

Elections, Parties and Institutional Design:
A Comparative Perspective on European Union Democracy

Dr. Simon Hix

Department of Government, Brunel University
Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3PH, United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 1895-274 000 / Fax: (+44) 1895-812 595
E-mail: simon.hix@brunel.ac.uk,

(From 1 September 1997)

Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom

Abstract: The Standard Version of the European Union 'democratic deficit' maintains that genuine pan-European elections and parties will only come about if the EU is transformed into a classic parliamentary system: if the European Parliament (EP) is given more power in the legislative and executive-selection processes. Two influential critiques of this view are that majoritarian democracy is inappropriate in such a deeply divided society, and that European level parties would form 'cartels' rather than compete for political office. To assess these claims and critiques, a typology of multi-level systems is developed and a series of hypotheses about the role of elections and parties within these systems are proposed. These are subsequently tested in a comparative analysis of eight cases. The key finding is that European elections and parties are unlikely to emerge if the EP is given more power. Nevertheless, real 'European' elections and competitive parties may develop if the EU becomes a (partial) presidential/interlocking system: if the institutional balance is kept, but the Commission President is directly elected.

1. Introduction: European Union Democracy in Comparative Perspective¹

The alliteration ‘democratic-deficit’ is so widely used and abused when discussing the European Union (EU) that it is now almost meaningless. To clarify the concept, nevertheless, Weiler et.al. (1995) outline a ‘Standard Version’ (SV) of the democratic-deficit. This SV is not directly attributable. Rather, it is the accumulation of ‘received knowledge’ by political, media and academic commentary on the subject. According to the SV, the democratic-deficit exists because ‘increasingly important government functions [have] transferred to “Brussels”’ (*ibid.*, p. 6), but:

parliamentary control [of executive power in the EU] is more an illusion than a reality ... Even after Maastricht, the powers of the European Parliament (EP) in the legislative process leave formal and formidable gaps in parliamentary control ... [And] paradoxically, one has seen a gradual increase in the formal powers of the EP, and a decrease in the turn-out in European elections ... The non-emergence of trans-European political parties is another expression of the phenomenon. Critically, there is no real sense in which the European political process allows the electorate to ‘throw the scoundrels out’ (*ibid.*, pp. 7-8)

By focusing on the role of parliaments, elections and parties, this SV thus assumes that the EU can be measured against the type of representative democracy that exists at the domestic level in Europe and throughout the democratic world. In this model, direct and democratic elections lead to the ‘formation of government’ and/or the ‘formation of public policy’ (King, 1981). Moreover, the main organisations facilitating this connection between voters’ choices and office-holding and/or policy-implementation are political parties. Parties present rival policy-agendas (manifestos) to the electorate, voters then choose between these agendas, and the winning parties take control of executive and legislative office and act cohesively to implement these agendas. This central role of parties has hence

led many to see modern democracy as 'competitive party government' (e.g. Weber, 1918; Schattschneider, 1942; Schumpeter, 1943; Rose, 1974; Katz, 1986; Budge & Keman, 1990).

By measuring the EU according to the criteria of competitive-party-government, therefore, the SV prescribes that the EU will only be democratic if: European elections are fought by cohesive Euro-parties who present rival agendas for EU policy action; the winning parties in the elections form the executive; and the parties act cohesively to ensure that their office-holders implement their electoral programme. This would require that the EP is the main legislative body, that the Commission is directly and constantly accountable to a majority in the EP, that the European elections are fought on European and not national issues, and that the EP Party Groups can construct and maintain a majority (cf. Vredeling, 1971; Marquand, 1978; Pridham & Pridham, 1979; Bogdanor, 1986, 1989, 1990; Williams, 1991; Attinà, 1992; Tsatsos, 1995; Hix, 1996; Lodge, 1996; Pederson, 1996; Hix & Lord, 1997).

There are, however, three types of criticism of this prescription. The first, and most obvious, maintains that this is highly *unrealistic*. For competitive-party-government to exist in the EU, there would need to be a dramatic shift in the institutional design of the EU - towards a fully-fledged parliamentary-democracy-at-the-European-level. In the wake of the problems of ratifying the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the presence of anti-European feelings in the 1994 European elections and the referendums on EU enlargement, and the growing antipathy towards Economic and Monetary Union in even some of the core member states (such as France and Germany), there is no wide-spread support for such a decisive step towards European political integration. Hence, it is almost impossible to imagine such a development any time in the next five, ten or perhaps even twenty years.

