis that arrived in Europe in autumn 2008 became an economic crisis. Over the course of 2009, European economies went into recession and unemployment rose. Public debt rose as a result of the strain on national treasuries and from 2010, in certain member states, that debt became unsustainable. Faced with a sovereign debt crisis, so-called bailouts were required in order to avoid default on debt payments and a contagion effect. This series of crises not only revealed failings on the part of national governments but also in the ability of the EU to respond to such crises. Measures were subsequently adopted at the EU level in an attempt to prevent future crises and better equip the EU to respond but were limited by opposition from Eurosceptic governments.

The economic crisis and the associated crisis of governance did great damage to the public's perception of established political actors at both the national and EU levels. This came

on the back of raised levels of public distrust of their governments following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. At the national level, support for anti-establishment, populist parties rose. Support for EU membership also declined following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. By late 2009, average public support for EU membership had fallen to 53 per cent and continued to decline over the following years.¹²³¹ Concurrently, the public increasingly had a negative image of the EU.¹²³² By May 2016, 27 per cent of the public had either a fairly negative or very negative image of the EU.¹²³³

The following sections present and analyse the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians in the period following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon until June 2016 when the UK public voted to leave the EU. As in the previous sub-chapter, these sections seek to determine how the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon impacted inter- and intra-party competition, how parties managed divisions, and the motivations of parties and individual politicians in positioning themselves on the Europe issue.

2.1. UK politicians and Europe post-Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force shortly before a general election was due to take place. Although the Labour Party still held a solid majority after more than twelve years in power, this had been considerably diminished over the years. Further, Gordon Brown, who lacked his predecessor's charisma, was less popular as Prime Minister than he had been as Chancellor. The Conservative Party had lost three successive general elections, putting David Cameron under pressure to return his party to office. By late 2009, the UK economy was just starting to come out of recession after over a year of negative growth. However, having contracted by over 6 per cent between early 2008 and mid-2009, recovery was far from sure.¹²³⁴

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party and among the public hardened. Whereas following the entry into force of the TEU Eurosceptic attention turned to ensuring the UK would not adopt the single currency, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon political support for a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU grew. Among the public, the already existing trend of declining support for EU membership was reinforced by the widespread sense of injustice at

¹²³¹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 72*, *op. cit.*

¹²³² Eurobarometer stopped expressly asking respondents whether they thought EU membership was a good thing in 2011. Instead, respondents have since then been asked whether they have a positive or negative image of the EU.

¹²³³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 85*, July 2016.

¹²³⁴ Office for National Statistics, "The 2008 recession 10 years on", 30 April 2018 <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/the2008recession10yearson/2018-04-30>>.

having been denied a referendum on either the Constitutional or Lisbon Treaties. By late 2009, just 30 per cent of the UK public believed membership of the EU to be a good thing and the same proportion considered membership to be a bad thing. As always, the UK public was far less supportive than the EU average¹²³⁵ and opposition to membership only grew over the coming years.¹²³⁶

2.1.1. A coalition of Eurosceptics and Europhiles

The 2010 general election took place in the context of on-going economic crisis. The UK had been heavily impacted by the economic crisis, but its recession did not last as long as in a number of other EU member states. Also, given that the UK had not adopted the Euro, the UK central bank could independently adjust the interest rate in response to the economic crisis. This served to vindicate opponents of the single currency, as did the emerging sovereign debt crisis within the Eurozone. In addition to the considerable proportion of the public that viewed EU membership as a bad thing, public opposition to the single currency had risen to 73 per cent by the time of the general election.¹²³⁷

The Labour Party's manifesto struck an ambitious tone, insisting that EU membership was in the interests of the UK. However, the manifesto repeatedly noted the need for the EU to reform and, conscious of public opposition to the single currency, reiterated the party's promise that there would be no adopting of the single currency without a referendum. Notably, Labour's manifesto directly responded to the Conservative Party's EU policy, claiming the latter was isolated and marginalised on the European stage.¹²³⁸ This was a reference to the Conservative Party's decision to leave the EPP group in the European Parliament. With Cameron as its young leader, the Conservative Party presented itself at the 2010 general election as a Eurosceptic but modern party.¹²³⁹ The party's manifesto ruled out the future adoption of the single currency and promised to introduce a law rendering any future transfer of sovereignty to the EU subject to a referendum. The party also promised to negotiate the repatriation of certain powers.¹²⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Europe issue did not play a prominent role in the election campaign. Despite growing opposition to EU membership, the public did not consider the issue to be of great

¹²³⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 72*, *op. cit.*

¹²³⁶ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 78*, April 2013.

¹²³⁷ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 73*, November 2010.

¹²³⁸ Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 2010" <<https://web.archive.org/web/20120305114506/http://www2.labour.org.uk/uploads/TheLabourPartyManifesto-2010.pdf>>.

¹²³⁹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹²⁴⁰ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 2010" <http://media.conservatives.s3.amazonaws.com/manifesto/cpmanifesto2010_lowres.pdf>.

importance. Neither party stood to gain from increasing the salience of the issue. In particular, David Cameron was determined that the Conservative Party would focus on “the things that most people care about” instead of “banging on about Europe.”¹²⁴¹ Minimising the salience of the Europe issue also reduced the risk of stirring up intra-party divisions that had been contained quite successfully under Cameron’s leadership.

The outcome of the election was highly unusual as it resulted in the formation of a coalition government. Although the Conservative Party won the greatest number of seats, it did not win enough to form a single-party government. This was seen as a great failing on Cameron’s part given that the Labour Party had been in government for 13 years and Brown’s personal popularity ratings were low going into the election. Twenty seats short of a majority, the Conservative Party was forced to form a coalition, the first since World War II. After negotiations, a coalition agreement was signed with the centrist, Europhile Liberal Democrats. Although UKIP failed yet again to win any seats, the party increased its share of the popular vote, winning 3.1 per cent of the vote, an increase of 0.9 per cent compared to the 2005 general election. In terms of popular support, the party arrived in fourth place. Notably, UKIP’s leader, Nigel Farage, won 17.4 per cent of the vote in the constituency he contested.¹²⁴² This result for UKIP and its leader served to further the anger felt by Conservatives, especially Eurosceptics, towards Cameron.

The coalition agreement concluded by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties made minimal reference to the EU. Nonetheless, the agreement did announce the government’s intention to “play a leading role in an enlarged European Union.” This reflected Cameron’s campaign promise to be active and pragmatic in relations with the EU. The agreement also retained the Conservatives’ promises that there would be no further transfers of powers to the EU without a referendum and the UK would not join or prepare to adopt the single currency during the course of the Parliament.¹²⁴³ However, the Liberal Democrats were successful in having the government renounce its promise to seek the repatriation of certain powers.¹²⁴⁴ Further, Cameron’s Cabinet necessarily reflected the wide range of views on integration within the government. Having served as Shadow Foreign Secretary since 2005, the soft Eurosceptic,

¹²⁴¹ David Cameron, *Leader’s Speech*, Conservative Party Conference, Bournemouth, 2006.

¹²⁴² Richard Cracknell, Feargal McGuinness and Chris Rhodes, “General Election 2010”, *Research Paper 10/36*, House of Commons Library, 2 February 2011 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp10-36/>>.

¹²⁴³ HM Government, *The Coalition: our programme for government*, The Cabinet Office, May 2010 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78977/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf>.

¹²⁴⁴ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

William Hague, became Foreign Secretary.¹²⁴⁵ However, David Lidington, a moderate, was appointed Europe Minister.¹²⁴⁶ The hard Eurosceptic, Iain Duncan Smith, returned to the frontbenches as Secretary for Work and Pensions, as did Eurosceptic Michael Gove as Education Secretary.¹²⁴⁷ Dominic Cummings was political adviser to Gove during much of his time in government. However, Europhile Ken Clarke also returned as Justice Secretary, having spent most of the preceding thirteen years on the backbenches.¹²⁴⁸ Joining Clarke in Cabinet were a number of Europhile Liberal Democrats, although they did not hold any of the key ministerial portfolios that would have given them great power in shaping the government's EU policy.¹²⁴⁹

Nonetheless, sharing power with the Liberal Democrats clearly placed limits on the Prime Minister's ability to implement his campaign promises as he required the support of Liberal Democrat MPs. Also, being in coalition impacted the government's tone on European integration. John Redwood claimed that the presence of the Liberal Democrats in the coalition had a major impact on the government's EU policy. This, he noted, forced opponents of EU membership to "put their ambitions on hold." A "deal" was therefore made with Cameron to return to the issue once the party regained a majority.¹²⁵⁰ Redwood's view was confirmed by Liberal Democrat MP, Tom Brake, who was Deputy Leader of the House of Commons and Assistant Whip during the coalition government's term in office. Brake claimed during interview that "the LibDem presence had a considerable impact on the government's EU policy."¹²⁵¹ Outside the governing parties there was a sense that the presence of the Liberal Democrats would "contain the Conservatives' Euroscepticism."¹²⁵² When asked about the EU policy of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, 53 per cent of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire stated that they did not believe it was representative of public opinion. This served as a clear indicator of the potential for unrest within the Conservative Party during the period of coalition as frustrations developed among soft and hard Eurosceptics alike.

¹²⁴⁵ UK Parliament, "Lord Hague: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/379/career>>.

¹²⁴⁶ UK Parliament, "David Lidington: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/15/career>>.

¹²⁴⁷ UK Parliament, "Iain Duncan Smith: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*; UK Parliament, "Michael Gove: Parliamentary Career", <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/1571/career>>.

¹²⁴⁸ UK Parliament, "Lord Clarke: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

¹²⁴⁹ Shane Fitzgerald, "Coalition in Britian – Coalitions in Europe? An Analysis of the UK's European Policy", *The Institute of International and European Affairs*, Dublin, Ireland, 2010, p. 7.

¹²⁵⁰ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

¹²⁵¹ Tom Brake, interview by telephone, 19 February 2016.

¹²⁵² Hywel Williams, interview by telephone, 15 January 2016.

This is especially true given that the coalition lasted the full five years of the Parliamentary term.

In opposition between 1997 and 2010, the Conservative Party had become increasingly united in its Euroscepticism. It was naturally expected that divisions within the government over EU policy would be between the Conservative Party and their Europhile coalition partners. In actual fact, the greatest divisions during the period of coalition were within the Conservative Party itself. During the 1990s intra-party divisions had opposed Europhiles and Eurosceptics, most of the latter opposing further integration rather than EU membership itself. However, from 2010 divisions within the Conservative Party opposed soft Eurosceptics and hard Eurosceptics.¹²⁵³ Following the 2010 general election, the balance between soft and hard Eurosceptics within the Conservative Party shifted in favour of the latter. The general election saw the entry into Parliament of a number of hard Eurosceptics who would quickly rise in prominence in the party and campaign for the UK to leave the EU. Among these were Andrea Leadsom and Priti Patel, the latter a former member of the Referendum Party, who would enter government within a few years of their election.¹²⁵⁴ The 2010 intake also included Jacob-Rees-Mogg, who would become a prominent member, and then Chair, of the European Research Group, and Mark Reckless, who would later defect to UKIP. George Eustice, who was also elected as a Conservative MP for the first time in 2010, estimated that, of the 306 Conservative MPs elected, 30 would have had the UK leave the EU immediately, 150 hoped to see substantial change to the UK-EU relationship by way of the repatriation of certain powers but, failing that, would support the UK's departure from the EU. Eustice claimed that there were no more than five openly Europhile Conservative MPs.¹²⁵⁵ Eustice had himself stood, unsuccessfully, as a UKIP candidate at the 1999 European Parliament elections.¹²⁵⁶

Hard Eurosceptic Conservative MPs found sharing power with the Liberal Democrats difficult to bear and, the longer the coalition held, the harder it was for them to, in Redwood's words, "put their ambitions on hold." Schnapper argues that the EU policy of Cameron's government was driven by the need to manage these internal divisions between soft and hard

¹²⁵³ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹²⁵⁴ UK Parliament, "Andrea Leadsom: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4117/career>>; UK Parliament, "Priti Patel: Parliamentary Career", <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4066/career>>.

¹²⁵⁵ David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future? ", *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹²⁵⁶ Matthew Barrett, "What is the Fresh Start Project? Matthew Barrett profiles the Tory MPs trying to forge a new UK-EU relationship", *Conservative Home*, 28 May 2012 <<https://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2012/05/what-is-the-fresh-start-project-mbarrettch-profiles-the-tory-mps-trying-to-forge-a-new-uk-eu-relatio.html>>.

Eurosceptics, and stave off growing popular support for UKIP.¹²⁵⁷ This point concerning UKIP was confirmed by Labour MP, Keith Vaz, who claimed during interview that Conservative EU policy was “heavily influenced by the threat posed by UKIP.”¹²⁵⁸

Having lost the general election, Gordon Brown stood down as Labour leader and was succeeded, in September 2010, by Ed Miliband. A Brownite, Miliband, like his predecessor, was “cautiously and unenthusiastically pro-European”.¹²⁵⁹ He spoke little of foreign or EU policy, reflecting his reluctance to openly embrace integration in a context of growing public opposition to membership.¹²⁶⁰

2.1.2. *Mounting calls for an in-out referendum*

As promised, in Autumn 2010 the government introduced legislation which would require future amendments to the EU’s Treaties resulting in a transfer of sovereignty to be subject to a referendum. The European Union Act 2011 enshrined this so-called referendum lock in law and set out the cases deemed significant enough to require a vote.¹²⁶¹ However, this promise did not satisfy all within the Conservative Party, many of whom worried transfers of power would be deemed not significant in order to avoid holding a referendum. The unfolding sovereign debt crisis, which had seen Greece, and later Portugal, Ireland, and Spain, require bailouts, had served only to strengthen anti-Euro and anti-EU sentiment within the Conservative Party. Regulatory measures, such as the proposed EU-wide Financial Transaction Tax, also met with fierce opposition from within the party as such measures stood in clear opposition to the Conservatives’ policy of free trade and open markets. Further, the public increasingly had a negative image of the EU and considered membership to be a bad thing. Growing popular support for UKIP could be viewed as a manifestation of this rising opposition to the EU since campaigning against EU membership remained the key focus of the party. Public opposition to the government’s austerity measures, introduced in response to the economic downturn, was also increasing. Vail argues, that the government sought to build support among the working- and middle-class voters most affected by its austerity measures by adopting a populist anti-EU

¹²⁵⁷ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹²⁵⁸ Keith Vaz, interview in person.

¹²⁵⁹ Pauline Schnapper, “The Labour Party and Europe from Brown to Miliband: Back to the Future?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015, p. 158.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹²⁶¹ HM Government, *European Union Act*, Elizabeth II, Chapter 12, 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/12/pdfs/ukpga_20110012_en.pdf>.

position.¹²⁶² Essentially the government tried to detract attention from spending cuts by increasing the salience of the Europe issue and reacting to public opinion on integration.

It was in this context that a group of approximately twenty-four Conservative MPs began openly calling for a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU.¹²⁶³ The group was led by backbencher Peter Bone, who was a member of the Backbench Business Committee (BBC).¹²⁶⁴ This cross-party committee was established in June 2010 with responsibility for scheduling non-ministerial business, and provides backbenchers with the opportunity to raise issues of their choice for parliamentary debate.¹²⁶⁵ During interview, David Nuttall, who was a member of the Committee between 2015 and 2017, highlighted the instrumental role of the BBC in leading calls for an in-out referendum.¹²⁶⁶ In February 2011, Bone unsuccessfully introduced an amendment to the Europe Union Bill, requiring that an in-out referendum would automatically take place should the public reject further transfers of power to the EU. However, although the amendment was unsuccessful, the very fact that it was introduced reflected the growing pressure the government was under to hold an in-out referendum.¹²⁶⁷

Pressure for a referendum was also mounting among the public. In March 2011, the People's Pledge campaign for a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU was launched. On 8 September 2011 an electronic petition with over 100,000 signatures calling for a referendum was presented to Downing Street. That the petition had attracted over 100,000 signatures meant that Parliament was under an obligation to discuss its demand. Also in September 2011, Andrea Leadsom and George Eustice, along with Christ Heaton-Harris, launched the Fresh Start Project. Heaton-Harris, like Leadsom and Eustice, was elected in 2010, and was Chair of the European Research Group, established by Michael Spicer in 1993. The ERG had increased its membership and influence since its founding to become one of the most powerful Eurosceptic groups. The Fresh Start Project was a soft Eurosceptic pressure group that, while tentatively supporting continued EU membership, advanced proposals for reform of the UK-EU relationship through the repatriation of certain powers. Implicit was that if powers were not repatriated, the group's position would switch to advocating the UK's departure from

¹²⁶² Mark I. Vail, "Between One-Nation Toryism and Neoliberalism: The Dilemmas of British Conservatism and Britain's Evolving Place in Europe", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015.

¹²⁶³ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹²⁶⁴ UK Parliament, "Parliamentary Career: Peter Bone" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/1581/career>>.

¹²⁶⁵ Richard Kelly, "The Backbench Business Committee", *Briefing Paper no. 7225*, House of Commons Library, 20 March 2020 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7225/>>.

¹²⁶⁶ David Nuttall, interview by telephone.

¹²⁶⁷ Mark I. Vail, "Between One-Nation Toryism and Neoliberalism: The Dilemmas of British Conservatism and Britain's Evolving Place in Europe", *op. cit.*, p. 113.

the EU. The group differed from those established around the time of the TEU in that it was a “research project” as opposed to a “dining club” or “voting bloc,” and its work was encouraged by the party’s leadership.¹²⁶⁸ The group’s launch event in September 2011 was attended by between 104 and 120 Conservative MPs, approximately one-third of the Parliamentary Party.¹²⁶⁹ The wide support for the group allowed its newly-elected founders, and Andrea Leadsom in particular, to raise their profiles within the party. Conservative MPs were most keen to see powers repatriated in the domains of justice and home affairs, financial services, and employment law. There were also calls by some to cut the EU’s structural funds, increase the ability of national parliaments to block EU legislation, and to opt-out of the Common Fisheries Policy.¹²⁷⁰ The group’s ambitions were very high and unlikely to be achieved through negotiations, indicating a likely shift in the position of its supporters on the UK’s continued membership of the EU.