At a more theoretical level, the second and third types of criticism maintain that the SV prescription is actually *undesirable*. On the one hand, there is a growing body of academic opinion, that maintains that 'majoritarian' institutions at the European level would actually undermine the legitimacy of the EU. This view argues that a majoritarian decision process would replace the slow, but highly effective, 'deliberative' style of 'governance' with a competitive 'bargaining' style that would inevitably lead to an unacceptable transfer of resources or values from 'losers' to 'winners' (Obradovic, 1996;

Jachtenfuchs, 1997; Joerges & Neyer, 1997; Scharpf, 1997; Weiler, 1997a). For example, a powerful EP majority and cohesive European political parties would most-likely increase the size of the EU budget and lead to large transnational economic transfers, neither of which are supported by the public. And a politicised Commission, which could no-longer be a provider of 'independent expertise', would not be capable of facilitating pareto-efficient, rather than redistributive, outcomes (Dehousse, 1995; Majone, 1996a, 1996b). Although applied to the EU, these arguments are similar to the view that majoritarian democracy is impractical in deeply-divided (pluralist) societies, because it would lead to subjugation of a particular societal 'segment' - or 'nation' in the case of the EU (e.g. Almond, 1956; Lijphart, 1968, 1969; Dahl, 1989, p. 19). I shall hence refer to this as the '*anti-Euromajoritarianism critique*'.

On the other hand, but from a slightly different angle, many scholars of party-government at the domestic level in Europe are increasingly sceptical of the centrality of parties to the democratic process (Lawson & Merkl, 1988; Reiter, 1989; Daalder, 1992; Katz & Mair, 1995). From the late 1980s, a new structure of party competition has begun to take shape in many party systems in western Europe. Instead of competing for public office, parties increasingly collude to use the resources of the state to promote their collective interests. As a result, rather than representing civil society, parties are increasingly becoming 'part of the state apparatus itself' (Katz & Mair, 1995, p. 14). Party elites have abandoned their traditional ideological differences, and consequently present almost identical policies to the electorates and are willing to 'jump-into-bed' with previous enemies at the slightest promise of a place in government. The result, therefore, is that parties are actually 'undermining the legitimacy of party government' (Mair, 1995, p. 38). Hence, cohesive and collusive Euro-parties may in fact increase rather than reduce the EU democratic-deficit. I shall refer to this as the '*anti-Europarty critique*'.

So, how can we test the validity of the claims of the advocates and critics of the SV? We could simply weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments on either side of the debate at an abstract level. This, in fact, is what most recent commentators on the democratic-deficit do (e.g. Weale, 1995; Weiler, 1995; Chrysochoou, 1996; Newman, 1996; Obradovic, 1996). However, these analyses need to be supplemented with empirical research. In an ideal world, we could treat the EU as a laboratory and

‘test’ the arguments of the SV (e.g. give more powers to the EP, introduce a uniform electoral procedure). However, this may mean waiting in vain.

There is, nonetheless, an alternative empirical approach. Instead of treating the EU as a *sui generis* laboratory, we can test the arguments by analysing the EU in ‘comparative perspective’ (e.g. Scharpf, 1988; Majone, 1992; Sbragia, 1992; Hix, 1994; Risse-Kappen, 1996). As Heidenheimer et.al. point out:

By assessing one situation against another, we gain a better perspective on our current situation as well as the options and constraints we face. In short we learn through comparing (Heidenheimer et.al., 1990, p. 1).

Ever since Plato and Aristotle compared the organisation of city-states in Ancient Greece, mankind has used this ‘comparative method’ to analyse whether one system of government is better than another, and connect the theoretical, empirical and normative levels of analysis (e.g. de Tocqueville,² J.S. Mill and Lord Bryce).

The comparative method can hence be used to analyse the current, and possible future, role of parties and elections in the EU. To narrow the scope of comparison, and to focus on the issue of institutional design, I have chosen a ‘most-similar-systems-design’ technique (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). By looking at political systems with two levels of institutions, we should be able to isolate the institutional structures that facilitate ‘good’ modes of party behaviour. This does not require treating the EU as a formal ‘federation’ simply as a ‘federal-type’ system (Elazar, 1987; Scharpf, 1988; Sbragia, 1992). In such a system, there are two (or more) levels of governing institutions, who possess separate jurisdictional or functional powers (cf. Wheare, 1953; Riker, 1964, 1975; Elazar, 1995). In so doing, we should be able to assess which types of institutional structures would be most likely to reduce the democratic-deficit in the EU. In other words, do we really need full-blown Euro-parliamentary-

democracy to make elections work in the EU? Or, should we do everything we can to prevent majoritarian practices from undermining EU legitimacy further?

Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate the claims and counter-claims about the EU democratic-deficit by undertaking a comparative analysis of elections and parties in multi-level political systems. Section 2 develops a theoretical framework and some hypotheses about the relationship between elections/parties and the institutional structure of multi-level systems. Section 3 subsequently tests these hypotheses. Finally, Section 4 summarises the results and draws some conclusions.

2. Theoretical Framework

In assessing the claims and critics of the Standard Version of the democratic-deficit, we are less concerned about which particular institutional design is ‘the ideal’ in any system of government than with two specific issues: the institutional options for the EU system; and, what may happen if the EU follows one or other of these options. These will be tackled separately.

Institutional Design in Multi-Level Systems

There are two different kinds of institutional structure in multi-level systems that impact on the choices of voters and party leaders. First, the design of the *vertical institutions* determines how power is divided between the central and local holders of political office. In unitary systems, the institutions at the central level have almost exclusive political control: such as the power to pass laws, make regulations, and raise taxes and spend public money. In multi-level systems, in contrast, power is divided between the central and local institutions. There are, however, two very different ways that this vertical division is organised (cf. Bakvis & Chandler, 1987).

In ‘dual federalism’ there is a separation of powers between the central and local levels (Corwin, 1950). Policy competences are divided along jurisdictional lines: each level is exclusively responsible

for adopting and implementing one or more policy areas. Moreover, the holders of political office at one level are not involved in decision-making at the other level. In a dual-federal system, therefore, the two levels of political institutions are said to be '*independent*'.

In 'cooperative federalism', in contrast, there is a fusion of powers between the two levels of government. Policy competences are divided along functional rather than jurisdictional lines: most policy areas are the joint responsibility of both levels, and the central level is usually responsible for setting policy frameworks whereas the local level is responsible for policy details and implementation. Moreover, the holders of executive office at the lower level are directly involved in the making of legislation at the central level - usually in a second chamber of the legislature. This is often referred to as 'executive federalism'. However, it can also be thought of as a system of 'dual leadership', where the central and state governments share executive functions.³ In such a system, therefore, the two levels of political institutions are '*interlocking*' rather than independent (Scharpf et.al., 1976).

Second, the design of the *horizontal institutions* determines the structure of political opportunities for the control of executive and legislative power at the central level. There are three main ways executive and legislative authority are organised (Lijphart, 1992; Shugart & Carey, 1992; Sartori, 1994). In a *presidential* system there is a clear separation of executive and legislative power. The members of the government are not members of the legislature, and the holders of executive and legislature office are elected in independent processes. In a *parliamentary* system, in contrast, there is a fusion of executive and legislative power. The executive and the legislature derive their authority from the same set of elections, and the executive must resign if it loses the majority support of the legislature. Moreover, in most cases the members of the government are also members of the legislature. However, there is also a hybrid model of horizontal institutional design, where executive authority is held *collegially*. As in a parliamentary system, the collegial-executive is nominally accountable to a legislative majority. As in a presidential system, however, the make-up of the collegial-executive is fixed independently of a parliamentary majority, although the executive is not directly elected. In

practice, the formula for the make-up of the collegial-executive ensures the representation of all the major groups in society, and hence a permanent ‘oversized majority’ in any parliament.