On 24 October 2011, following the receipt of the People’s Pledge petition, backbench Conservative MP David Nuttall proposed a motion calling for the government to hold an in-out referendum by 2013. A parliamentary vote on the motion was defeated by 438 votes to 111.¹²⁷¹ Although Nuttall’s motion was heavily opposed, the result of the vote was nonetheless of great significance. Despite Cameron imposing a three-line whip demanding party MPs oppose the motion, 81 of the Conservatives’ 306 MPs rebelled to vote in support of a referendum, and a further two abstained. These rebels included Maastricht veterans Bill Cash and Bernard Jenkin. John Redwood, who had been on the backbenches since Cameron took the party leadership, also rebelled. Graham Brady, the Chair of the 1922 Committee at the time and former Shadow Minister for Europe, rebelled, which is highly revelatory of opinion among the backbenches. Andrea Leadsom and Chris Heaton-Harris also rebelled, while fellow Fresh Start Project founder, George Eustice abstained. During the debate, Eustice justified his abstention by stating that: “It is because I believe that a referendum should come at the end of the process [of renegotiation], rather than the beginning, that I cannot support the motion.”¹²⁷² Eustice was not opposed to the holding of the referendum, just the proposed timing. The positions of the founders of the Fresh Start Project indicated a change in their strategy to bring about change in

¹²⁶⁸ Matthew Barrett, “What is the Fresh Start Project? Matthew Barrett profiles the Tory MPs trying to forge a new UK-EU relationship”, *op. cit.*

¹²⁶⁹ Anthony Browne, “Last night in the Thatcher Room, a new Eurosceptic Movement of Tory MPs was born”, Conservative Home, 13 September 2011 <<http://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2011/09/anthony-browne-last-night-in-the-thatcher-room-a-new-eurosceptic-movement-of-tory-mps-was-born.html>>.

¹²⁷⁰ David Rennie, “The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future? ”, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-54.

¹²⁷¹ Hansard, *Daily Hansard Debate*, 24 October 2011 <<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111024/debtext/111024-0004.htm>>.

¹²⁷² *Idem.*

the UK's relationship with the EU. Priti Patel, Jacob Rees-Mogg, and Mark Reckless also rebelled.

The rebellion of Conservative MPs did not result in their isolation, far from it. Both Leadsom and Patel were promoted to government in 2014 and Cabinet in 2016. Furthermore, Leadsom came second in the party leadership contest in 2016. Their involvement in the campaign to ensure an in-out referendum actually served to advance the careers of the two women. Although he remained on the backbenches, Rees-Mogg, as an active member of the ERG, was a highly influential actor in the campaign to have the UK leave the EU. Reckless, along with Douglas Carswell, left the Conservative Party to join UKIP in 2014. During the Parliamentary debate preceding the vote on 24 October, George Eustice stated that:

“The truth is that the only real division this evening will be over the wording of a motion, not the substance of our approach to the EU. Conservatives are united in believing that the EU has accumulated far too many powers, that the status quo is no longer an option and that we must renegotiate a new relationship with the EU and make a fresh start.”¹²⁷³

This statement reflects the extent to which Euroscepticism had engulfed the Conservative Party. It also indicates that, if the government's EU policy did not evolve, support for an in-out referendum among the party's MPs would certainly grow.

The 81 Conservative rebels were joined on 24 October 2011 by 19 of Labour's 258 MPs. Labour rebels included future party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and future Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell. While Corbyn and McDonnell had opposed the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, they supported (albeit unenthusiastically) the UK's membership of the EU.¹²⁷⁴ Both men were long-serving backbenchers. However, they would soon thereafter rise to take the party leadership, despite or perhaps because of, their soft Euroscepticism, and would play key roles in the 2016 referendum campaign. Other Labour rebels included Kelvin Hopkins, Kate Hoey, and Gisela Stuart, who, in contrast to Corbyn and McDonnell, were hard Eurosceptics.

Once the campaign for an in-out referendum began in earnest in late 2011, public opinion on the question fluctuated considerably. Views, it seems, were swayed by the salience of the issue in the Europhile media, and shifts in public opinion indicated indecision.¹²⁷⁵ This indecision was present not only among the public but also among politicians. In opposition,

¹²⁷³ George Eustice, Hansard, *Daily Hansard Debate*, 24 October 2011, *op. cit.*

¹²⁷⁴ Hansard, “European Union (Amendment) Bill”, 11 March 2008 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2008-03-11/division/08031114000605/EuropeanUnion\(Amendment\)Bill?outputType=Party#party-yesConservativeAyes](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2008-03-11/division/08031114000605/EuropeanUnion(Amendment)Bill?outputType=Party#party-yesConservativeAyes)>.

¹²⁷⁵ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

although the Labour leadership stopped well short of showing any support for the UK leaving the EU, it continued to send mixed messages on the question of EU integration. Shortly after the 2010 general election, Ed Balls, the Shadow Education Secretary and aspiring party leader, called into question the free movement of workers, a fundamental principle of the Single Market.¹²⁷⁶ This position was later expressed by the Labour leader, Ed Miliband, who, in April 2011, stated that the party had to respond to the public's concerns about immigration from new EU member states and its consequences for wages and housing.¹²⁷⁷ Although the relative importance of immigration fell during the economic crisis, it rose again once unemployment began to decline.¹²⁷⁸ These statements reflected the growing influence of public opinion over Labour Party EU policy.

At the Brussels summit of December 2011, two months after the Parliamentary vote on an in-out referendum, the UK was one of just two member states to oppose Treaty change deemed necessary to reform the EU in the wake of the financial crisis. That Cameron was prepared to veto treaty-reform confirmed that the Conservative Party had not become any less Eurosceptic despite being in government, and despite being in coalition with the Europhile Liberal Democrats.¹²⁷⁹ The ostensible reason for Cameron's veto was that other member states were not prepared to meet the UK's demands for concessions. Schnapper contends that Cameron's position at the European Council summit can also be explained by the October rebellion by Conservative Party MPs. Cameron sought to show his party that, despite opposing an in-out referendum, he would adopt a tough stance on Treaty reform. Cameron seemed to achieve his objective as he won praise from both soft and hard Eurosceptics within the party for his stance.¹²⁸⁰ Further, Cameron's popularity in the eyes of the public increased following his veto.¹²⁸¹ However, Ed Miliband, the Labour leader, accused the Prime Minister of having sold Britain "down the river" as he had not ensured adequate protections for the UK.¹²⁸² Miliband's Eurosceptic tone reflected not only an attempt to detract from a perceived success and capitalise on divisions within the coalition government, but also Labour's changed position on integration. The Labour leader's reluctance to position himself clearly on European

¹²⁷⁶ Anushka Asthana, "Ed Balls: Labour's immigration policy hurt wages of British workers", *The Guardian*, 6 June 2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jun/06/ed-balls-labour-immigration-wages>>.

¹²⁷⁷ David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹²⁷⁸ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 73*, November 2010, *op. cit.*

¹²⁷⁹ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Coming in from the Cold? Euroscepticism, Government Participation and Party Positions on Europe", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.51, no.1, 2013, pp. 30-31.

¹²⁸⁰ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹²⁸¹ David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹²⁸² Christopher Hope, "Ed Miliband: David Cameron has sold Britain down the river in Europe", *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 2012, cited in David Rennie, "The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future?", *op. cit.*, p. 25.

integration was evident during a speech he made on Europe in November 2012. Although the objective of the speech was to make the case for the UK remaining in the EU, Miliband nonetheless listed a number of its failures.¹²⁸³

Satisfaction with Cameron did not last long, however, and despite the defeat of the October 2011 motion Cameron remained under pressure from within his party to offer an in-out referendum. This was to be expected given that one in four Conservative MPs had voted in favour of holding a referendum. Pressure grew from 2012, when Cabinet members Iain Duncan Smith and Owen Paterson, who had voted with the government in October 2011, now voiced their support for the holding of a referendum and openly questioned the value of the UK's continued membership of the EU. This was the first time since 1973 that government ministers had advocated the UK's withdrawal from the EU.¹²⁸⁴ During interview, Conservative MP, Guto Bebb, spoke of the period between 2012 and 2014. He recounted that there were complaints that "too many concessions were being made" to the Conservatives' Liberal Democrat coalition partners. Popular support for UKIP was at a high and defections of Conservative Party members to the anti-EU party were increasing. Cameron, Bebb claimed, was "hated" by those who defected to UKIP. For many Conservative Eurosceptics Cameron was viewed as a "problem that had to be removed."¹²⁸⁵ Cameron was clearly faced with a fight for his survival as party leader.

2.1.3. *Cameron's referendum promise*

When Cameron made his speech at Bloomberg on 23 January 2013, he had been under sustained pressure from within his party for over a year. Cameron announced that a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU would be held mid-way through the Conservatives' next term in office if the party were re-elected with a majority at the 2015 general election. Although Cameron emphasised the need for the EU to change, to increase its "competitiveness", "flexibility", "democratic accountability", and "fairness", he made clear that he, personally, hoped to see the UK remain in the EU.¹²⁸⁶ Given his 2010 campaign promise to take a pragmatic approach to UK-EU relations, and his efforts to block the holding of a referendum in 2011, Cameron's announcement was clearly reluctantly made and laid bare the pressure he,

¹²⁸³ Pauline Schnapper, "The Labour Party and Europe from Brown to Miliband: Back to the Future?", *op. cit.*, p. 169.

¹²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 131.

¹²⁸⁵ Guto Bebb, interview in person, 27 January 2016.

¹²⁸⁶ David Cameron, *EU speech*, Bloomberg, London, 23 January 2013 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>>.

personally, was under. By promising to hold an in-out referendum, Cameron appeased hard Eurosceptics within his party and helped to secure his position within the party. Conservative MP, Mike Wood, confirmed that the announcement strengthened Cameron, which was important given that there had been “a lot of grumbling about him within the party” in recent years.¹²⁸⁷ The perception that the promise of a referendum secured Cameron’s leadership was shared by Labour MPs. Alan Meale claimed that Cameron had prioritised his own career interests over those of the country, and that he had been overly concerned about his leadership of the party and unduly influenced by party Brexiters.¹²⁸⁸

In promising a referendum Cameron also responded to increasing public opposition to EU membership. By late 2012, 48 per cent of the UK public had a negative impression of the EU,¹²⁸⁹ and 56 per cent of the electorate would probably or definitely vote for the UK to leave the EU if a referendum were held.¹²⁹⁰ By promising to hold the referendum *after* the 2015 general election, Cameron boosted his chances of being elected for a second term as Prime Minister. While the promise of a referendum clearly served Cameron’s personal political interests, it was also evidence of the concern felt by the party’s leadership faced with growing popular support for UKIP. Guto Bebb confirmed that the promise of a referendum was part of “a strategy to have the Conservative Party win the next general election” and reflected the recognition that nothing other a referendum would “keep UKIP at bay.”¹²⁹¹ This was confirmed by Conservative MP, Flick Drummond, who claimed that the rise of UKIP and its “threat” to certain Conservative MPs was an important factor in calling the referendum.¹²⁹² Not only had UKIP made solid gains at local elections, between 2010 and 2013 the party’s candidates came second at five by-elections. More precisely, at four of those five by-elections, the UKIP candidates came second to the Labour Party’s candidate.¹²⁹³ This means that UKIP candidates were pushing Conservative candidates into third place and, as Tournier-Sol shows, the majority of UKIP voters were former Conservative voters.¹²⁹⁴ Further, although given the electoral

¹²⁸⁷ Mike Wood, interview in person, 28 January 2016.

¹²⁸⁸ Alan Meale, interview in person.

¹²⁸⁹ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 78*, *op. cit.*

¹²⁹⁰ Daniel Boffey and Toby Helm, “56% of Britons would vote to quit EU in referendum, poll finds”, *The Guardian*, 17 November 2012 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/nov/17/eu-referendum-poll?intcmp=239>>.

¹²⁹¹ Guto Bebb, interview in person, 27 January 2016.

¹²⁹² Flick Drummond, interview by telephone.

¹²⁹³ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?* *op. cit.*, pp.88, 118.

¹²⁹⁴ Karine Tournier-Sol, “Rewriting the eurosceptic and conservative traditions into a populist narrative: UKIP’s winning formula?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015, cited in Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?* *op. cit.*, p. 118.

system it was rather unlikely that UKIP candidates would be elected to Parliament, the loss of Conservative voters to UKIP increased the likelihood of Labour candidates being elected.¹²⁹⁵

In his memoirs, Cameron addresses accusations that he made the promise of a referendum because of intra-party divisions, electoral considerations, and concerns about the rise of UKIP. He states simply that holding a referendum was the “right thing for Britain” and insists that his pledge was part of a “strategy for keeping Britain in Europe.”¹²⁹⁶ While Cameron claimed he wanted the UK to remain in the EU, he was nonetheless Eurosceptic and wanted to reform the UK-EU relationship. It has been said that Cameron’s soft Euroscepticism was “born of ignorance” and that he was uncomfortable discussing the detailed functioning of the EU.¹²⁹⁷ In light of this, Cameron might have over-estimated the outcome of the planned renegotiation of the UK-EU relationship, believing he could secure more concessions than was legally possible for the EU to accord.

Ed Miliband’s reaction to Cameron’s Bloomberg speech was somewhat irresolute. While he criticised the negative tone of the Prime Minister’s speech and highlighted the risks to the UK of leaving the Single Market, he was clearly conscious of the context of growing public opposition to EU membership.¹²⁹⁸ As noted above, between 2010 and 2013 UKIP’s candidate came second at five by-elections, and at four of those the candidate came second to the Labour Party’s candidate.¹²⁹⁹ While the UKIP threat was greatest for the Conservative Party, the anti-EU party plainly also presented a threat for the Labour Party. At a speech at Oxford University in May 2012, Peter Mandelson, the influential Blairite former Cabinet member and former European Commissioner, called for a referendum on the UK’s continued membership of the EU, noting that polls showed strong support among the public for a referendum.¹³⁰⁰ Mandelson’s call indicates a growing concern about public opinion on the Europe issue among even the party’s centrists. The response of the Liberal Democrat leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, was also ambivalent. While Clegg criticised the Prime Minister’s negative tone, the pro-EU party stood to gain little from pushing a Europhile agenda given the context. Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats insisted on the need for the EU to carry out reform. However, at that time, neither party promised to hold an in-out referendum in the event that they entered government following the 2015 general election.

¹²⁹⁵ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

¹²⁹⁶ David Cameron, *For the Record*, William Collins, London, 2019, p. 400.

¹²⁹⁷ Shane Fitzgerald, “Coalition in Britain – Coalitions in Europe? An Analysis of the UK’s European Policy”, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹²⁹⁸ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l’Union européenne?* *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.118.

¹³⁰⁰ David Rennie, “The Continent or the Open Sea. Does Britain have a European future? ”, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

As in 2007 when he promised a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, Cameron's promise of an in-out referendum was made in response to pressure from Eurosceptic Conservative MPs and an increasingly Eurosceptic public, but also in an attempt to appease resurfacing intra-party divisions over the Europe issue.¹³⁰¹ His promise was initially well-received by Conservative hard Eurosceptics. David Nuttall saluted Cameron for having "listened to the British people,"¹³⁰² and his colleague, Nigel Evans, stated that Cameron's referendum promise averted "a full-blown civil war" within the party.¹³⁰³ This statement by Evans tends to confirm an often-denied claim that the key motivation in promising an in-out referendum, more important than securing Cameron's leadership of the party or countering the electoral threat posed by UKIP, was the desire to avoid a descent into civil war between hard Eurosceptics and the rest of the party.

However internal divisions and unrest soon returned because the mere promise of a referendum was not enough. Given his previous positions, there was good reason for hard Eurosceptics to doubt that Cameron would keep his promise.¹³⁰⁴ Notably, the concerns of hard Eurosceptics were raised by the fact that a referendum bill was not included in the Queen's speech of May 2013. The absence was due to opposition from Liberal Democrat members of the government. In response, 114 Conservative MPs voted in favour of a motion denouncing the absence of a bill in the legislative programme.¹³⁰⁵ In July 2013 backbencher James Wharton, who did not rebel at the time of the October 2011 vote, proposed a Private Member's Bill to enshrine in law the holding of a referendum by 2017.¹³⁰⁶ Although the Bill was approved by the House of Commons, it fell in the House of Lords. Some wanted the referendum to be held before the 2015 general election, with the backbench Conservative MP, Adam Afriyie, who was absent at the vote in October 2011, proposing an amendment in this respect.¹³⁰⁷ That the Bill was proposed by a member who had voted against the holding of a referendum in 2011 and was passed by the House of Commons, the overwhelming majority of whose members had opposed a referendum in 2011, was indicative of the shifting positions of MPs on the question in line with public opinion. Not only was a cross-party consensus in support of an in-out referendum emerging, a growing number of Cabinet members joined Duncan Smith and Paterson in calling into question the value of the UK's continued membership of the EU. Philip

¹³⁰¹ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?* *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹³⁰² David Nuttall, interview by telephone.

¹³⁰³ Nigel Evans, interview in person.

¹³⁰⁴ Mark I. Vail, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

¹³⁰⁵ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 134.

¹³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.135.

Hammond, the Defence Secretary, and Michael Gove, the Education Secretary, both indicated that if the UK's relationship with the EU remained unchanged and a referendum were held, they would vote to leave.¹³⁰⁸

Again, taking such a stance did not hinder Cabinet members in advancing through the party's ranks. Far from being marginalised, Hammond or Gove were promoted at the next Cabinet reshuffle. Following Hague's decision to step down, Hammond was appointed as Foreign Secretary in July 2014.¹³⁰⁹ Announcing the end of a 'Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union', Hammond commented that the reports "provide further evidence of the need for a change in Britain's relationship with the EU."¹³¹⁰ Also in July 2014, Gove was appointed as Chief Whip, a position that afforded him great power and influence within the party.¹³¹¹ While neither Hammond nor Gove was ideologically disposed to EU integration, their decision to come out as likely supporters of a 'no' vote points to strategic considerations. During interview, Nigel Evans claimed that, regardless of the outcome of the referendum, Cameron's successor "would have to have backed Brexit" in order to win the necessary support of the Conservative MPs and party members.¹³¹² With their eyes on the party leadership, both Hammond and Gove were prepared to undermine Cameron.

2.1.4. *The Conservatives' fear of UKIP*

The increasingly vocal calls from within the Conservative Party in support of both a referendum and a leave vote came as UKIP made sizeable gains at English local elections, held on 2 May 2013. The party came fourth, winning 147 seats, 6 per cent of those contested.¹³¹³ Increased support for UKIP caused the Conservatives to lose control of certain county councils. In response, the Conservative Party Chairperson, Grant Schapps, said: "People sent a clear message. We hear you."¹³¹⁴ However, UKIP's success was not only due to its anti-EU position. The party drew support because of its widened agenda and, in particular, its hardline position

¹³⁰⁸ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 131.

¹³⁰⁹ UK Parliament, "Lord Hammond: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/105/career>>.

¹³¹⁰ HM Government, *Press release: Final report in the review of EU Balance of Competences published*, 18 December 2014 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/final-reports-in-review-of-eu-balance-of-competences-published>>.

¹³¹¹ UK Parliament, "Michael Gove: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

¹³¹² Nigel Evans, interview in person.

¹³¹³ Nicholas Duckworth, "Local Elections 2013", *Research Paper 13/30*, House of Commons Library, 13 May 2013 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp13-30/>>.

¹³¹⁴ Nicolas Watt, "UK makes huge gains in local government elections", *The Guardian*, 3 May 2013 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/may/03/ukip-gains-local-elections>>.

on immigration to the UK both from within and outwith the EU. This point was confirmed by Conservative MP, David Davies during interview.¹³¹⁵

In an attempt to address concerns about the EU and immigration, particularly in the context of the end of the transition period limiting the movement of Romanian and Bulgarian workers, Cameron focused his drive for EU reform on the principle of free movement of workers. While the UK was not the only member state to voice concerns about a possible influx of workers from Romania and Bulgaria, it was the only one to call into question the fundamental principle of free movement.¹³¹⁶ Such Euroscepticism within a mainstream, established party in government was exceptional at that time, reflecting the extent to which the Conservative Party's EU policy had hardened, under pressure from the party's hard Eurosceptics and increasing popular support for UKIP.

The hardening of the Conservatives' position stood in contrast to Labour's continued refusal to promise a referendum. Although UKIP came second behind the Labour candidate at the Wythenshawe and Sale East by-election in February 2014, Ed Miliband held firmly to this position. During a speech at the London Business School on 12 March 2014, Miliband confirmed that a Labour government would not hold a referendum unless it was proposed to transfer more powers to the EU.¹³¹⁷ This position was risky, especially in the context of the upcoming European Parliament elections at which it could be expected the UK electorate would vote based on their EU attitudes as opposed to simply in support of, or opposition, to the government.

As UK voters went to the polls at the 2014 European Parliament elections, the Conservative Party was the only one of the three main parties promising a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU, although this had not been enshrined in legislation. The Conservative manifesto also promised to push for reform of the free movement of workers. The official policy of both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats was that a referendum would only be offered in the event of further transfers of sovereignty to the EU. It seems, however, that even the Conservatives' promise did not satisfy Eurosceptic voters, who wanted to see legislation passed guaranteeing the holding of a referendum.

At 35.6 per cent, turnout out was slightly higher than in 2009, although it was, as ever, well below the EU average. UKIP won the European Parliament elections for the first time,

¹³¹⁵ David Davies, interview in person.

¹³¹⁶ Pauline Schnapper, *Le Royaume-Uni doit-il sortir de l'Union européenne?* *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹³¹⁷ Nicholas Watt and Patrick Wintour, "Ed Miliband's EU referendum pledge leaves business leaders divided", *The Guardian*, 12 March 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/12/ed-miliband-eu-referendum-business-leaders>>.

winning 26.6 per cent of the popular vote – a swing of over 10 per cent since 2009 – and almost doubling its seats. Labour came second, winning 24.4 per cent of the vote, markedly increasingly both its popular support and seats compared to 2009. The Conservative Party, arriving third with 23.3 per cent of the vote, clearly lost the support of a proportion of its Eurosceptic voters to UKIP. On the other hand, in regions such as London, more moderate Conservative voters seemed to cast their vote for the Labour Party.¹³¹⁸

Fitzgibbon urges caution in interpreting the result of the election solely as a vote against the EU and considers the outcome to have been as much a vote against the established political elite.¹³¹⁹ However, although the Europe issue was not of great importance to the electorate as a whole, as was reflected in the low turnout, it was of great importance to a section of the electorate and, overall, public support for an in-out referendum was high. Even more so than at previous European Parliament elections, the public treated the election as a first-order contest. Further, post-election polls by Lord Ashcroft revealed that at least 50 per cent of those who voted for UKIP at the 2014 European Parliament election planned to vote for the party again at the 2015 general election, whereas just 20 per cent planned to vote Conservative and 10 per cent for Labour. The outcome of the European Parliament election confirmed public opinion on the EU as revealed by polling data and hinted at the result of the referendum that would be held two years later.

Shortly after the European Parliament elections, Cameron reshuffled his Cabinet. Hague stepped down as Foreign Secretary to be succeeded by Philip Hammond and Michael Gove was made Chief Whip. The Cabinet lost a prominent Europhile with the resignation of Kenneth Clarke. Clarke decided to return to the backbenches where he considered he would be better placed to fight for the UK's continued membership of the EU.¹³²⁰ Clarke's resignation reflected hostility within the Cabinet towards openly Europhile Conservatives. The period following the European Parliament elections was also marked by Cameron's vocal opposition to the nomination of Jean-Claude Juncker as President of the Commission. Along with Hungary, the UK was one of just two member states to resist Juncker's nomination.

UKIP's victory, coupled with the prediction that half of their supporters would vote for the party again at the 2015 general election, caused divisions between soft and hard

¹³¹⁸ Oliver Hawkins and Vaughne Miller, "European Parliament Elections 2014", *Research Paper 14/32*, House of Commons Library, 11 June 2014 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/rp14-32/>>.

¹³¹⁹ John Fitzgibbon, "Euroscepticism and the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections", *L'Europe en Formation*, 2014/3, no. 373, p. 34.

¹³²⁰ Nicholas Watt, "Ken Clarke resigns from cabinet with parting warning to Cameron over EU", *The Guardian*, 15 July 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jul/14/ken-clarke-resigns-government-tories-reshuffle-top-team>>.

Eurosceptics within the Conservative Party to become all the more evident. There was anger at Cameron's failure to enshrine in law the holding of a referendum and some lacked confidence in Cameron's ability, or willingness, to negotiate a changed UK-EU relationship. The extent of divisions was manifested in August 2014 by the decision of Douglas Carswell to leave the Conservative Party and join UKIP. Carswell resigned his seat and thus triggered a by-election. He won the by-election, retaining the majority he had won as the Conservative candidate in 2010, and thus gave UKIP its first seat in the House of Commons. The following month, a second Conservative MP, Mark Reckless, defected to UKIP and was re-elected at the subsequent by-election, giving the party a second parliamentary seat.

The departure of Carswell and Reckless cannot be viewed as an externalisation of their hard Euroscepticism by the Conservative Party leadership, as in the case of Chevènement or Dupont-Aignan, among others, in France. Carswell and Reckless had not been pushed to the margins of the party; on the contrary they had contributed to the hardening of the party's EU policy. Rather, their defection reflected the growing threat that UKIP posed to Conservative MPs in advance of the 2015 general election and the belief of hard Eurosceptic MPs that they could better achieve their aim of having the UK leave the EU by joining UKIP. Shortly after the departure of Reckless, and undoubtedly in an attempt to avoid further defections, it was announced that backbench Conservative MPs would be allowed to vote freely in the referendum on continued EU membership.

In addition to winning the two by-elections triggered by Conservative defections, UKIP came second at two others. In June 2014, the UKIP candidate had come second to the Conservative candidate at the Newark by-election. The importance of this election was demonstrated by Cameron's very active involvement in the campaign.¹³²¹ In October 2014, UKIP came a very close second to the Labour candidate at the Heywood and Middleton by-election. The Labour candidate won a majority of just 617 votes,¹³²² demonstrating again that UKIP posed an electoral threat not only to the Conservative Party. Nonetheless, the Labour Party remained firm in its refusal to offer an automatic in-out referendum.

As the 2015 general election approached, just 30 per cent of the UK public had a positive image of the EU and a greater proportion of the public – 32 per cent – had a negative image.¹³²³

¹³²¹ Nicholas Watt and Andrew Sparrow, "Tories win Newark byelection comfortably with UKIP second and Labour third", *The Guardian*, 6 June 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jun/06/newark-byelection-result-conservatives-win-comfortably-with-ukip-second-and-labour-third>>.

¹³²² Helen Pidd and Nicholas Watt, "Labour scrapes byelection victory over UKIP in Heywood and Middleton", *The Guardian*, 10 October 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/oct/10/labour-scrapes-byelection-victory-ukip-heywood-middleton>>.

¹³²³ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 82*, *op. cit.*

Perhaps surprisingly, therefore, the Europe issue was not among the most important for voters at the general election. Neither did the main political parties attach much importance to the Europe issue during their campaigns. This is perhaps surprising given that the outcome of the election would determine whether or not a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU would be held.¹³²⁴ Naturally, however, parties that did not promise a referendum sought to minimise the salience of the Europe issue. Rather, the Europe issue tended to be dealt with indirectly due to its association with immigration, the issue to which the public attached the most importance.¹³²⁵ Conservative respondents to the questionnaire, like the public at that time, were particularly concerned about immigration, classing it as the third most important issue facing the UK after economic growth and government debt. In contrast, Labour respondents attributed much less importance to the issue of immigration. Again, the Labour Party showed itself to be out of touch with public opinion on certain issues.

Having won two seats in Parliament and come second at a number of by-elections since the last general election in 2010, UKIP was perceived as a real electoral threat by the Conservative Party. Obviously, having failed to secure a majority in 2010, Cameron was under heavy pressure to do so in 2015. Further, the Conservative Party needed to win a majority to be able to introduce legislation guaranteeing a referendum. The party's manifesto committed to holding a referendum by 2017.¹³²⁶ In fact, during a televised interview with Andrew Marr in January 2015, Cameron indicated that a referendum could be held earlier than expected under a Conservative government, reflecting the pressure exerted on him by Conservative Eurosceptics.¹³²⁷ Boris Johnson, who was a candidate at the 2015 election, joined Cameron in calling for an early referendum although, as Cameron later wrote in his memoirs, Johnson still supported the UK remaining in the EU at that point.¹³²⁸ On the question of immigration, the Conservative manifesto promised to renegotiate with the EU the rules concerning the access of EU immigrants to social security benefits. Remarkably, David Cameron refused to rule out a coalition with the anti-EU party in the event of a hung Parliament – a scenario that, according to polls, seemed quite possible.¹³²⁹ In doing so Cameron surely hoped to minimise the loss of votes to UKIP and insisted that a vote for UKIP was essentially a vote for Labour. However,

¹³²⁴ Pauline Schnapper, "The Elephant in the Room: Europe in the 2015 British General Election", *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2015.

¹³²⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83*, *op. cit.*

¹³²⁶ Conservative Party, "General Election Manifesto 2015" <<https://www.theresavilliers.co.uk/sites/www.theresavilliers.co.uk/files/conservativemanifesto2015.pdf>>.

¹³²⁷ Rowena Mason, "David Cameron twice refuses to rule out Ukip coalition", *The Guardian*, 4 January 2015 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jan/04/david-cameron-ukip-coalition-nigel-farage>>.

¹³²⁸ David Cameron, *For the Record*, *op. cit.*

¹³²⁹ Rowena Mason, "David Cameron twice refuses to rule out Ukip coalition", *op. cit.*

his apparent willingness to include UKIP in government served to lend credibility to the party and its positions.

While Conservative Party associations were typically very Eurosceptic and influential, their powers were increased in the run-up to the 2015 general election. This was due to the fact that the sixth periodic review of constituency boundaries was underway, which meant that all MPs would need the approval of their local association in order to stand for re-election. In selecting candidates for the 2015 election, Conservative Party associations paid far greater attention to candidates' positions on the Europe issue than at previous elections. This was confirmed by Conservative MP Mark Pritchard, who was elected to Parliament in 2005. He claimed that candidates' positions on integration became a much greater feature of questioning in 2015.¹³³⁰ Likewise, Flick Drummond recounted that she was not asked about her views on integration when she was selected for her seat in 2007 whereas the issue was a prominent feature of discussions in advance of the 2015 election. She felt that she could express her support for EU membership only after her election in 2015 and then only because she enjoyed a strong majority in her constituency. Drummond claimed that among candidates who supported EU integration, but did not enjoy such a majority, there was a sense that they ought to conceal their views.¹³³¹

The Labour Party's manifesto did promise that no further transfers of sovereignty to the EU would take place without the consent of the public through a referendum on continued membership. However, the party maintained its refusal to promise an automatic in-out referendum, which was a considerable political risk. Given the presumption at the time that the public would vote to remain in the EU, it would have made strategic sense for Labour to promise a referendum so as to avoid losing voters over the question. That it stuck firmly to its refusal suggests an ideological basis for the party's position. Nonetheless, Labour remained quiet on European integration in general and the question of a referendum in particular in an attempt to avoid drawing too much attention to its position. The focus was instead on specific EU reforms that a Labour government would seek, including to immigration and social security rules, and "stronger transitional controls" to allow member states to limit the movement of workers from new member states.¹³³²

¹³³⁰ Mark Pritchard, interview in person.

¹³³¹ Flick Drummond, interview by telephone.

¹³³² The Labour Party, "General Election Manifesto 2015" <https://action.labour.org.uk/page/-/A4_per cent20BIG%20_PRINT_ENG_LABOUR%20MANIFESTO_TEXT%20LAYOUT.pdf>.

The Conservative Party won the election, increasing its seats to hold a majority of 11, allowing it to form a single-party government. Whereas EU issue voting had had some, albeit limited, impact on support for the Conservative and Labour Parties at previous general elections, the Europe issue, and in particular the Conservatives' promise of an in-out referendum, seemed to contribute to its success. This was confirmed by John Redwood, for whom the Conservatives' victory was "due in no small part" to its promise of a referendum.¹³³³ Although the Labour Party slightly increased its share of the vote, it lost a substantial number of seats. During interview, Kelvin Hopkins, a hard Eurosceptic Labour MP, contended that Labour lost votes due to the fact that it did not promise a referendum.¹³³⁴

Although UKIP won just one seat, it won 12.6 per cent of the popular vote compared to 3.1 per cent at the 2010 general election. Outside Scotland, Northern Ireland, and London, support for UKIP was higher than average, with support for the party rising to 16.2 per cent in the Conservative stronghold of East England and 16.7 per cent in the Labour stronghold of North East England. While, contrary to expectations, UKIP's leader, Nigel Farage, was not elected, he won 32.4 per cent of the popular vote. He was beaten by the Conservative candidate, Craig Mackinlay, a former UKIP member who was clearly selected due to his ability to attract UKIP sympathisers. Of the two Conservative defectors, only Douglas Carswell was re-elected. Mark Reckless lost his seat to the Conservative candidate, Kelly Tolhurst, who won a solid majority.¹³³⁵ Although Tolhurst voted in favour of remaining in the EU, she was certainly no Europhile and was careful not to announce whether she would vote to remain or leave until a few weeks before the referendum. It is also important to note, however, that UKIP came second in 120 constituencies, 75 of which were won by the Conservatives and 44 by Labour. Further, in 69 constituencies UKIP won more than 20 per cent of the popular vote.¹³³⁶ If the UK had a proportionate electoral system, UKIP could have won more than 50 seats at the 2015 general election. Regardless, given the rate of increase in electoral support for UKIP and the fact that it came second in a great number of constituencies, the general election served to confirm the anti-EU party as a serious threat for the Conservative Party, and also for Labour.

¹³³³ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

¹³³⁴ Kelvin Hopkins, interview by telephone.

¹³³⁵ Oliver Hawkins, Richard Keen and Nambassa Nakatudde, "General Election 2015", *Briefing Paper No. CBP7186*, House of Commons Library, 28 July 2015 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7186/>>.

¹³³⁶ *Ibid.*

2.1.5. *Towards Brexit*

With the Conservative Party having won the election, it was sure that a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU would take place by 2017. The holding of a referendum by then enjoyed wide support within the House of Commons. Of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire, 80 per cent were in favour of the vote. While the referendum was supported by 72 per cent of Labour respondents, during interview certain Labour MPs voiced grave concerns about the vote. Alan Meale regretted the fact that such a complex issue was dealt with in such a "black and white" fashion and suggested that the debate "played into the hands of UKIP."¹³³⁷ Daniel Zeichner claimed that most Labour MPs considered the referendum to be "undesirable but necessary." He considered the issue to be a "diversion tactic," and that the referendum was really about "settling a dispute" within the Conservative Party.¹³³⁸

Of the 330 Conservative MPs elected to Parliament in 2015, 73 – over 20 per cent – were elected for the first time.¹³³⁹ Given the increased attention paid to candidates' views on the Europe issue during the selection process, these new MPs had the potential to tip the balance within the Parliamentary Party in favour of a vote to leave the EU. Without the presence of the Liberal Democrats, Cameron's second Ministry was far more Eurosceptic and included a number of individuals who were certain or likely to support the UK leaving the EU. The Eurosceptic Philip Hammond remained as Foreign Secretary and Michael Gove was promoted to Justice Secretary.¹³⁴⁰ It remained unclear whether these two would support a vote for remain or leave as their position, they claimed, was dependent on the outcome of the up-coming negotiations. Theresa Villiers and Chris Grayling, both firmly in favour of a leave vote, remained in Cabinet.¹³⁴¹ Hard Eurosceptic Priti Patel was promoted to Employment Minister, which allowed her to attend Cabinet meetings.¹³⁴² John Whittingdale, a hard Eurosceptic, entered Cabinet.¹³⁴³ James Wharton, who proposed the Private Member's Bill to enshrine in law the holding of a referendum by 2017, was given a position in government just five years

¹³³⁷ Alan Meale, interview in person.

¹³³⁸ Daniel Zeichner, interview by telephone, 19 February 2016.

¹³³⁹ Oliver Hawkins, Richard Keen and Nambassa Nakatudde, "General Election 2015", *op. cit.*

¹³⁴⁰ UK Parliament, "Lord Hammond: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*; UK Parliament, "Michael Gove: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

¹³⁴¹ UK Parliament, "Theresa Villiers: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/1500/career>>; UK Parliament, "Chris Grayling: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/1413/career>>.

¹³⁴² UK Parliament, "Priti Patel: Parliamentary Career", *op. cit.*

¹³⁴³ UK Parliament, "John Whittingdale: Parliamentary Career" <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/39/career>>.

after entering Parliament.¹³⁴⁴ Now that the referendum was a certainty, it was unclear whether Cameron would be able to enforce Cabinet discipline.

Following Labour's election defeat, Miliband resigned as party leader. He was succeeded by Jeremy Corbyn who was firmly on the left of the party. It should be recalled that Corbyn was one of just ten Labour MPs to have opposed the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and one of nineteen to vote in support of an in-out referendum in October 2011. As party leader Corbyn made it clear that, although he wanted the UK to remain in the EU, he wanted to see fundamental change in the objectives of integration. Also, he refused to share a pro-remain platform with David Cameron.

Cameron entered negotiations with his EU counterparts under great pressure to ensure what could be considered a successful outcome. A number of Eurosceptic MPs would determine their position – remain or leave – based on the concessions negotiated by Cameron. Fully 80 per cent of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire stated that European integration had gone too far, while only 7 per cent felt that it should continue at the same pace. In contrast, two-thirds of Conservative respondents wanted the UK to leave the EU, although a majority of those wanted the UK to seek membership of either the European Economic Area (EEA) or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The perception that integration had gone too far was common among Conservative MPs interviewed. What was also clear was that many were waiting for the outcome of the negotiations before deciding how to vote. Peter Lilley was among those awaiting the outcome of negotiations. While he refused to be more specific, Lilley hoped Cameron would succeed in returning “enough powers” to “allow” him to vote for remain. He claimed that what was essential for him was the establishment of a precedent of returning substantial powers to member states, meaning more powers could be returned in the future.¹³⁴⁵ Mike Wood echoed Lilley when he said that he was “waiting to be persuaded to vote remain.”¹³⁴⁶ It was clear, therefore, that if Cameron were to convince the Parliamentary Party to support continued membership he would have to secure the repatriation of considerable powers.