Consequently, taking these two dimensions of institutional design, we have six possible types of multi-level political systems, as Figure 1 shows.⁴ The most common are the classic ‘parliamentary systems’ (as espoused for the European level). Of these systems, in Australia, Austria, Belgium and Canada the two levels of government are independent (Box 1).⁵ Germany, in contrast, is the archetypal case of interlocking-federalism (Box 2).⁶ There is only one western case of a multi-level presidential/independent system (Box 3): the United States (US).⁷ There are no western cases of presidential/interlocking multi-level systems (Box 4). There is, however, no inherent reason why such a system could not exist - with a president sharing executive power with a strong second-chamber of congress, where the state executives are directly represented. Switzerland is the classic collegial-executive system: where a fixed formula determines the party-political make-up of the seven-member Federal Council, which guarantees an ‘oversized majority’ in both chambers of the Swiss Parliament. Although Switzerland has some interlocking characteristics, like Austria, the institutional design is essentially independent (Box 5).⁸

INSERT FIGURE 1

The European Union, however, is a case of a collegial-executive system with clearly interlocking arrangements (Box 6). First, executive authority in the EU is shared between the Commission and the national governments, in the EU Council (cf. Lenaerts, 1991; Curtin, 1993). As signatories of the EU Treaty, the national governments delegate executive power to the Commission. Also, like the Canadian First Ministers’ Conference, the long-term policy agenda of the EU and the institutional reform bargains (in the Intergovernmental Conferences) are worked out collectively by the heads of the executives of the EU member states (i.e. the Prime Ministers and the French President), in the European Council. The Commission, on the other hand, has the sole right of legislative initiative in most areas of EU social and

economic policy, is responsible for supervising policy implementation, is the guardian of the EU Treaties, is responsible for managing the EU budget, and has significant regulatory authority akin to the regulatory agencies at the domestic level in Europe and in the US (Majone, 1996a). Moreover, political competences are divided between the EU and the national institutions along functional rather than jurisdictional lines: with legislative frameworks set at the European level in a growing number of areas of social and economic policy, but these rules subsequently requiring ‘transposition’ into national law and implementation by the national administrations. Nevertheless, the bulk of political competences still remain the primary authority of the member states, such as education, health and social security policies. Finally, the national governments participate directly in the EU legislative process, in the Council.

Second, the Commission is a collegial-executive body, much like the Swiss Federal Council. The formula is two Commissioners from each of the five larger member states, and one from each of the ten smaller member states, and the term of office of the Commission is fixed (five-years). The Commission President is nominated by the national governments, in the European Council, and under the rules of the Maastricht Treaty is now subject to an investiture vote in the EP. However, this is not like the investiture of a government in a parliamentary system, since the Commission does not require a permanent majority in the EP. Under Article 144 of the EC Treaty, the EP has a right to censure the Commission as a whole. Nevertheless, this requires a two-thirds majority vote and, despite several attempts, the EP has never used this power. In other words, this right is more similar to the power of the US Congress to impeach the US President than to the power of a parliamentary majority to withdraw its support of the government.

In sum, the EU is likely to remain a multi-level system what-ever institutional changes are made. This hence suggests that the institutional choices for the EU are limited to these six basic multi-level models.⁹ There is a possibility that the EU can be reformed into any of these other models:

- the EU could be moved to Box 5 (collegial-executive/independent system) if the legislative power of the EP were increased versus the Council, and the executive power of the Commission were increased versus the national governments;

- the EU could be moved to Box 4 (presidential/interlocking), if the Commission President were directly elected in Europe-wide elections, but the relative power of the EP, the Commission and the Council remain unchanged;
- the EU could be moved to Box 3 (presidential/independent) if the Commission President were directly elected, and the legislative power of the EP were increased versus the Council, and the executive power of the Commission were increased versus the national governments;
- the EU could be moved to Box 2 (parliamentary/interlocking) if the EP were given a central role in the investiture of the Commission and the Commission were eventually dependent on a majority in the EP, but the EP-Council and Commission-Council balance were unchanged; and
- the EU could be moved to Box 1 (parliamentary/independent) if the EP were given a central role in the investiture of the Commission and the Commission were eventually dependent on a majority in the EP, and the legislative power of the EP were increased versus the Council and the executive power of the Commission were increased versus the national governments.