In contrast, just 17 per cent of Labour respondents to the questionnaire felt that European integration had gone too far, and only 11 per cent of respondents hoped to see the UK leave the EU, and all of those wanted the UK to seek to join either the EEA or EFTA. Two-thirds of

¹³⁴⁴ UK Parliament, “Lord Wharton: Parliamentary Career” <<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4123/career>>.

¹³⁴⁵ Peter Lilley, interview by telephone.

¹³⁴⁶ Mike Wood, interview in person, 28 January 2016.

Labour respondents hoped to see either the status quo maintained or the UK become a fully participating member of the EU. The contrast in the positions of Conservative and Labour MPs reveals the extent to which Cameron would be dependent on the Labour Party to help him convince the public of the merits of remaining in the EU.

The outcome of negotiations with the EU was announced on 19 February 2016 and, three days later, Cameron revealed that the referendum would take place on 23 June 2016.¹³⁴⁷ Despite attempts to convince Parliament and the public otherwise, it was quite widely recognised that the concessions secured by Cameron would not bring any great change in the UK-EU relationship. David Cameron confirmed that party MPs could vote freely in the upcoming referendum. Further, and quite exceptionally, he announced that the collective responsibility of Cabinet would be suspended so as to extend the free vote also to Cabinet ministers. Soon thereafter, six members of Cabinet declared that they would vote for the UK to leave the EU. Unsurprisingly Iain Duncan Smith, Chris Grayling, Theresa Villiers, John Whittingdale, and Priti Patel were among the six who announced their support for Brexit. All five had been consistent in their opposition to integration. They were joined by Michael Gove, who, after some hesitation, declared his support for a leave vote. Having stalled for so long, his position was unconvincing on ideological grounds. Ambitious, Gove was undoubtedly influenced by strategic calculations. He took a leading role in the campaign for Brexit and went on to contest the party leadership. Notably absent from the group was Philip Hammond, who claimed he was satisfied by the concessions secured by Cameron. Hammond's position was not necessarily uninfluenced by strategic considerations as, over the preceding months, polls had indicated that the UK public would vote in favour of remaining in the EU.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had won the safe Conservative seat of Uxbridge and South Ruislip at the 2015 general election. Although he sat on the backbenches, Johnson was a prominent figure having been Mayor since 2008 and having gained notoriety as an outspoken journalist. While his newspaper articles had often been critical of certain EU policies, he had not positioned himself as ideologically opposed to integration. Yet in February 2016 he announced that he supported a vote to leave. His decision, it was claimed, was heavily influenced by Gove.¹³⁴⁸ Johnson's decision came as a surprise, including to the Prime Minister, and some accused him of positioning himself on the Europe issue so as to advance his career.

¹³⁴⁷ David Cameron, *Statement to House of Commons*, 22 February 2016 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-commons-statement-on-eu-reform-and-referendum-22-february-2016>>.

¹³⁴⁸ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

Cameron writes in his memoirs of how Johnson made a strategic choice to side with Gove and campaign for an outcome that he did not truly want simply because he believed it would advance his political career.¹³⁴⁹ Cameron was not alone in believing Johnson's position to be strategic. Amber Rudd, the pro-remain Conservative Energy Secretary stated during the campaign, "We need to look at the numbers – I fear the only number Boris is interested in is the one that says No 10."¹³⁵⁰ Fellow pro-remain Conservative MP, Roger Gale, claimed that Johnson's stance was "opportunistic".¹³⁵¹ Pro-Brexit Conservative MPs also acknowledged that vocally supporting a leave vote would advance Johnson's career. Conservative MP, Desmond Swayne, predicted that Johnson's decision to campaign for a leave vote would "enhance his prospects."¹³⁵² John Redwood, who claimed to also have had some influence over Johnson in making his decision, also expected Johnson's pro-Brexit position to have a positive impact on his future career. Redwood, like Nigel Evans, insisted that the next leader of the party must have campaigned for a leave vote.¹³⁵³ Both Gove and Johnson were relatively late in positioning themselves in favour of leaving the EU. Their hesitation suggests that they wanted to be sure they were backing the winning campaign as the outcome of the referendum would shape the future direction of the Conservative Party. The leading role they played in the Vote Leave campaign, directed by Dominic Cummings, reflected not only their desire to ensure victory, but also their determination to gain prominence both within the party and in the eyes of the public. It seems clear that both men were campaigning not only for Brexit but also to become the next leader of the Conservative Party.

Despite accusations that certain Conservative MPs positioned themselves in favour of leaving the EU in order to advance their careers, certain Conservative MPs had the impression that, on the contrary, some of their colleagues were reluctant to speak out in support of leaving the EU for fear of damaging their careers. Again, Desmond Swayne expressed his surprise at the number of colleagues who had long been Eurosceptic but (discreetly) positioned as remainers during the referendum campaign. Swayne suggested that as constituency boundaries were due to be modified some Conservative MPs were reluctant to position themselves in opposition to official party policy.¹³⁵⁴ Likewise, John Redwood claimed that some leave-supporting Conservative MPs did not publicly declare as such for fear of upsetting the party's

¹³⁴⁹ David Cameron, *For the Record*, *op. cit.*

¹³⁵⁰ Amber Rudd, *Televised referendum debate*, 9 June 2016.

¹³⁵¹ Roger Gale, interview in person.

¹³⁵² Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

¹³⁵³ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

¹³⁵⁴ Desmond Swayne, interview by telephone.

leadership.¹³⁵⁵ Nigel Evans agreed that ambitious Conservative MPs would tend to campaign for a remain vote.¹³⁵⁶ All MPs interviewed in advance of the June 2016 referendum, including Conservative hard Eurosceptics, predicted a vote in favour of remaining in the EU. Such an outcome would have resulted in a shift in the balance of power within the Conservative Party in favour of soft Eurosceptics and (the few) Europhiles, meaning Brexit-supporting MPs risked having their ambitions curtailed if they went against the leadership. Perhaps had the referendum been held *before* the 2015 general election when party associations were particularly influential, leave-supporting MPs would have been more out-spoken given that, according to John Redwood, around 75 per cent of party members supported the UK leaving the EU. An earlier referendum could have rendered the opinion of members more important than that of the party leadership.

The responses of Conservative respondents to the questionnaire gave a strong indication as to how the party's MPs would vote in the up-coming referendum. As was seen in Chapter 1, most Conservative respondents felt little or no attachment to Europe, whereas the vast majority felt the UK has most in common with Commonwealth countries and considered the UK's interests to be most closely aligned with the United States. While some Conservative respondents expressed strong support for EU membership and recognised its benefits, the majority expressed low levels of support for EU membership and little recognition of its benefits. Conservative respondents cited numerous drawbacks of EU membership, most notably loss of sovereignty, sub-optimal decision-making, and the implementation of EU legislation. The majority also considered the EU's decision-making process to be undemocratic and felt the UK had little or no influence therein. It should also be recalled that Conservative respondents tended to think the electorate attached considerable importance to the Europe issue and three-quarters believed the majority of their constituents opposed EU membership. Not only do these responses account for the absence of a consensus in support of continued membership of the EU within the Conservative Party, they indicate that, in positioning themselves on the referendum, Conservative MPs would take into consideration the (perceived) negative attitudes of their constituents. The responses also revealed how difficult it would be for remain-supporting Conservative MPs to make a convincing case to the public for a remain vote.

During interview Labour MPs, like their Conservative colleagues, expressed the sentiment that certain of their Labour colleagues had strategic considerations in mind when

¹³⁵⁵ John Redwood, interview by telephone.

¹³⁵⁶ Nigel Evans, interview in person.

positioning themselves on the referendum. Alan Meale claimed the referendum campaign was a “horse race” with MPs hoping to back the “winner.”¹³⁵⁷ Notably, some believed that Jeremy Corbyn’s support for a remain vote, having criticised the outcomes of European integration for much of his career, was due to a recognition that the majority of Labour voters supported EU membership. Whereas Corbyn seemed to have been influenced by strategic considerations in ostensibly positioning himself in favour of a remain vote, Kelvin Hopkins claimed that some remain-supporting Labour MPs avoided speaking out openly in favour of membership for fear of “upsetting their constituents” and losing support to UKIP.¹³⁵⁸ This, Hopkins stated, was especially so of MPs in constituencies that had seen a rapid increase in electoral support for UKIP in the years preceding the referendum.

Unsurprisingly the responses of Labour respondents to the questionnaire contrasted markedly with those of Conservatives and foretold how the party’s MPs would vote in the June 2016 referendum. As was seen in Chapter 1, the vast majority of Labour respondents felt attached or very attached to Europe and a solid majority believed the UK had most in common with European countries in terms of culture, values, and interests. While a small proportion of Labour respondents expressed little support for, and even opposition to, EU membership and did not recognise its benefits, the vast majority expressed high levels of support for membership and strong recognition of its benefits. Labour respondents cited few drawbacks of EU membership and expressed little concern about loss of sovereignty. While half of Labour respondents voiced concerns about the EU’s decision-making process, the other half was satisfied with the process and a strong majority considered the UK had some or great influence therein. It should also be recalled that Labour respondents tended to think that the electorate attached limited importance to the Europe issue and almost 90 per cent believed the majority of their constituents supported EU membership. These responses reflect a consensus in support of continued membership of the EU within the Labour Party and indicate that, in positioning themselves on the referendum, Labour MPs would not be heavily influenced by the attitudes of their constituents. However, these responses suggest certain Labour MPs over-estimated their constituents’ support for membership. The responses also reveal that the unenthusiastic support for EU membership of the party’s new leadership was out of step with the majority of Labour MPs.

By 22 June, the day before the referendum, 323 of the Conservatives’ 330 MPs had declared their position. Just 185, or 56 per cent of the Parliamentary Party, announced they

¹³⁵⁷ Alan Meale, interview in person.

¹³⁵⁸ Kelvin Hopkins, interview by telephone.

would vote to remain in the EU. This confirmed the depth of the divide within the party. Of the Labour Party's 232 MPs, 218, or 94 per cent, declared their support for remain. With only ten Labour MPs announcing their intention to vote to leave the EU, the party showed itself to be relatively united. All other parties were united in their support for remain, other than the Democratic Unionist Party, (DUP) which was united in its support for leave.¹³⁵⁹ This meant almost three-quarters of MPs supported the UK's continued membership of the EU. The referendum resulted in a vote to leave the EU, with 52 per cent of the public voting for Brexit. Notable was that 58 per cent of Conservative supporters, and 37 per cent of Labour supporters, voted to leave the EU.¹³⁶⁰ While these figures show a clear difference in the positions of the parties' supporters on EU membership, they also reveal that the positions of Conservative MPs were far more in keeping with public and supporter opinion than those of Labour MPs. Or more specifically, the enthusiastic support for membership of Labour MPs was out of touch, whereas the Labour leadership's position of conditional support was more in keeping with public and supporter opinion.

2.2 French politicians and Europe post-Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force halfway through President Sarkozy's term in office, with the UMP holding a solid majority of seats in the National Assembly. In opposition, the PS continued to seek to repair the damage done by intra-party divisions to boost its chances of winning the 2012 Presidential elections. By late 2009, France was still in the midst of a recession, with the economy having contracted by 2.6 per cent that year.¹³⁶¹ Although this decline in GDP was far less steep than that in the UK, it was protracted and instilled a deep sense of insecurity among the French public.

Despite the public's rejection of the Constitutional Treaty and the fact that no referendum was held to ratify its replacement, there was not the same sense of deception among the French public as there was among the UK public. Yet in spring 2010, as the EU struggled to manage a sovereign debt crisis, perceptions of membership as a good thing fell to 44 per cent, while opposition rose to 24 per cent.¹³⁶² Although net support for EU membership was

¹³⁵⁹ During interview in person on 26 January 2016, just five months before the referendum, Jeffrey Donaldson, DUP MP and Chief Whip, stated that he, personally, and the party's MPs as a whole, had not yet decided whether to vote to remain or leave.

¹³⁶⁰ Perry Anderson, "The Breakaway", *London Review of Books*, Vol. 43, no. 2, 21 January 2021, p. 6.

¹³⁶¹ Guillaume Houriez, Vladimir Passeron and Adrien Perret, "Les comptes de la nation en 2009", Insee <<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1281253>>.

¹³⁶² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 73*, *op. cit.*

much higher in France, the trend in public opinion was concerning and mirrored that among the UK public.

2.2.1. *The Europe issue more present in political debate*

Just as the UK general election of 2010, the 2012 Presidential and legislative elections took place in a context of great economic insecurity. Having emerged from recession, the French economy struggled to pick up pace and unemployment remained high. Further, the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis was on-going and member states had committed, at the end of 2011, to deeper integration so as to bring the situation under control. As a result, the EU was a greater feature of the 2012 Presidential elections.¹³⁶³ However, while support for EU membership had declined considerably since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, 52 per cent of the French public nonetheless considered that the EU was the best level at which to address the economic crisis and 66 per cent considered that European integration made France stronger on the international stage.¹³⁶⁴ Although attitudes towards EMU and the single currency had been affected by the crisis, the majority of the public still supported the single currency. Further, while negative perceptions of the EU had risen to 28 percent by spring 2012, this figure remained markedly lower than in the UK, where almost half the public had a negative image of the EU at that time.¹³⁶⁵

Under the slogan *La France forte*, President Sarkozy's campaign for re-election focused, as it had done in 2007, on immigration and national identity. His campaign also addressed globalisation and European integration, two further issues of concern to the public in the context of on-going crises within the EU. The tone of the campaign reflected the perceived threat posed by Marine Le Pen, who had succeeded her father as President of the party in 2011.¹³⁶⁶ The central presence of Guillaume Peltier, a former member of the FN and later spokesperson for the MPF's Philippe de Villiers, within the campaign team certainly contributed to this tone. Yet, despite the campaign addressing the electorate's fears about integration, as well as immigration and globalisation, Sarkozy insisted upon his own support for integration and criticised those politicians who had voted against the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008.¹³⁶⁷ Also, by 2012 there were no anti-EU groups playing a role of any significance within

¹³⁶³ Francesca Vassallo, "The EU Discourse in the 2012 French Presidential Election", *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol.30, no.3 Winter 2012.

¹³⁶⁴ European Commission, *Flash Eurobarometer 346: Les Français et l'Union européenne*, March 2012.

¹³⁶⁵ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 77*, July 2012.

¹³⁶⁶ Alister Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj, "From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?", *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁶⁷ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p..227.

the UMP. This was in part due to the externalisation of Dupont-Aignan from the UMP, who had left to establish *Débout la République* as a separate political party in 2008.¹³⁶⁸ Sarkozy's position on the Europe issue allowed him to set himself apart from Dupont-Aignan, who was also a candidate for election.

The PS held a primary to designate its candidate for the election and decided to allow both party members and supporters to vote.¹³⁶⁹ Six candidates sought the party's nomination: François Hollande, Martine Aubry, Arnaud Montebourg, Ségolène Royal, Manuel Valls, and Jean-Michel Baylet. The presence of Montebourg, who had opposed the Constitutional Treaty, meant on-going differences within the party over the future direction of EU integration were brought to the fore. His campaign criticised globalisation and called for more protectionist measures from the EU.¹³⁷⁰ Hollande and Aubry went through to the second round, and Hollande won the nomination with 56.6 per cent of the votes.¹³⁷¹ A notable advantage held by Hollande was that, having been First Secretary of the PS since 1997, he had an intimate understanding of the inner workings of the party and understood the need to appeal across the board. Hollande's 2012 campaign focus was one of socio-democratic economic realism. Although he was firmly Europhile, he recognised the need to attract the support of the *'France du Non'* and also to avoid reigniting divisions within his party. This was particularly important given that Mélenchon, externalised from the PS in 2008, was also a candidate.

Hollande won the first round of the Presidential elections and passed to the second round along with the incumbent, President Sarkozy. Marine Le Pen came third, attracting 17.9 per cent of the vote, just 10 points less than Sarkozy. Ms Le Pen also won more votes than her father had done in either the 2002 or 2007 Presidential elections.¹³⁷² Mélenchon attracted 11 per cent of the vote and arrived in fourth place,¹³⁷³ proving that his *Parti de Gauche* posed an electoral threat to the PS. In a context of falling support for EU membership and given that Eurosceptics Le Pen and Mélenchon had, between them, attracted 29 per cent of the vote, the Europe issue gained in prominence in advance of the second round of the election.¹³⁷⁴

Both Sarkozy and Hollande made statements critical of the EU in an attempt to attract the support of Eurosceptic voters. Their positions seemed very much to be shaped by strategic

¹³⁶⁸ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹³⁶⁹ Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹³⁷⁰ Frédéric Sawicki, "Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left", *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹³⁷¹ Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹³⁷² Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

¹³⁷³ Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 2012", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/election-presidentielle-2012.htm>>.

¹³⁷⁴ Francesca Vassallo, "The EU Discourse in the 2012 French Presidential Election", *op. cit.*, p. 79.

considerations. As a consequence of Le Pen having arrived in third place, Sarkozy's campaign took a turn to the right in advance of the second round.¹³⁷⁵ For example, he announced his intention to suspend France's participation in the Schengen Area if changes were not made to the implementation of the agreements. However, Sarkozy also sought to attract voters on the left by promising to have the EU renegotiate trade agreements with third states with a view to ensuring fairer competition in Europe and job protections.¹³⁷⁶ Sarkozy's position stood in stark contrast to that of 2007, when he sought to have France reclaim its leadership of the EU, and in 2008 when he presided the European Council.

Likewise, Hollande made clear attempts to reassure voters on the left who had opposed the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. This was highly important as analysis revealed that only 37 per cent of Hollande's supporters had voted in favour of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005.¹³⁷⁷ He pledged to undo the austerity policies implemented at the EU level. He also promised to renegotiate the Fiscal Compact Treaty, agreed by leaders in December 2011, claiming that the Treaty would undermine French economic sovereignty and force austerity.¹³⁷⁸ With an increase in turnout at the second round, the candidates' strategies of mobilising Euroscepticism appear to have succeeded in encouraging supporters of Le Pen and Mélenchon to vote in the second round. Hollande won the election, attracting 51.6 per cent of the vote.¹³⁷⁹

The PS succeeded in winning a majority at the legislative elections the following month. Hollande appointed Jean-Marc Ayrault as Prime Minister. Although Ayrault was a long-standing *député*, this was the first time he had held a position in government. In a clear signal to the '*France du Non*', Hollande appointed Laurent Fabius as Foreign Minister. The appointment of Fabius to such a high-level position was also part of Hollande's strategy to neutralise him. Leadership rivals, Arnaud Montebourg, who had (discretely) opposed the Constitutional Treaty, and Manuel Valls were also given cabinet positions, Finance Minister and Interior Minister respectively. The government included members of the radical left and ecologists.

Despite Hollande's campaign promise to renegotiate the Fiscal Compact Treaty, the Treaty was ratified by the French Parliament, in its original form, in October 2012.¹³⁸⁰ Hollande also committed to reducing France's budget deficit to 3 per cent by 2013 and to eliminating it

¹³⁷⁵ Gilles Thevenon and Jean-Philippe Jal, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹³⁷⁶ Francesca Vassallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 87.

¹³⁷⁷ Pascal Perrineau, "François Hollande confronté au défi européen", *Le Figaro*, 8 May 2012, p. 16, cited in Francesca Vassallo, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹³⁷⁸ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 229.

¹³⁷⁹ Laurent de Boissieu, "Election présidentielle 2012", *op. cit.*

¹³⁸⁰ Helen Drake, "France and the European Union", *op. cit.*, p. 229.

by 2017.¹³⁸¹ This went against his campaign promises to renegotiate the Treaty and undo austerity. Hollande's willingness to bow to pressure from the EU seems to confirm that positions adopted, particularly in advance of the second round of the Presidential elections, were motivated by strategic considerations. Further, this post-election shift in Hollande's position risked causing the divisions of 2005 to resurface. During interviews, a number of PS *députés* spoke of on-going divisions within the party. Régine Povéda, confirmed that divisions were still present within the party, stating "*le parti n'est pas guéri*" and "*une blessure reste*."¹³⁸² So, too, did Christophe Premat, who claimed that "*un clivage demeure*" within the PS over the Europe issue.¹³⁸³ For Chantal Guittet, although the EU was not the most important source of divisions within the party, it remained "*une question qui peut diviser*." Guittet went on to claim that Hollande's post-election shift served to "*renforcer les tensions*."¹³⁸⁴ On-going frictions within the PS were reflected in the fact that only 19 per cent of PS respondents to the questionnaire considered the government's EU policy to be representative of public opinion, while 35 per cent considered it was not.

2.2.2. Responding to the FN threat

In opposition, the UMP became much more factional than it had been between 2004 and 2012.¹³⁸⁵ As popular support for the FN grew, the party was viewed as a real and growing electoral threat to the UMP. In response, the UMP moved further to the right, particularly on questions of national identity and immigration, and even adopted some of the FN's policies.¹³⁸⁶ This move was supported by a considerable proportion of UMP members. In July 2012, Guillaume Peltier, a key actor in Sarkozy's re-election campaign, established *La Droite forte* group within the party in order to pursue the former President's policies. The group's motion attracted the support of 28 per cent of UMP members at the party's congress in November 2012. Further, the motion advanced by *La Droite populaire*, another group on the right of the party founded by Thierry Mariani in July 2010, attracted 11 per cent of the vote.¹³⁸⁷ The growing importance of immigration for the UMP and its successor party was reflected in responses to the questionnaire. Asked to list the issues they believed to be the most important for France, in

¹³⁸¹ Frédéric Sawicki, "Political Parties: The Socialists and the Left", *op. cit.*, p. 116.

¹³⁸² Régine Povéda, interview by telephone.

¹³⁸³ Christophe Premat, interview by telephone.

¹³⁸⁴ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone.

¹³⁸⁵ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

¹³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.

¹³⁸⁷ Laurent de Boissieu, "Union pour un mouvement populaire", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/courants-ump.htm>>.

a context of economic stagnation LR respondents, like their PS colleagues, considered unemployment to be the most important. Also, in view of the terrorist attacks of 2015, both parties' respondents considered national security and terrorism to be of great importance. Notable, however, was the greater importance LR respondents attached to the issues of immigration and crime, considered the fifth and sixth most important issues. PS respondents, in contrast, attached far less importance to these issues.

Although increasing popular support for the FN caused the UMP to move further to the right, it did not, however, result in any considerable modification of the party's EU policy.¹³⁸⁸ The UMP was successful in minimising the association of immigration with European integration. This might be because concerns about immigration, particularly among FN supporters, tend to relate to immigrants from North Africa as opposed to from other EU members states.¹³⁸⁹ While the party, like others in the French party system, has been reluctant to accept further enlargement of the EU and transition measures were implemented in 2004 and 2007, the principle of free movement of workers itself has not been called into question. This contrasts with the reaction of the UK's Conservative Party, and latterly the Labour Party, to growing public concerns about immigration by calling this fundamental principle into question. Neither did the EU policy of the PS shift in response to growing popular support for the FN and the *Parti de Gauche*. As the governing party, it was important, and easier, for the PS to conceal internal divisions. Neither the PS nor the UMP stood to gain politically from increasing the salience of the issue so, as in the past, following the 2012 Presidential elections the salience of the Europe issue declined. This again contrasts with the situation in the UK following the 2010 general election where, despite the return on the Conservatives to government and legislative steps taken to limit future transfers of sovereignty to the EU, the salience of the Europe issue only continued to grow.

Following Cameron's announcement in January 2013 that a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU would take place if the Conservative Party were re-elected in 2015, Le Pen called on Hollande to hold a referendum on France's continued membership of the EU in January 2014.¹³⁹⁰ The 2014 European Parliament elections therefore took place in a particular context as, despite the decline in the salience of the Europe issue following the 2012 elections, Le Pen sought to mobilise growing public Euroscepticism to attract greater electoral

¹³⁸⁸ Florence Haegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-102.

¹³⁸⁹ Jacques Lagroye with Bastien François and Frédéric Sawicki, *Sociologie politique, op. cit.*, p. 271.

¹³⁹⁰ Abel Mestre, "Marine Le Pen demande à Hollande un référendum sur la sortie de l'Union européenne", *Le Monde*, 2 March 2013 <https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/03/02/marine-le-pen-demande-a-hollande-un-referendum-sur-la-sortie-de-l-union-europeenne_1841929_823448.html>.

support for the FN. As such, the party took a clear anti-EU position going into the European elections. Whereas in 2009 the party had campaigned on a platform of reforming the EU, in 2014 the FN campaigned against membership, insisting upon the ultra-liberal ideology of the EU and the democratic deficit of its institutions.¹³⁹¹ The programme clearly sought to attract voters on the left and appeal to anti-establishment sentiment.

Despite the context, turnout at the election was just 42.43 per cent, only slightly higher than in 2009.¹³⁹² However, one in four votes cast was for the FN, allowing the party to win the elections. For the first time since 1984, neither the UMP nor the PS lists won the European Parliament elections. With 24.86 per cent of the vote the FN won 24 of France's 74 seats. Compared to 2009, the party multiplied by four its popular support and by eight the number of seats held. The UMP arrived in second place, with 20.81 per cent of the vote and 20 seats. The public, it seemed, chose to voice its opposition to the PS government, with the party winning just 13.98 per cent of the vote and 13 seats.¹³⁹³ Of note is that leftist voters did not voice opposition to the government or concerns about integration by voting for Mélenchon's *Front de Gauche* list, which increased its share of the vote only marginally, to 6.33 per cent, compared to 2009. This seems to confirm that the FN had been successful in attracting the support of the 'France du Non' on the left.

The outcome mirrored that in the UK, where UKIP also won the European Parliament elections for the first time with a similar proportion of the popular vote as the FN. However, whereas the victory of UKIP seemed truly to reflect public opinion on the EU as the electorate had increasingly treated the European Parliament elections as first-order contests, this cannot be said about the victory of the FN. Whereas UKIP was essentially a single-issue party founded to campaign for the UK to leave the EU, the agenda of the FN was much wider, meaning the bases of electoral support could have been multiple. Chloé Thomas argues that Euroscepticism is a form of populism and that parties, notably the FN, adopt Eurosceptic discourse in order to strengthen their anti-establishment positions.¹³⁹⁴ Thus, while the anti-EU position of the FN undoubtedly attracted the support for voters opposed to EU membership, votes cast for the party

¹³⁹¹ Chloé Thomas, "'L'Europe contre les peuples': Euroscepticisme et populisme dans le discours des partis politiques", *Les Cahiers du Cevipol*, no. 2, 2017 <<https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-du-cevipol-2017-2-page-3.htm>>.

¹³⁹² European Parliament, "Résultats des élections européennes 2014" <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/fr/resultats-nationaux/france/2014-2019/session-constitutive/>>.

¹³⁹³ Laurent de Boissieu, "Elections européennes 2014", *France Politique* <<https://www.france-politique.fr/elections-europeennes-2014.htm>>.

¹³⁹⁴ Chloé Thomas, "'L'Europe contre les peuples': Euroscepticisme et populisme dans le discours des partis politiques", *op. cit.*

at the 2014 European Parliament elections were as much a vote in opposition to Hollande and his government as a vote in opposition to EU membership.

During interview, politicians discussed the link between increasing Euroscepticism among the public and growing support for the FN. For some, on both the centre-left and the centre-right, increasing support for the FN was perceived as a reflection of growing anti-establishment sentiment as opposed to opposition to European integration. Catherine Quéré spoke of “*la colère contre l’élite politique.*”¹³⁹⁵ Likewise, UDI *député* Charles de Courson claimed that a vote for the FN was a means for voters to communicate a sentiment of “*j’en ai marre de la classe politique*” and had “*rien à voir avec une opposition à l’UE.*”¹³⁹⁶ Others identified an indirect link between support for the FN and the Europe issue. LR *député* Denis Jacquat believed that, while increasing support for the FN was not directly linked to the EU, French Euroscepticism was based on concerns about immigration.¹³⁹⁷ This sentiment was shared by Jacquat’s LR colleague, Jean-Claude Mignon, who considered rising support for the FN to be linked to “*les problèmes de l’immigration et la sécurité.*”¹³⁹⁸ The PS *député*, Régine Povéda, highlighted a link between enlargement, immigration, and growing public opposition to integration.¹³⁹⁹ Damien Abad considered the Europe issue to be an important factor driving growing support for the FN, although just one of many factors.¹⁴⁰⁰ Others felt that rising support for the FN was directly linked to its position on integration. PS *député* Dominique Raimbourg claimed there was no doubt that rising support for the FN was linked to growing public Euroscepticism as the FN is “*un parti anti-UE.*”¹⁴⁰¹ LR *député* Frédéric Reiss stated that he had great difficulty convincing his constituents of the benefits of EU membership in the context of rising support for the FN.¹⁴⁰² What does seem clear from these statements is that there was little consensus between or within mainstream parties as to the importance of the link between increasing electoral support for the FN and growing public Euroscepticism. The matter therefore had the potential to become a source of divisions as parties sought respond to the electoral threat posed by the FN.

¹³⁹⁵ Catherine Quéré, interview in person.

¹³⁹⁶ Charles de Courson, interview by telephone.

¹³⁹⁷ Denis Jacquat, interview by telephone.

¹³⁹⁸ Jean-Claude Mignon, interview in person.

¹³⁹⁹ Régine Povéda, interview by telephone.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Damien Abad, interview in person.

¹⁴⁰¹ Dominique Raimbourg, interview by telephone.

¹⁴⁰² Frédéric Reiss, interview in person.

2.2.3. *No sign of a Frexit?*

Following the 2014 European Parliament elections, the situation in France resembled that in the UK to a considerable extent. The FN, a vocally Eurosceptic party calling for a referendum on France's continued membership of the EU, had come third at the 2012 Presidential elections and had won the 2014 European Parliament elections. In fact, the FN held more seats in the National Assembly and had come far closer to exercising executive power than UKIP in the UK. In both states public support for EU membership was below the EU average and opposition to integration was growing. Nonetheless public support remained much higher in France than in the UK, and opposition lower. The French and UK publics both attached substantial importance to the issues of immigration and security, often associated with European integration. The Europe issue was increasingly salient at national elections in both states, although to a lesser extent in France than in the UK.

Yet whereas the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron had, by January 2013, found himself under such pressure from within his mainstream, established party that he felt he had little choice but to offer the public a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU, there was little sign of an increase in Euroscepticism among French mainstream, established politicians. In contrast to the situation in the UK, where responses to the questionnaire confirmed there was no consensus between the two main parties or within the governing party in support of continued EU membership, the responses of French respondents made it clear that, if a referendum were to be held on France's continued membership of the EU, there would be overwhelming support for a remain vote within both the LR and the PS. Not only this, there was no support within the LR or the PS, or other mainstream parties, for such an in-out referendum to be held. While some differences in attitudes were visible both between and within the two main parties, a strong consensus in support of French membership of the EU was evident.

As was seen in Chapter 1, the overwhelming majority of both LR and PS respondents to the questionnaire signalled their attachment to Europe and a strong majority considered the interests of EU member states to be close or very close. The vast majority of both LR and PS respondents expressed high levels of support for EU membership and, for the most-part, solid recognition of its benefits. While certain drawbacks of EU membership were noted, both LR and PS respondents most commonly complained of sub-optimal decision-making. Nonetheless, loss of sovereignty and cultural identity remained a concern for a considerable minority of LR respondents. In so far as concerns the decision-making in the EU, LR and PS respondents were in agreement that the process is not democratic enough, although they felt sure that France has

some or great influence at the EU level. It should also be recalled that both LR and PS respondents tended to consider that the electorate attached limited importance to the Europe issue. Further, the vast majority of both LR and PS respondents believed that the majority of their constituents supported EU membership. Nonetheless, certain politicians interviewed in the aftermath of the UK's referendum said that if a similar referendum were to be held in France they felt sure that the public would vote to leave the EU. Chantal Guittet, for example, predicted that the French public "*ferait la même chose.*"¹⁴⁰³ Notable, however, was that politicians frequently insisted on the need to better explain European integration to the public, rather than seek to change the EU, in order to increase support for membership. For example, LR *député* André Schneider emphasised "*le besoin de pédagogie pour rapprocher les citoyens de l'Europe.*"¹⁴⁰⁴ The vast majority of both LR and PS respondents stated that they wanted integration to continue, either at the same rate or at a faster pace. While a majority – 64 per cent – of PS respondents hoped to see integration continue at a faster pace, there was nonetheless considerable support – 38 per cent – among LR respondents for more intense integration. Further, just 4 per cent of PS respondents and 14 per cent of LR respondents felt that integration had gone too far.

The information gathered through the questionnaire and from interviews confirmed the existence of a strong consensus in support of European integration *between* the two main parties. As such, there have been few grounds for inter-party competition around the Europe issue. Further, the findings showed that, despite periodic divisions, a consensus in support of integration also existed *within* the LR and the PS. This intra-party consensus extended to the bases of support for integration. Intra-party unity means there have been few grounds for intra-party competition around the Europe issue. The existence of inter- and intra-party consensus in support of integration also means there has been little interest for either the LR or the PS in seeking to increase the salience of the Europe issue. On the contrary, both parties have had an interest in minimising the salience of the issue.

The information gathered through the questionnaire and from interviews laid bare differences between UK and French politicians. Beyond the far higher overall level of support for integration among LR and PS politicians, the existence of a strong consensus between these parties stood in stark contrast to the UK, where no such consensus existed between the Conservative and Labour Parties. The similarities between the positions of LR and PS *députés* and those of UK Labour MPs served to highlight the extent of the divergence between the two

¹⁴⁰³ Chantal Guittet, interview by telephone.

¹⁴⁰⁴ André Schneider, interview in person.

main parties in the UK. Also, the extent to which the positions of LR *députés* differed from those of their centre-right counterparts of the Conservative Party highlighted the extremity of positions within the UK party. Further, the findings also revealed that the Conservative Party was the only one of the four main parties under study in which an intra-party consensus in support of integration was absent.

In this sub-chapter, through the analysis of the positions of UK and French political parties and individual politicians following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, it has again been shown that there were certain significant similarities in the situations in the UK and France, but more importantly, there were prominent differences. There was considerable anger in both the UK and France at the respective governments' decisions to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon by parliamentary vote alone. In the UK, the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon saw the crystallisation of that anger, principally within the Conservative Party. Soon thereafter calls from within the party for a referendum on the UK's very membership of the EU became more and more vocal. The October 2011 rebellion revealed the extent of the intra-party divide over the Europe issue and the failure of the leadership to neutralise opponents of the EU. The referendum promise of January 2013 laid bare the fact that intra-party competition around the Europe issue was increasingly dominated by hard Eurosceptics. As hard Eurosceptics gained force within the Conservative Party, soft Eurosceptics and waverers were drawn towards them in an attempt to secure political gain. Labour's refusal to offer an automatic in-out referendum made the question a basis of inter-party competition, despite the party's attempts to minimise the salience of the Europe issue. In France, the situation was strikingly different. Following the entry into force of the Treaty, anger that ratification had taken place by parliamentary vote alone subsided. The Europe issue declined in salience and was rarely a basis of competition between the two main parties. A notable exception was the period between the first and second rounds of the 2012 Presidential election. Neither was the Europe issue a basis of competition within either of the two main parties, which seems to confirm the success of the strategy of externalising those who continued to vocally oppose the Treaty.

In both the UK and France a party calling for the state's withdrawal from the EU won the European Parliament elections in 2014. In the UK the Conservatives reacted with fear at the electoral threat posed by UKIP. Subsequently, demands grew for Cameron's referendum promise to be enshrined in legislation; two of the party's MPs defected, without being pushed, to UKIP; and, importantly, a growing number of Cabinet members indicated their support for a vote to leave the EU. The 2016 referendum revealed that close to half of Conservative MPs

were hard Eurosceptics. The reactions of the two main French parties to the victory of the FN contrasted markedly with that of the Conservative Party. While the victory was of course concerning, the two main parties took a more nuanced view of increasing electoral support for the FN. Rather than being viewed simply as a vote against the EU, support was considered to be a vote against the established political elite and sign of concerns about immigration and security. The outcome of the European Parliament election did not, therefore, result in any considerable change in the EU policy of either the governing PS or the UMP. The consensus in support of integration, both between and within the two main parties, remained soundly in place and there were certainly no calls for a Frexit within either party.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, just as the Treaty on European Union marked a key juncture in the process of European integration, so too did the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU gained legal personality, its institutions were strengthened, and the scope of its action was widened. However, it was perhaps the process of enacting Treaty reform and the failure of the Constitutional Treaty, that was the most consequential. Despite public support for EU membership having fallen considerably since the early 1990s, referenda on the Constitutional Treaty were held, or planned, in a number of member states where there was no legal obligation to do so. Following the ‘no’ votes of the French and Dutch publics, the Treaty was redrawn as the Treaty of Lisbon, which was ratified by Parliamentary vote alone in all but one member state. Although the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon did not see the sharp drop in public support for EU membership that followed the entry into force of the TEU, the public’s image of the EU gradually became more negative. In a context of economic crisis, declining support for integration manifested itself through increasing support for anti-establishment parties, many of which were Eurosceptic, and the growing electoral importance of the Europe issue. It was seen in Chapter 3 that the ratification of the TEU caused divisions within mainstream parties in the UK and France, rather than between them. Where the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties were concerned, while in France an inter-party consensus prevailed and divisions were again solely internal, there was a divide *between* the two main parties in the UK. Again, what is striking in studying the mainstream parties of the UK and France, is the nature and duration of divisions, the motivations of politicians in positioning themselves, the ways in which parties dealt with divisions, and the consequences for the careers of the actors concerned.