All these have been considered at different times by various academics, consultants and constitutional lawyers. However, the Standard Version of the democratic-deficit maintains that the best option would be to turn the EU into a genuine parliamentary-model, in Box 2 or even Box 1. For example, this was the position of the EP in the 1984 Draft Treaty on European Union, and has been the general thrust of the EP's constitutional-thinking in the last two Intergovernmental Conferences, which led to the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, and in the 1996-97 Intergovernmental Conference on the reform of Maastricht. In all these processes the EP has argued for two main things: increasing its own power versus the Council, and increasing its role in the nomination and ratification of the Commission President - hence, the classic parliamentary/independence model (Corbett et.al., 1995: 299-306). However, can the democratic-deficit be reduced if the EU reformers choose one of the other options? To answer this question we need to develop some hypotheses about how these institutional arrangements affect the role of parties and elections, and to test these theories against the real-world cases.

Impact of Multi-Level Institutions on Elections, Parties and Democracy: Some Hypotheses

The institutional design of a political system has a significant influence on the way elections and parties function. This can be explained in several ways. One approach is to assume that voters and party leaders are utility-maximising actors. In this framework, the institutional design determines the 'structure of political opportunities' for the main political 'agents': the options that are available, and the type of rewards that are on offer (Shepsle, 1979; Riker, 1980; Laver & Shepsle, 1990). By 'constraining' these actors' behaviour, institutions produce 'structure-induced equilibria', that are different to the 'preference-induced equilibria' that result from an institution-free decision (Shepsle, 1986, 1989). This type of approach is now widely used in the so-called 'new institutional' approaches to politics from the rational choice school (Dunleavy, 1990; North, 1990; Tsebelis, 1990). It offers a powerful analytical tool-kit to help us understand the implications of multi-level institutional structures across several political systems.

Starting with the electoral process, citizens will only bother going out to vote if they think elections are important. Rational choice theory has always had problems coming to terms with the fact that voting seems an irrational act: the costs of voting for any individual (e.g. transport and time) far outweigh the chances of influencing the outcome of an election. However, people do vote. Hence, this is usually explained by the fact that the cost of voting is actually lower than the cost of not-voting because of peer-pressure, social responsibility or cognitive constraints (such as ideology) on individual behaviour. Nevertheless, not all elections have the same cost of not-voting. If an election is deemed 'unimportant' by the peer-group, by the media or by the individual, then the cost of not-voting is low. From King (1981), we can assume that the relative importance of an election is how far it can alter the 'formation of government' and/or the 'formation of public policy'. Consequently, by determining how far elections can alter these two things, the institutional structure should have a significant effect on voter turnout.

Turning to the role of parties, the classic theories of party behaviour assume that party leaders either seek 'political office' (Downs, 1957; Riker, 1962) or 'public policy' (Axelrod, 1970; Wittman, 1973). However, most contemporary theories argue that party leaders pursue office *and* policy goals -

and the key determinant of how party leaders trade-off these two goals is the structure of the institutional environment (Strom, 1990). For example, if parties are unlikely to be able to achieve a monopoly position, they would rather establish a ‘cartel’ than suffer the costs of competing with other parties for office and policy. In many systems, parties hence tend to club-together to share the spoils of government (such as public funding of their organisations) than compete for the spoils and risk losing. Consequently, by deciding how parties compete or collude in the pursuit of office and policy goals, the institutional environment is a key determinant of whether parties can reinforce or undermine democracy.

As a result, through their impact on the behaviour of voters and party leaders, the structure-of-opportunities in the different types of multi-level system produces different roles for elections and political parties. First, in most political systems there is a clear division between ‘first order’ and ‘second order’ elections. First-order-elections are where the main political offices are up-for-grabs and the overall policy-agenda is set. These are the most important elections for parties to win, and are the most relevant for the voters. However, in most systems there are other sets of elections that are not so important. These second-order-elections determine who holds the lesser political offices, and do not have an impact on the overall policy-agenda. Hence, parties tend to fight these elections as ‘mid-term’ referendums on the party or parties that won the last first-order contest, and voters are less inclined to bother going out to vote (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Heath et.al., 1996).¹⁰