In the UK, the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties marked a key juncture in the UK-EU relationship, even more so than the TEU. First, because the ratification of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties made clear the divide between the Labour Party and Conservative Parties on the future of European integration. Second, because the decision not to hold a referendum on the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon triggered calls for a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU. Having negotiated both the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, the Labour government supported their ratification and the party was very much united in its support. The Conservative Party was united in its opposition to the ratification of the Treaties. As such, the question of Treaty reform was a basis of quite salient inter-party competition for four years. Not only was the Conservatives' opposition unusual for an established, mainstream party, the unity of the party stood in contrast to the intra-party divisions over the ratification of the TEU. The Conservative Party had become more united in its Euroscepticism, although its official position was one of *soft* Euroscepticism. Despite its support for the Treaties, the Labour Party's discourse on integration changed in tone. This shift reflected ideological opposition to the single currency among Brownites, but also a strategic reaction to falling public support for EU membership and a desire to avoid electoral losses.

Brown's decision to ratify the Treaty by parliamentary vote alone was made in light of increasingly negative public opinion. However, the refusal to hold a referendum, particularly given the close result of the parliamentary vote, served to drive calls from Conservative hard Eurosceptics and the public for an in-out referendum. As a result, the Europe issue did not fall in salience following the entry into force of the Treaty. Once in government, Cameron found himself under mounting pressure to agree to an in-out referendum. The voice of those seeking a vote was strengthened by surging electoral support for UKIP, which was viewed as a manifestation of anti-EU sentiment. The growing influence of hard Eurosceptics over party policy resulted in Cameron promising, in January 2013, to hold a referendum if the party were re-elected in 2015. This move was highly strategic, allowing Cameron both to secure his position within the party and increase the likelihood of re-election. While Cameron's promise achieved these two objectives, it also served to bring intra-party divisions, now between the party's *soft* and *hard* Eurosceptics, to the fore, which posed a challenge for the leadership. Forced to take a stand at the October 2011 Parliamentary vote and then in advance of the in-out referendum in June 2016, an increasing number of Conservative MPs, including Cabinet members, positioned themselves not only in favour of a referendum but also in favour of leaving the EU. Their growing number reflected the ever-greater influence of hard Eurosceptics over the Parliamentary Party, especially as the Europe issue seemed to play a growing role in voter

behaviour. The dynamic established by the growing influence of hard Eurosceptics was hard for ambitious Conservative MPs to resist, resulting in almost half of the party's MPs voting in favour of Leave. Although the positions of a committed core of hard-Eurosceptics were driven by ideological considerations, it is clear that in advance of the 2016 referendum ambitious Conservative MPs, such as Boris Johnson and Michael Gove among a number of others, supported Leave for strategic reasons, believing this would result in personal political gain. The extent of the intra-party divide between Conservative *soft* and *hard* Eurosceptics was only emphasized by the Labour Party's unity in support of a Remain vote.

In France, despite the failure of the 2005 referendum, the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties did not have a profound, long-term impact on the positions of mainstream politicians on European integration. Just like the RPR in 1992, divisions over the Constitutional Treaty emerged within the opposition PS. However, while some in the PS had solid ideological reasons for opposing the Treaty, Laurent Fabius, the leader of the 'no' campaign, was clearly driven by strategic considerations. This, and the fact that Fabius' leadership aspirations were ended in advance of the 2007 Presidential elections, facilitated the healing of intra-party divisions and allowed the PS to present a relatively united front in support of the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. Neither the PS nor the governing UMP interpreted the outcome of the 2005 referendum as a clear rejection of the EU by the public, but rather as a rejection of certain policies.

It was Sarkozy's desire to see France recover its lost influence that led him to announce his intention to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon by parliamentary vote alone. The Treaty was ratified by the National Assembly by a resounding majority and with the support of both the UMP and the PS, confirming the Europe issue was not the basis of inter-party competition. The PS and, to a lesser extent, the UMP were united in their support for ratification, indicating intra-party divisions had been resolved, key dissidents were externalised from both parties following the vote. This response of the UMP stood in contrast to the post-TEU period when attempts were made to neutralise dissidents. Further, despite growing public concern about immigration and security, Sarkozy quite successfully dissociated these issues from the Europe issue during his Presidency minimising the impact on public support for EU membership. Nonetheless, the Europe issue was a feature of the second round of the 2012 Presidential elections, following considerable support for the Eurosceptic FN and the *Parti de Gauche* at the first round. Cameron's promise of an in-out referendum prompted the FN to call for the same, which undoubtedly contributed to its victory at the 2014 European Parliament elections. Yet, again, this was not viewed as an anti-EU vote by the two main parties, but rather as a vote against the established political elite and a signal of concerns about immigration and security. As a result,

growing support for parties with Euroscepticism had little impact on the EU policies of the two main parties.

In seeking to account for the hardening of Conservative Euroscepticism and the resulting emergence of an inter-party divide between the UK's two main parties, which stands in contrast to the situation in France, the role of intra-party competition and the potential for political gain are key. Having been less problematic while the Conservative Party was in opposition, intra-party divisions and competition around the Europe issue once again became a serious challenge after the party returned to government. Cameron's attempts to manage intra-party divisions differed greatly with the practice in the two main French parties of externalising dissidents who could not be neutralised. Cameron's impotence in the face of the growing influence of hard Eurosceptics was due to the fact that there were clear political gains to be made – by the Conservative Party and by its individual politicians – from adopting an ever-harder Eurosceptic position. This was especially so in the context of growing public opposition to EU membership, the increasing electoral salience of the Europe issue, and its association with the key public concern of immigration. Cameron himself had made such a political gain in winning the party leadership by presenting himself as a Eurosceptic. Harsh critics of the EU raised their standing within the party and quickly entered government and Cabinet. In advance of the 2015 general election, aspiring candidates increased their chances of being selected by adopting Eurosceptic positions and the party won the election at least in part due to its promise of an in-out referendum. The positioning of Conservative MPs in advance of the referendum was driven, in a number of instances, by the pursuit of personal political gain. In France, where public opposition to EU membership was relatively low, as was the electoral salience of the Europe issue, there was very limited potential for, and very few examples of, political gain being made by either the UMP or the PS, or their individual politicians, from adopting a Eurosceptic position.

Conclusion

This thesis has studied the interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain in the UK and France. By studying the two main political parties in each of these states, the research has sought to understand the extent to which the potential for political gain has determined the positions of mainstream parties and individual politicians on European integration. It has also sought to determine why European integration has been a cause of divisions within some mainstream political parties, yet not in others, and how it is that some parties, once divided over the issue, have managed to re-establish unity, while others have not.

In seeking to account for a party's position on European integration, there is a tendency for the literature on political Euroscepticism to focus on either ideology or strategy. Considering political ideology and strategy within the national context of a member state allows for a better understanding of how these variables interact and the extent to which they shape the positions of politicians on integration. Further, study of the national context helps to explain variations in the positions of parties in different member states where ideology and strategy are similar. The UK's Conservative Party and France's RPR-UMP-LR serve as an example of two parties with similar ideologies and positions within the political system that responded very differently to integration.

It is clear that certain characteristics of national contexts make political Euroscepticism more likely. In fact, certain characteristics of national contexts seem to encourage political competition on the Europe issue, and even incentivise Euroscepticism. There is increasing evidence that a party's position on integration has consequences for its electoral success. In a context of falling public support for European integration, parties and individual politicians might therefore seek to make political gains from adopting a Eurosceptic position. This was increasingly the case of certain Conservative politicians and, latterly, the party as a whole.

A further tendency of the existing literature on Euroscepticism, and in particular that on political competition, is to focus on political competition *between* parties, and pay less attention to competition *within* parties. Yet, given the increase in Eurosceptic discourse among established, mainstream politicians and the presence of divisions within certain established, mainstream parties on the Europe issue, a fuller understanding of the role of intra-party competition in determining the positions of politicians on European integration is necessary.

In studying the interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain it has been assumed that strategic considerations might shape political ideology (Bourdieu), that a party's position on European integration might affect its electoral fortunes (de Vries), and that intra-party divisions on questions of integration might present the greatest challenge resulting from EU membership for political elites (Leconte). The research has taken a comparative approach, analysing the interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain in the UK and France. This comparative approach has allowed for stronger empirical arguments to be made. The interdisciplinary nature of the research has allowed for a fuller understanding of the factors that determine the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration. The use of original primary data, gathered through a survey and interviews of UK and French politicians, has provided new and detailed insights into their positioning on integration. The use of this original primary data, along with the comparative and interdisciplinary approach of the research, have enabled this thesis to bring something new to the existing scholarship.

Part 1 of this thesis began with a study, in Chapter 1, of the specific national contexts of the UK and France. This allowed for a clearer understanding of the role of the national context in shaping the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration, in encouraging political competition, and in incentivising Euroscepticism. It was shown that, despite similarities between the UK and France in terms of national political cultures, political systems and the Europeanization thereof, and popular Euroscepticism, the reactions of UK and French politicians to European integration differed considerably.

Both the UK and France were historically, great global powers and both are old, established democracies with highly majoritarian political systems. As such, it could be expected that both the UK and France would have difficulty in adapting to EC/EU membership. Adapting to membership certainly did pose problems in both states. However, whereas UK politics resisted Europeanization and politicians were less willing to recognise the benefits of membership, a cross-party consensus in support of membership emerged in France not long after accession. The benefits of integration have been widely accepted by the French political elite, as has the role of the EU in the French political system. Moreover, whereas the importance of national sovereignty and pride in the UK made attachment to Europe less likely, in France attachment to Europe is far higher, as is the recognition of the role of integration in establishing peace in Europe. In both the UK and France public support for integration has fallen over time. However, whereas support for membership in the UK was among the lowest in the EC/EU, and opposition surpassed support in the years preceding its departure, French public support

remained around the EC/EU average. The issues of immigration and crime, often associated with European integration, have become increasingly important for both the UK and French electorates. Yet, whereas mainstream politicians in the UK reacted to this by going so far as to call into question the principle of the free movement of workers within the EU, French mainstream politicians have been quite successful in limiting the association of immigration and crime with European integration.

Chapter 2 charted the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and individual politicians during the long period from the end of World War II to 1990. It identified the points at which the Europe issue was a cause of divisions between and within parties, and sought to understand the basis of those divisions. Whereas the two main parties in the UK were initially united in their opposition to membership of the Communities, divisions were present both between and within the main parties in France in the 1950s. Thereafter, however, a consensus emerged among French political elites in support of membership of the Communities. Divisions emerged in the UK once a decision was made to apply for EC membership, most notably within the Labour Party, which split deeply over the question. It was argued that, in the early years of integration, the positions of parties and individual politicians in both the UK and France were mostly determined by perceptions of the national interest and these perceptions were, in most cases, influenced by political ideology.

However, it was also argued that, at certain points, when it was believed that political gains could be made, strategic considerations influenced positions on European integration. In the UK, an early example of the role of strategy could be seen in Harold Wilson's changing positions in the 1960s and 1970s, motivated by a need to manage intra-party divisions. Later, the drastic shift in Labour's position on membership in the late-1980s was very much due to a desire to make the party more electable. The increasingly antagonistic approach of the Conservative government was, however, driven by ideological factors, and the apparent incompatibility of integration with Thatcherite economic policies. In France, Jacques Chirac's Eurosceptic positioning in the late 1970s was influenced by strategic considerations and the misjudged belief that his position would attract electoral support. However, throughout this long period, integration enjoyed the permissive consensus of the European public and the Europe issue was of limited salience and political importance in both the UK and France. As such, parties and individual politicians stood to make limited political gains as a result of their position on integration.

Part 2 of this thesis focused on the period from 1991 to 2016. During this time, the role of the Europe issue in political and public debate evolved considerably, and integration emerged

as a basis of political competition. Throughout this second part, the motivations of politicians in positioning themselves on the Europe issue were questioned. It investigated the role of strategic considerations in shaping positions and sought to determine whether parties or individual politicians made political gains as a result of their positions. Individuals who diverted from the official party position were identified and the subsequent evolution of their careers was traced. Parties' responses to divisions, the measures implemented to bring rebels into line and foster party unity, and their success were studied.

Chapter 3 charted the positions of mainstream UK and French political parties and individual politicians from the opening of the intergovernmental conferences on the Treaty of the European Union in December 1990 to the beginnings of the Convention on the Future of Europe in 2002. In both the UK and France, the two main parties supported the TEU, yet intra-party divisions manifested themselves. In both cases, divisions were most present in the parties of the centre-right, the supporters of which were unsupportive of the Treaty. However, whereas the Conservative Party was in government, the RPR was in opposition. Also, whereas the RPR (mostly) succeeded in neutralising the Treaty's opponents following its ratification and divisions were short-lived, the Conservative Party *internalised* vocal Euroscepticism. Intra-party divisions were on-going while the Conservative Party remained in government, which presented a serious challenge for the party's leadership. In opposition, however, party unity increased as Euroscepticism became more dominant. Vocal critics of further integration did not advance through the ranks of the RPR. Neither did they rise through the ranks of the PS. In fact, the PS went further than the RPR by *externalising* vocal Eurosceptics. In contrast, following the ratification of the TEU, and particularly following the Conservatives' 1997 general election defeat and the resignation of John Major as party leader, it seemed that being Eurosceptic was necessary in order to advance through the Conservative Party's ranks. This was particularly evident at the 1997 party leadership contest.

It was argued that in the UK, while ideology certainly seemed to be the key factor driving the opposition of Conservative Maastricht rebels to the TEU, from the early 1990s strategic considerations began to play a much more visible role in determining the positions of Conservative MPs. The TEU marked a key juncture in evolving attitudes towards, and positions on, integration within the party. As Conservative Eurosceptics organised in groups, and in the context of falling public support for membership, a dynamic was established within the party that attracted ambitious and calculating MPs. In France, while strategic considerations did play a role at certain points, for example Chirac's lacklustre support for the TEU, the positions of politicians continued to be driven predominantly by ideological beliefs. Following the

ratification of the TEU, the salience and political importance of the Europe issue in the UK continued to be elevated. In opposition from 1997, the Conservative party actively sought to raise the issue's salience with a view to attracting the support of an increasingly Eurosceptic public. In France, the salience and importance of the Europe issue declined following ratification and remained relatively low until around the referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005.

The focus of Chapter 4 was the period from the opening of the intergovernmental conference on the Constitutional Treaty in October 2003 to June 2016, when the UK public voted to leave the EU. In the UK, the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties were supported by a unified Labour Party in government and opposed by a relatively unified Conservative Party. This signalled the extent to which Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party had hardened and that the Europe issue had become a basis of inter-party competition. In France, while both of the main parties officially supported the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties, a deep divide emerged within the PS, in opposition, over the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. The unity of the UMP in support of the Treaties reflected the evolution of the party's position on European integration.

It was argued that in the UK, while the positions of a committed core of hard Eurosceptic politicians were driven by ideology, politicians were increasingly influenced by strategic considerations in positioning themselves on the Europe issue. This was especially the case in the Conservative Party, where Euroscepticism continued to be internalised. Hard Eurosceptic ideologues were joined by a growing number of MPs who strategically positioned themselves against further integration and, increasingly, against membership. It had become clear that it was necessary to position publicly as Eurosceptic in order to advance through the party's ranks. Candidates for election were increasingly quizzed on their position on integration, non-Eurosceptics were more and more rare on the Conservative frontbenches and hard Eurosceptics were increasingly common, and the party leadership was reserved for those who had proven their Eurosceptic credentials. Opposition to membership was growing among the public and among Conservative members and supporters in particular, fuelled by anger at having been denied a referendum on treaty reform. Conservative politicians were likely to believe that the public attached considerable importance to the Europe issue and that their constituents opposed membership. The bottom-up influence of public opinion over the Conservative Party, divided between soft and hard Eurosceptics, was therefore great. In view of rising electoral support for UKIP, it was believed that a tougher EU policy would bring electoral gains, or at least minimise losses. Although the Conservative Party remained in opposition until 2010, the party's victories

at three successive European Parliament elections, which, it was argued, were viewed from 2004 as first-order contests by an increasing proportion of voters, would seem to indicate the strategy's partial success. These electoral successes served to legitimise calls within the Conservative Party for a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU, which was promised by David Cameron in a strategic attempt to temper growing intra-party divisions and counter the perceived threat of UKIP. Strategic considerations also played a role in shaping Labour's EU policy while in government. Although the party was supportive of integration throughout its time in office, the tone of its discourse became markedly less enthusiastic, ambiguous, and even Eurosceptic at times. While Brown was certainly, ideologically, less Europhile than Blair, the change in tone was influenced to a considerable extent by concerns about public opinion.

It seems clear that, in positioning himself against the Constitutional Treaty, Laurent Fabius was heavily influenced by strategic considerations. The deep divide within the PS was made more likely by the fact the party was in opposition and its voters were unsupportive of the Treaty's provisions. Given divisions within the party over the liberal economic orientation of integration, negative supporter opinion had significant bottom-up influence. Keen to secure the PS candidacy for the 2007 Presidential elections, Fabius sought to appeal to the considerable portion of the party who opposed provisions of the Constitutional Treaty. However, although the 'no' campaign led by Fabius was successful, given his political past, his position was perceived as opportunistic. This facilitated the neutralisation of Fabius in the post-referendum period and impeded him from making political gains from his position. PS politicians who maintained their vocal Euroscepticism beyond the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon were externalised. The UMP's enthusiastic support for the Treaties was not only a sign of the evolution of its EU policy but was also in keeping with the attitudes of its voters who had become more Europhile. More unified in its support for integration, the party was better able to influence supporter opinion. The UMP also externalised vocal Eurosceptics following the ratification of the Treaty, again a signal of its unambiguously Europhile position.

Despite having been an influential member state of the EC/EU for over 40 years, a consensus in support of integration did not emerge among established, mainstream UK politicians or the public. As a result, the UK stood out among member states, often referred to by scholars and journalists alike as an 'awkward partner.' As contended by Hooghe and Marks, the particularities of UK national identity played a key role in shaping attitudes towards

European integration.¹⁴⁰⁵ Accounting for the distinctiveness of UK identity has not been an objective of this thesis. However, it is clear that the importance of national sovereignty and pride in the past impeded the development of an attachment to Europe and the recognition of the benefits of integration for the UK. What also set the UK apart was low levels of support for EC/EU membership among the public, undoubtedly tied to lower levels of European identification and ambivalent or negative messaging from political elites. In the post-Maastricht period and in the absence of a consensus in support of integration, the Europe issue began to affect the choice made by voters at general elections. It has been argued that, from 2004, an increasing proportion of the electorate viewed European Parliament elections as first-order elections at which they expressed their opinion on integration. It is not surprising, therefore, that strategic considerations had a greater influence over the positions of the two main political parties in the UK than they did in France.

While UK politics, in general, resisted Europeanization and politicians across the political spectrum were less likely to acknowledge the benefits of membership, the reaction of the Conservative party to EC/EU membership stood out in particular. That Euroscepticism, both soft and hard, became widespread in an established, mainstream party of government was highly unusual. Although the presence of Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party can be explained to an extent by ideological factors – the ideological shift to the right under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher and opposition to the widening scope of integration from the late 1980s – strategic considerations and desire for political gain were key in accounting for positions from the Maastricht period onwards. Whereas established, mainstream parties have typically sought to minimise the salience of the Europe issue, Conservative Eurosceptics pushed the issue up the political agenda. Whereas Euroscepticism, where present in established, mainstream parties, has tended to be pushed to the margins or even externalised, such attitudes were internalised by the Conservative Party. Ineffectively managed, the influence of Eurosceptics grew. The intra-party divide that initially opposed supporters of integration and soft Eurosceptics evolved by the late 1990s to oppose soft and hard Eurosceptics. Whereas at the start of the 1990s Euroscepticism was not an impediment to career advancement so long as it was expressed discreetly, by the end of the 1990s being vocally Eurosceptic had become something close to a prerequisite for those hoping to sit on the frontbenches. Further, whereas the supporters of established, mainstream parties have tended to be more disposed to European integration, Conservative supporters, and members in particular, increasingly tended to oppose

¹⁴⁰⁵ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?”, *op. cit.*

membership. The bottom-up influence of supporters over the party was strengthened by the presence of intra-party divisions, and the influence of members in particular was reinforced by the changes to the leadership election process introduced in 1998. Since then, each time they have been given the opportunity party members have elected a Eurosceptic leader. Given this context, there was considerable potential for political gains to be made from positioning as Eurosceptic and, as has been shown, many individual Conservative MPs who positioned as Eurosceptic did make such gains.

In contrast, however, political gains made by the Conservative Party as a whole were not necessarily directly attributable to its increasingly Eurosceptic position. This is perhaps surprising given growing public opposition to EU membership and the increasing importance of EU issue voting. In fact, it seems intra-party divisions over the Europe issue contributed to the party's heavy defeat at the 1997 general election and its Eurosceptic message was rejected by electors at the following election in 2001. The party won the European Parliament elections of 1999, 2004, and 2009, which served to vindicate its hardening EU policy. However, while EU issue voting was increasingly present as these elections, the fact that the Conservative Party was in opposition over the period certainly contributed to the victories. Although Cameron's promise of an in-out referendum undoubtedly contributed to the Conservatives' victory at the 2015 general election, the role of this factor should not be over-estimated; it is more likely that the electorate simply wanted a single-party, non-Labour government. The conclusion drawn is that, while for much of the electorate the Europe issue was not important enough to determine which party they would support, for a significant section of the electorate the issue came to be of prime importance and the EU policy of the Conservative Party was viewed as not Eurosceptic enough.

This thesis has shown the extent to which a party's position on European integration can diverge from that which would be expected based on its political ideology and its position within the party system. It has revealed the fundamental role played by national context in shaping positions on integration. In the case of the Conservative Party it has been shown that certain features of the national context, most notably national identity, internal party organisation, and public and supporter opinion, incentivised Euroscepticism and boosted the role of strategic considerations. This thesis has highlighted links between parties' and individual politicians' positions on European integration and political gain. However, while certain conclusions have been drawn as to the political consequences, these conclusions are not without limits. It is not possible to state with certainty the extent to which political gains (or losses) were due to the position of a party or individual politician on the Europe issue. Multiple factors

contribute to political outcomes, and measuring one factor in isolation is simply impossible. Further, some factors, such as party financing and the role of media, that undoubtedly have an impact on the positions of parties and individual politicians, have not been considered in this thesis.

The outcome of the 2016 referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU had drastic consequences both for the UK and the EU. Many of these consequences have been well-documented, including the subsequent accelerated rise of hard Eurosceptics through the ranks of the Conservative Party, which thus allowed Boris Johnson to achieve his ambition of becoming Prime Minister. The consequences of the referendum result for the future unity of the UK have also been widely discussed. A solid majority of voters in Scotland and Northern Ireland supported the UK remaining in the EU. Moving forward, it will be interesting to study the role of the Europe issue in driving support for Scottish independence and Irish reunification. The outcome of the referendum also had drastic consequences for the EU and the debate around the Europe issue in its remaining member states. Initially, the outcome of the UK's referendum seemed to encourage Eurosceptic parties and politicians in certain states to push for a referendum on their own state's continued membership of the EU. It will be interesting to see whether the example of political gains achieved by Eurosceptic Conservative politicians has a longer-term impact on the positions of parties and individual politicians on European integration in the EU27. Crucial in this will be the response of the EU and its member states in addressing public concerns about integration.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire UK politicians

Please note your name. _____

1. To what extent do you feel attached to your region or nation?
 - Very attached
 - Attached
 - Little attachment
 - Not at all attached

2. To what extent do you feel attached to the United Kingdom?
 - Very attached
 - Attached
 - Little attachment
 - Not at all attached

3. To what extent do you feel attached to Europe?
 - Very attached
 - Attached
 - Little attachment (*please go to question no.5*)
 - Not at all attached (*please go to question no.5*)

4. If you feel attached or very attached to Europe, what is it that makes you feel European? Please note the **three** factors that are most important for you:
 - Shared history
 - Common civilization
 - Shared territory/borders
 - Shared culture
 - Shared values
 - Common rights and duties
 - Common political and legal system
 - Common economic system

5. Have you ever worked or studied in a foreign country?
 - No (*please go to question no.8*)
 - Yes

6. If yes, where? _____

7. If yes, for how long? _____

8. Would you feel confident holding a conversation in one or more foreign languages?
- Yes
 - No
9. On average, how frequently do you travel outside the UK for professional or personal reasons?
- Once or less a year
 - Two to five times a year
 - Six or more times a year
10. Over the past year how frequently have you had professional contact with representatives of European governments, European parliaments, or the European Union's institutions?
- No contact
 - Occasional (approximately once a month)
 - Frequent (approximately once a week)
11. How do you view the UK's political influence on the international stage?
- Strong
 - Weak
12. How do you view the UK's political influence on the international stage relative to most other developed countries?
- Stronger
 - Weaker
13. How do you view the UK's political influence on the international stage compared to 10 years ago?
- Stronger
 - Weaker
14. How do you view the UK's political influence on the international stage compared to 50 years ago?
- Stronger
 - Weaker
15. How do you view the UK's economic situation?
- Strong
 - Weak
16. How do you view the UK's economic situation relative to most other developed countries?
- Stronger
 - Weaker

17. How do you view the UK's economic situation compared to 10 years ago?
- Stronger
 - Weaker
18. How do you view the UK's economic situation compared to 50 years ago?
- Stronger
 - Weaker
19. What do you consider to be the three most important issues facing the UK today?
- Economic growth
 - Unemployment
 - Rising prices/inflation
 - Government debt/deficit
 - Healthcare and social security
 - Climate change
 - Social justice/inequality
 - Immigration
 - Crime
 - National security/terrorism
20. In terms of culture and values, the UK has most in common with:
- European countries
 - The United States
 - Commonwealth countries
21. In terms of interests, the UK has most in common with:
- European countries
 - The United States
 - Commonwealth countries
22. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall support for the UK's membership of the European Union?
(1 = fully opposed; 10 = fully supportive)
-
23. On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted overall from EU membership?
(1 = no benefits; 10 = only benefits)
-

24. On a scale of 1 to 4, to what extent do you support the following EU policies?
(1 = fully opposed; 2 = somewhat opposed; 3 = supportive; 4 = very supportive)
- Single Market
 - Economic and Monetary Union
 - Regional Development Policy/Structural Funds
 - Common Agricultural Policy
 - Climate and Energy Package
 - Enlargement
 - Common Foreign and Security Policy
 - Common Defence Policy
25. On a scale of 1 to 4, to what extent do you feel the UK has benefitted from EU integration in the following domains?
(1 = no benefits; 2 = little benefit; 3 = beneficial; 4 = very beneficial)
- Peace-building
 - Economic growth
 - Standard of living
 - Free movement of goods and services
 - Free movement of workers
 - Agriculture
 - Infrastructure
 - Social protection
26. Do you consider any of the following to be drawbacks of the UK's membership of the European Union?
- Contribution to EU budget
 - Loss of sovereignty
 - Loss of cultural identity
 - Sub-optimal decision-making outcomes
 - Implementation of EU legislation
 - More crime
27. What is your opinion on the process of European integration?
- It has gone too far
 - It has gone far enough
 - It should continue at the current pace
 - It should continue at a faster pace

28. To what extent do you consider the EU's decision-making process to be democratic?
- Not at all democratic
 - Not democratic enough
 - Fairly democratic
 - Very democratic
29. In your view, how influential is the UK in the EU decision-making process?
- Of no influence
 - Of little influence
 - Of influence
 - Of great influence
30. Has your support for the UK's membership of the EU changed over time?
- Yes, I have become more supportive
 - Yes, I have become less supportive
 - No (*please go to no.32*)
31. If the level of your support for membership of the European Union has changed over time, can you identify the point at which this happened?
- Around the time of the UK's access to the European Communities
 - Around the time of the signing/ratification of the Single European Act
 - Around the time of the signing/ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht
 - Around the time of the signing of the Constitutional Treaty
 - Around the time of the signing/ratification of the Lisbon Treaty
 - After 2009
32. How frequently would you say that issues relating to the EU are discussed in the UK parliament?
- Very often
 - Quite often
 - Not often
 - Rarely
33. How do you feel about the amount of time spent by the UK parliament discussing issues relating to the EU?
- Too much
 - Just right
 - Too little
34. What are your thoughts on the quality of the debate on European issues in Parliament?
- Good quality
 - Bad quality

35. Do you feel the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's EU policy was representative of public opinion?
- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
36. To which political party do you belong? _____
37. Do you feel your party's EU policy is representative of public opinion?
- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
38. Do you feel that your own views on the EU are in keeping with the official position of your party?
- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
39. To what extent do your constituents support the UK's membership of the EU?
- The majority supports membership
- The majority opposes membership
40. How much importance do you believe the electorate attaches to issues relating to the EU?
- A lot of importance
- Some importance
- Little importance
- No importance
41. Are you in favour of a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU?
- Yes
- No
- Undecided
42. In your opinion, which of the following scenarios would be best for the UK?
- Become a fully participating member of the EU
- Maintain the status quo
- 'Repatriate' certain powers
- Leave the EU
- Leave the EU, then seek membership of the European Economic Area (like Norway) and/or the European Free Trade Association (like Switzerland)

Annex 2: Questionnaire French politicians

Veillez bien vouloir indiquer votre nom _____

1. Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous attaché(e) à votre région?
 Très attaché(e)
 Assez attaché(e)
 Pas très attaché(e)
 Pas du tout attaché(e)

2. Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous attaché(e) à la France?
 Très attaché(e)
 Assez attaché(e)
 Pas très attaché(e)
 Pas du tout attaché(e)

3. Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous attaché(e) à l'Europe?
 Très attaché(e)
 Assez attaché(e)
 Pas très attaché(e) (*prenez la question no.5*)
 Pas du tout attaché(e) (*prenez la question no.5*)

4. Si vous vous sentez assez ou très attaché(e) à l'Europe, lesquels des éléments suivants sont les plus importants pour constituer votre identité européenne? Veuillez noter les **trois** critères les plus importants pour vous:
 Une histoire commune
 Une civilisation commune
 Un territoire/des frontières communs
 Une culture commune
 Des valeurs communes
 Des droits et des obligations communs
 Des institutions communes et un ordre juridique commun
 Un système économique commun

5. Avez-vous déjà travaillé ou fait des études dans un pays étranger?
 Non (*prenez la question no.8*)
 Oui

6. Si oui, dans quel pays? _____

7. Si oui, pendant combien de temps? _____

8. Pourriez-vous participer à une conversation dans une langue autre que le français?
- Oui
 - Non
9. En moyenne, combien de fois par an voyagez-vous à l'extérieur du pays pour des raisons professionnelles ou privées?
- Une fois par an ou moins
 - Deux à cinq fois par an
 - Six fois par an ou plus
10. Au cours des douze derniers mois, à quelle fréquence avez-vous eu des contacts professionnels avec des représentants des parlements et gouvernements européens ou des Institutions européennes?
- Aucun contact
 - Une ou deux fois
 - Environ une fois par mois
 - Environ une fois par semaine
11. Comment jugez-vous l'influence politique et diplomatique de la France dans le monde?
- Forte
 - Faible
12. Comment jugez-vous l'influence politique et diplomatique de la France dans le monde par rapport à celle de la plupart des autres pays développés ?
- Plus forte
 - Moins forte
13. Comment jugez-vous l'influence politique et diplomatique de la France dans le monde par rapport à il y a 10 ans?
- Plus forte
 - Moins forte
14. Comment jugez-vous l'influence politique et diplomatique de la France dans le monde par rapport à il y a 50 ans?
- Plus forte
 - Moins forte
15. Comment jugez-vous la situation économique française actuelle?
- Bonne
 - Mauvaise

16. Comment jugez-vous la situation économique française actuelle par rapport à celle de la plupart des autres pays développés?
- Meilleure
 - Moins bonne
17. Comment jugez-vous la situation économique française actuelle par rapport à il y a 10 ans?
- Meilleure
 - Moins bonne
18. Comment jugez-vous la situation économique française actuelle par rapport à il y a 50 ans?
- Meilleure
 - Moins bonne
19. A votre avis, quels sont les problèmes les plus importants auxquels la France doit faire face? Veuillez classer par ordre d'importance :
- La situation économique
 - Le chômage
 - La hausse des prix/inflation
 - La dette publique
 - Le système de santé et de sécurité sociale
 - Les questions d'environnement et de changement climatique
 - Les inégalités sociales
 - L'immigration
 - L'insécurité
 - La sécurité nationale/terrorisme
20. Dans quelle mesure les intérêts des pays membres de l'UE sont-ils proches?
- Très proches
 - Plutôt proches
 - Plutôt différents
 - Très différents
21. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, dans quelle mesure soutenez-vous l'appartenance de la France à l'Union européenne?
(1 = tout à fait contre; 10 = tout à fait favorable)
-
22. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, dans quelle mesure estimez-vous que la France a bénéficié ou non de son appartenance à l'UE?
(1 = aucun bienfait; 10 = que des bienfaits)
-

23. Sur une échelle de 1 à 4, dans quelle mesure soutenez-vous les politiques européennes suivantes?

(1 = tout à fait contre; 2 = plutôt contre; 3 = plutôt favorable; 4 = tout à fait favorable)

- Le marché unique
- Une union économique et monétaire européenne avec une seule monnaie, l'euro
- La politique de développement régional/Les Fonds structurels
- La politique agricole commune
- La politique de changement climatique et de l'environnement
- L'élargissement de l'UE à d'autres pays dans les années à venir
- Une politique étrangère commune aux 28 Etats membres de l'UE
- Une politique de sécurité et de défense commune des Etats membres de l'UE

24. Sur une échelle de 1 à 4, dans quelle mesure estimez-vous que la France a bénéficié ou non de la construction européenne dans les domaines suivants?

(1 = aucun bienfait; 2 = peu de bienfaits; 3 = certains bienfaits; 4 = que des bienfaits)

- La paix entre les Etats membres de l'UE
- Le pouvoir économique de l'UE
- Le niveau et la qualité de vie
- La libre circulation des biens et des services au sein de l'UE
- La libre circulation des travailleurs européens
- L'agriculture
- Le développement d'infrastructures
- Le niveau de protection sociale

25. Est-ce que, pour vous, certains des éléments suivants seraient des inconvénients de la construction européenne?

- La contribution nationale au budget de l'UE
- La perte de souveraineté
- La perte d'identité culturelle
- Des résultats décisionnels sous-optimaux
- La mise en œuvre de la législation de l'UE
- Une hausse de la criminalité

26. Quel est votre avis sur la construction européenne?

- Elle est allée trop loin
- Elle est allée assez loin
- Elle devrait se poursuivre au même rythme
- Elle devrait se poursuivre à un rythme plus rapide

27. **Partagez-vous l'opinion selon laquelle** les décisions européennes les plus importantes (modification des traités, élargissement...) devraient être prises à la majorité des citoyens français par referendum populaire?
- Oui
- Non
28. Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous satisfait(e) ou pas du fonctionnement de la démocratie dans l'UE?
- Pas du tout satisfait(e)
- Plutôt pas satisfait(e)
- Plutôt satisfait(e)
- Très satisfait(e)
29. Êtes-vous d'accord ou pas sur le fait que la voix de la France est entendue au niveau européen?
- Pas du tout d'accord
- Plutôt pas d'accord
- Plutôt d'accord
- Tout à fait d'accord
30. Est-ce que votre soutien en faveur de l'appartenance de la France à l'Union européenne a évolué au fil des ans?
- Oui, je suis devenu(e) plus favorable
- Oui, je suis devenu(e) moins favorable
- Non (*prenez en compte la question no.32*)
31. Dans le cas où votre soutien a évolué, pourriez-vous indiquer le moment où ce changement a eu lieu?
- Autour de la période du premier élargissement des Communautés européennes
- Autour de la période de la signature et de la ratification de l'Acte unique européen
- Autour de la période de la signature et de la ratification du traité de Maastricht
- Autour de la période de la signature et de la ratification du traité constitutionnel
- Autour de la période de la signature et de la ratification du traité de Lisbonne
- Après 2009
32. Selon vous, à quelle fréquence les questions européennes sont-elles débattues par le Parlement français?
- Très souvent
- Assez souvent
- Pas souvent
- Rarement

33. Comment appréciez-vous le temps consacré par le Parlement français aux questions européennes?
- Trop de temps
 - Assez de temps
 - Pas assez de temps
34. Comment évaluez-vous la qualité du débat sur les questions européennes au sein du Parlement français?
- De bonne qualité
 - De mauvaise qualité
35. Estimez-vous que la politique européenne menée par le gouvernement est représentative de l'opinion publique?
- Oui
 - Plus ou moins
 - Non
36. Etes-vous membre de quel parti politique? _____
37. Pensez-vous que la politique européenne menée par votre parti politique est représentative de l'opinion publique?
- Oui
 - Plus ou moins
 - Non
38. Vos opinions personnelles sur la construction européenne sont-elles en accord avec les positions officielles de votre parti politique?
- Oui
 - Plus ou moins
 - Non
39. Dans quelle mesure vos électeurs soutiennent-ils l'appartenance de la France à l'Union européenne?
- Une majorité y est favorable
 - Une majorité y est opposée
40. Dans quelle mesure les citoyens français attachent-ils de l'importance aux questions européennes?
- Beaucoup d'importance
 - Une certaine importance
 - Peu d'importance
 - Aucune importance

Annex 3: Interview questions UK politicians

1. What are your views on European integration? What are the bases of your support/opposition?
2. What do you consider to be the positive and negative outcomes of integration?
3. What future for European integration and what role for the UK therein?
4. What would you like to change in terms of the process and outcomes of integration?
5. How has integration impacted politics in the UK?
6. How would you explain that UK politicians tend to be less supportive of integration than politicians in other member states?
7. How has integration impacted your political party?
8. To what extent is the party's official policy in keeping with the views of its MPs?
9. In your view, how and why has the UK's relationship with the EU changed over time?
10. To what extent has rising support for UKIP impacted the political debate around the Europe issue?
11. Are you in favour of the holding a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU?
12. What is your view of the campaign and the role taken by key actors?

Annex 4: Interview questions French politicians

1. Quel est votre avis sur l'intégration européenne? Quelles sont les bases de votre soutien/opposition?
2. Quelles sont, selon vous, les conséquences positives et négatives de l'intégration?
3. Quel avenir pour l'intégration européenne et quel rôle pour la France?
4. Quels changements seraient souhaitables en ce qui concerne le processus et les résultats de l'intégration?
5. Quel a été l'impact de l'intégration sur le débat politique en France?
6. Quel a été l'impact de l'intégration pour votre parti politique?
7. Dans quelle mesure la politique UE de votre parti est en accord avec les positions de ses élus?
8. A votre avis, comment la relation de la France avec l'UE a-t-elle évolué au fil du temps?
9. Dans quelle mesure le soutien croissant du public pour le Front national a-t-il eu un impact sur le débat politique sur les questions européennes?

Annex 5: UK interviewees

NAME	PARTY	PERIOD IN OFFICE	DATE OF INTERVIEW
BEBB Guto	Conservative Party, Independent (2019-present)	2010-2019	27 January 2016
BRAKE Tom	Liberal Democrat Party	1997-2019	19 February 2016
DAVIES David	Conservative	2005-present	19 April 2016
DONALDSON Jeffrey	Democratic Unionist Party	1997-present	26 January 2016
DRUMMOND Flick	Conservative Party	2015-present	26 February 2016
EVANS Nigel	Conservative Party	1992-present	27 January 2016
FLYNN Paul	Labour Party	1987-2019	6 January 2016
GALE Roger	Conservative Party	1983-present	12 October 2016
HOPKINS Kelvin	Labour Party, Independent (2017-2019)	1997-2019	18 May 2016
HOWELL John	Conservative Party	2008-present	22 April 2016
LILLEY Peter	Conservative Party	1983-2017	13 January 2016
MEALE Alan	Labour Party	1987-2017	12 October 2016
MONAGHAN Paul	Scottish National Party	2015-2017	19 January 2016
MOONIE Lewis	Labour Party	1987-2005	3 March 2016
NUTTALL David	Conservative Party	2010-2017	27 April 2016
PRITCHARD Mark	Conservative Party	2005-present	26 January 2016
REDWOOD John	Conservative Party	1987-present	27 May 2016
SHARMA Virendra	Labour Party	2007-present	26 January 2016
SMITH Andrew	Labour Party	1987-2017	10 March 2016
SWAYNE Desmond	Conservative Party	1997-present	24 May 2016
VAZ Keith	Labour Party	1987-2019	30 March 2015
WILLIAMS Hywel	Plaid Cymru	2001-present	15 January 2016
WOOD Mike	Conservative Party	2015-present	28 January 2016
ZEICHNER Daniel	Labour Party	2015-present	19 February 2016

Annex 6: French interviewees

NAME	PARTY	PERIOD IN OFFICE	DATE OF INTERVIEW
ABAD Damien	UMP-LR	2012-present	19 April 2016
ALLAIN Brigitte	EELV	2012-2017	9 November 2016
CROZON Pascale	PS	2007-2017	24 May 2016
DE COURSON Charles	UDF (1993-2007, Nouveau Centre (2007-2012), UDI (2012-2018))	1993-present	1 June 2016
GUITTET Chantal	PS	2012-2017	30 June 2016
JACQUAT Denis	UMP-LR	1998-2017	26 April 2016
MIGNON Jean-Claude	RPR-UMP-LR	1988-2017	22 June 2016
PELLOIS Hervé	PS (-2012) Divers gauche (2012-2017), La république en marche (2017-present)	2012-present	23 May 2016
PIRON Michel	UMP (2002-2013), UDI (2013-present)	2002-2017	23 June 2016
POVEDA Régine	PS	2014-2017	23 May 2016
PREMAT Christophe	PS	2014-2017	27 June 2016
QUERE Cathérine	PS	2007-2017	19 April 2016
RAIMBOURG Dominique	PS	2007-2017	24 May 2016
REISS Frédéric	UMP-LR	2002-present	20 April 2016
SAINT-ANDRÉ Stéphane	Parti radical de gauche	2012-2017	3 June 2016
SCHNEIDER André	RPR-UMP-LR	1997-2017	27 April 2016
TANGUY Jean-Philippe	Débout la France, Rassemblement national (2021-present)	-	6 December 2016

Annex 7: Chronology of key events 1945 – 2016

YEAR	GENERAL	UK	FRANCE
1946 September		Winston Churchill calls for 'United States of Europe'	
1948 April	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) established		
1949 April	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) established		
May	Council of Europe established		
1950 February		Clement Attlee (Labour) re-elected Prime Minister of UK	
May			'Schuman Declaration'
1951 April	Signature of Treaty of Paris		
October		Winston Churchill (Conservative) elected Prime Minister	
1952 May	Signature of Treaty establishing EDC		
1954 August			French Parliament rejects EDC
1955 May		Anthony Eden (Conservative) elected Prime Minister	
June	Messina Conference		
1956 October – November		Suez Crisis	
1957 March	Signature of Treaties of Rome		
1958 September			Founding of Fifth Republic
December			Charles de Gaulle (UNR) elected President
1959 September	EFTA established		

October		Harold Macmillan (Conservative) elected Prime Minister	
1961 August		UK applies for membership of EEC	
November			Launch of Fouchet Plan
1963 January			France vetoes UK application for membership
1964 October		Harold Wilson (Labour) elected Prime Minister	
1965 July			Empty Chair Crisis begins
December			Charles de Gaulle re-elected President
1966 March		Harold Wilson re-elected Prime Minister	
1967 May		Second UK application for membership	
November			France again vetoes UK application for membership
1968 July	Customs Union established		
1969 April			De Gaulle resigns as President
June			Georges Pompidou (UNR) elected President
1970 June		Edward Heath (Conservative) elected Prime Minister; UK accession negotiations resume	
1973 January		UK (along with Ireland and Denmark) joins EEC	
1974 February		Harold Wison (Labour) elected Prime Minister (minority government); Labour government renegotiations terms of UK membership	
May			Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (FNRI) elected President
September	European Council established		

October		Harold Wilson re-elected Prime Minister	
1975 February		Margaret Thatcher elected leader of Conservative Party	
March	Launch of European Regional Development Fund		
June		UK public votes at referendum to remain in EEC	
1976 December			RPR founded by Jacques Chirac, who serves as party President until 1994
1977 January		Roy Jenkins becomes President of the European Commission	
1979 March	Launch of European Monetary System and ERM		
May		Margaret Thatcher (Conservative) elected Prime Minister	
June	First direct elections to the European Parliament		
1980 November		Michal Foot elected leader of Labour Party	
1981 January	Greece joins EEC	Lionel Jospin elected First Secretary of PS	
May			François Mitterrand (PS) elected President
1983 June		Margaret Thatcher re-elected Prime Minister	
October		Neil Kinnock elected leader of Labour Party	
1984 June	European Parliament elections	Fontainebleau European Council Summit: UK rebate agreed	
1985 July	Milan European Council Summit: decision to launch IGC on SEA	Thatcherites establish No Turning Back group	
December	Signature of SEA		
1986 January	Portugal and Spain join EEC		
March			First period of cohabitation of 5 th Republic begins

1987 June		Margaret Thatcher re-elected Prime Minister	
1988 May			François Mitterrand re-elected President Pierre Mauroy elected First Secretary of PS
June	Hanover European Council Summit: Leaders decide to establish committee on introduction of EMU chaired by Jacques Delors		
1989 February		Bruges Group established	
June	Madrid European Council Summit European Parliament elections		
November	Fall of Berlin Wall		
1990 October	Reunification of Germany	UK joins ERM	
November		Margaret Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister, succeeded by John Major	
December	Rome European Council Summit: Two IGCs begin on monetary and political union		
1991 November		Anti-Federalist League established by Alan Sked	
December	Collapse of USSR	7 Conservative MPs rebel at first reading of EC Bill	
1992 January			Laurent Fabius elected First Secretary of PS
February	Signature of TEU		
April		John Major (Conservative) elected as Prime Minister	
May		22 Conservative MPs rebel at second reading of EC Bill	
June	Danish public votes against TEU at referendum		François Mitterrand announces TEU referendum
July		John Smith elected leader of Labour Party	
September		UK withdraws from ERM (Black Wednesday)	French public narrowly votes in favour of TEU at referendum

November		26 Conservative MPs rebel on Paving Motion (vote of confidence)	
1993 March			Second period of cohabitation of 5 th Republic begins
April			Michel Rocard elected First Secretary of PS
May	Danish public votes in favour of TEU at second referendum	41 Conservative MPs rebel at third reading of EC Bill	Jean-Pierre Chevènement leaves PS to found MDC as separate party
July		European Research Group established by Michael Spicer	
September		UKIP established	
November	Entry into force of TEU and thus establishment of EU		
1994 June	European Parliament elections		Anti-TEU lists attract over one-third of vote at European Parliament elections Henri Emmanuelli elected First Secretary of PS
July		Tony Blair elected leader of Labour Party	
November		Referendum Party established	Alain Juppé elected President of RPR MPF established by Philippe de Villiers
1995 January	Austria, Finland, and Sweden join EU		
May			Jacques Chirac (RPR) elected President
June-July		John Major resigns as leader of Conservative Party, re-elected	
October			Lionel Jospin elected First Secretary of PS for second time
1997 May		Tony Blair (Labour) elected as Prime Minister	
June		William Hague elected as leader of Conservative Party	Third period of cohabitation of 5 th Republic begins
July			Philippe Séguin elected President of RPR

October	Signature of Amsterdam Treaty		
November			François Hollande elected First Secretary of PS
1999 February			DLR faction established by Nicolas Dupont-Aignan
June	European Parliament elections		Charles Pasqua's Eurosceptic RPFIE list comes second at European Parliament elections
November			Charles Pasqua and Philippe de Villiers found RPF
2001 February	Signature of Treaty of Nice		
June	Irish public votes against Treaty of Nice at referendum	Tony Blair re-elected as Prime Minister	
September		Iain Duncan Smith elected as leader of Conservative Party (members' vote)	
2002 January	Introduction of Euro notes and coins		
February	Convention on the Future of Europe begins		
April/November			Founding of UMP, with Alain Juppé as President
May			Jacques Chirac re-elected President
October	Irish public vote in favour of Treaty of Nice at second referendum		
2003 March	Invasion of Iraq by US-led coalition		
June	Convention of the Future of Europe ends with presentation of draft Constitutional Treaty		
November		Michael Howard elected leader of Conservative Party, unopposed	
2004 May	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia join EU		

June	European Parliament elections	UKIP comes third at European Parliament elections	
September			Laurent Fabius announces opposition to Constitutional Treaty
October	Signature of Constitutional Treaty		
November			Nicolas Sarkozy elected President of UMP
2005			
May		Tony Blair re-elected as Prime Minister	French public rejects Constitutional Treaty at referendum
June	Dutch public rejects Constitutional Treaty at referendum		
December		David Cameron elected leader of Conservative Party (members' vote)	
2006		Better Off Out campaign launched	
2007			
May			Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP) elected President
June		Gordon Brown (Labour) succeeds Tony Blair as Prime Minister	
December	Signature of Treaty of Lisbon		
2008			
February			Treaty of Lisbon ratified by National Assembly
June	Irish public votes against Treaty of Lisbon at referendum		
September	Beginning of financial crisis in Europe		
November			Martine Aubry elected First Secretary of PS Nicolas Dupont-Aignan leaves UMP to found DLR as separate party; Jean-Luc Mélenchon leaves PS
2009	Financial crisis, recession across Europe		Jean-Luc Mélenchon founds Parti de Gauche
February			
June	European Parliament elections	UKIP comes second at European Parliament elections	
October	Irish public vote in favour of Treaty of Lisbon at second referendum		
2010	Recession across Europe, sovereign debt crisis		
May		David Cameron (Conservative) elected Prime Minister, forms	

July		coalition government with LibDems	<i>La Droite populaire</i> founded by Thierry Mariani
September		Ed Miliband elected leader of Labour Party	
2011	Sovereign debt crisis		
September		People's Pledge petition for referendum presented to government	
October		81 Conservative MPs rebel to vote in favour of in-out referendum	
December	Rome Summit: agreement on measures to manage and prevent future crises	David Cameron vetoes Treaty reform	
2012			
May			François Hollande (PS) elected President
July			<i>La Droite forte</i> established Guillaume Peltier
2013			
January		David Cameron's Bloomberg speech	
2014			
February		UKIP comes second at Wythenshawe and Sale East by-election	
June	European Parliament elections	UKIP comes second at Newark by-election; UKIP wins European Parliament elections	FN wins European Parliament elections
July-August		Cameron opposes nomination of Jean-Claude Juncker	
August		Douglas Carswell defects to UKIP, re-elected as MP at by-election	
September		Mark Reckless defects to UKIP, re-elected as MP at by-election	
October		UKIP comes second at Heywood and Middleton by-election	
2015			
May		David Cameron re-elected Prime Minister (majority government)	UMP relaunched as LR

September		Jeremy Corbyn elected leader of Labour Party	
2016 February		Michael Gove and Boris Johnson announce support for 'leave'	
June		UK public votes to leave EU at referendum	

**Euroscepticism, Party Politics, and Political Gain:
A Comparative Analysis of the UK and France from Maastricht to Brexit**

Abstract

This thesis studies the interplay between Euroscepticism, party politics, and political gain. More specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which the potential for political gain has determined the positions of mainstream parties and individual politicians on European integration, and why European integration has been a cause of divisions within some mainstream political parties, yet not in others. As a starting point, this thesis uses key arguments in the literature, notably that political ideology is shaped by strategy, that a party's position on integration can affect its electoral fortunes, and that intra-party divisions on questions of integration present a great challenge for political elites. The study of the positions of parties and individual politicians begins with the establishment of the European Communities, however particular attention is paid to events between 1991 and 2016. The cases of the UK and France are studied and, more specifically, positions within the two main political parties of these states are compared. An interdisciplinary approach is taken, combining political science and civilisationist approaches, to study party debates on European integration through a wider lens. Key to this thesis is the use of original primary data, which provide new and detailed insights into the positioning of mainstream UK and French politicians. Original primary data was gathered through a quantitative questionnaire of members of the lower houses of the UK and French parliaments and qualitative interviews of the same. It is argued that, the positions of French politicians from the two main political parties have principally been motivated by ideology and perception of the national interest. Intra-party divisions over the Europe issue have been successfully managed and dissidents have rarely made political gains from their positions. In contrast, in the UK, integration was often a strategic issue for both main political parties. While ideology and perception of the national interest certainly played a role in determining the positions of parties and individual politicians, it is shown that strategic considerations, and, in particular, the desire to exploit the potential for personal political gain, influenced the positions of certain politicians. Rather than being managed, intra-party divisions impacted official party policy and dissidents frequently made political gains from their positions.

Keywords: Europeanization, EU policy, Euroscepticism, party politics, political competition, strategy.

**Euroscepticisme, politique des partis et gain politique:
Une analyse comparative du Royaume-Uni et de la France de Maastricht au Brexit**

Résumé

Cette thèse étudie l'interaction entre l'euroscepticisme, la politique des partis et le gain politique. Plus précisément, elle cherche à déterminer dans quelle mesure le potentiel de gain politique a déterminé les positions des partis traditionnels et des politiciens individuels sur l'intégration européenne, et pourquoi l'intégration européenne a été une cause de division au sein de certains partis politiques traditionnels, mais pas dans d'autres. Comme point de départ, cette thèse utilise des arguments clés de la littérature, notamment que l'idéologie politique est façonnée par la stratégie, que la position d'un parti sur l'intégration peut affecter ses chances électorales, et que les divisions intra-partis sur les questions d'intégration représentent un grand défi pour les élites politiques. L'étude des positions des partis et des politiciens individuels commence avec la création des Communautés européennes, mais une attention particulière est accordée aux événements survenus entre 1991 et 2016. Les cas du Royaume-Uni et de la France sont étudiés et, plus particulièrement, les positions au sein des deux principaux partis politiques de ces États sont comparées. Une approche interdisciplinaire est adoptée, combinant les approches de la science politique et de la civilisation, pour étudier les débats des partis sur l'intégration européenne à travers une optique plus large. Un élément fondamental de cette thèse est l'utilisation de données primaires originales, qui fournissent un aperçu nouveau et détaillé du positionnement des politiciens des principaux partis politiques britanniques et français. Ces données primaires originales ont été recueillies par le biais d'un questionnaire quantitatif auprès des membres des chambres basses des parlements britannique et français et d'entretiens qualitatifs auprès des mêmes personnes. On avance que les positions des politiciens français des deux principaux partis politiques ont été principalement motivées par l'idéologie et la perception de l'intérêt national. Les divisions au sein des partis sur la question européenne ont été gérées avec succès et les dissidents ont rarement tiré des avantages politiques de leurs positions. En revanche, au Royaume-Uni, l'intégration a souvent été une question stratégique pour les deux principaux partis politiques. Si l'idéologie et la perception de l'intérêt national ont certainement joué un rôle dans l'élaboration des positions des partis et des politiciens individuels, il est démontré que des considérations stratégiques et, en particulier, le désir d'exploiter le potentiel de gain politique personnel, ont influencé les positions de certains politiciens. Plutôt que d'être gérées, les divisions au sein des partis ont eu un impact sur la politique officielle des partis et les dissidents ont souvent tiré des avantages politiques de leurs positions.

Mots-clés: Européanisation, politique européenne, euroscepticisme, politique des partis, concurrence politique, stratégie.

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