INSERT TABLE 1

As Table 1 shows, each type of multi-level system has a different set of first and second order elections. Two basic principles hold. First, on the vertical institutional dimension, independent institutional structures suggest that the elections for the higher political offices (i.e. the central executive or parliament) are generally more important than those for the lower offices (i.e. the state executives and parliaments). If the system is interlocking, however, the elections for the state executives can be equally as important as those for the central offices, since policy-making power and executive authority is shared

between the two levels of politics. Second, on the horizontal institutional dimension, if executive and legislative offices are fused, the main elections are the parliamentary elections. If they are separate, however, the elections for executive office (i.e. the president) are more important for parties and voters than the elections for legislative office (i.e. the congress). In a collegial-executive system, moreover, the central elections do not have an impact on the make-up of the executive or on the general policy-agenda. Nonetheless, because the EU combines an interlocking system with a collegial-executive, the national elections can have a more significant impact on the exercise of executive power (through the EU Council at the European level, and in the administration of the bulk of public expenditure at the national level) than the elections to the EP. On the basis of these assumptions, the first and second order elections for the six multi-level systems can be worked-out deductively, and we can test these hypotheses about the first and second order elections by looking at voter turnout in the eight cases discussed above.

INSERT TABLE 2

Second, the institutional design of the system alters the levels of organisational cohesion and competition between political parties, as Table 2 illustrates. On the organisational side, in an independent multi-level system, different structures of party organisation within the same party family can exist on the two separate levels of government without there being any direct political clashes (which would undermine internal party cohesion), as in the different structure of Democratic and Republican party organisation between the US Congress and the State legislatures (Katz & Kolodny, 1994). In such a system, vertically integrated political parties are unlikely, but the cohesion of parties across the legislative and executive arenas at the central level is likely to be high (Chandler & Chandler, 1987). However, if a system is interlocking, the two levels of party organisation come into direct competition in the central legislative process - as in Germany or the EU, where there is inherent conflict between the party organisations in the directly-elected chamber (the *Bundestag* and the EP) and the sub-units of these

parties that act in the second chamber as executives of the constituent states rather than branches of the central parties (the *Bundesrat* and the EU Council). Hence, we can expect higher levels of internal organisational cohesion in legislative action and legislative-executive relations in independent than in interlocking systems (Chandler, 1987).

Cross-cutting this, moreover, in a parliamentary system, where the executive commands a fixed majority in the lower chamber of the legislature, the level of party cohesion in the legislative process and in legislative-executive relations (i.e. the nomination and support of the executive) is likely to be high, because of the high political price of party members not voting *en bloc*. Parties in parliamentary systems enforce cohesion through various institutional mechanisms: such as hierarchical decision-structures, the delegation of policy responsibilities, and the control of committee appointments. As a result, parliamentary systems are the most conducive to 'party government', where cohesive party organisations can enforce party policy choices on their legislative and executive 'agents' (Katz, 1986). In contrast, in a presidential system and in a collegial-executive system, there is little incentive against individual party members from defecting from the common position of the parliamentary faction, since this would not effect the make-up of the executive (Shugart & Carey: 1992, pp. 174-86). Party groups in presidential systems can use the same mechanisms to ensure internal cohesion, but the price of individual defection for the group as a whole is low, hence there is less incentive to enforce the sanctions. Consequently, taking these two sides of the institutional-structure together, the level of party cohesion in the different types of multi-level systems is likely to be as illustrated in the 'cohesion' column of Table 2.¹¹

On the competition side, as discussed above, the institutional structure affects how far parties must compete (or can collude) for political office or over the legislative agenda. Whether a system is interlocking or independent does not alter how executive office is formed at the central level, and has very little impact on the way parties interact in the legislative process. Consequently, it is the structure of the horizontal institutions that has the most impact on the level of party competition. In a presidential system, the party that wins the election for executive has a monopoly on executive authority. There is thus an incentive for parties to collude in electoral competition, to build an alliance with a real prospect

of winning the required electoral majority. As a result, a common critique of the US presidential system is that unless parties act ‘responsibly’ there is a temptation to present identical platforms to the electorate (e.g. American Political Science Association 1950; Schattschneider, 1960; Committee on the Constitutional System, 1982). Once in office, however, there is little possibility for parties to share the spoils of office. Hence, the choice of executive office-holder and the policy agenda is primarily made by the electorate.

In a parliamentary system, in contrast, the choice is very much in the hands of the parties. There is little incentive to cooperate in electoral competition, and a high incentive to collude in the formation of government and in legislative behaviour, to manufacture a majority (in a ‘smoke-filled-room’) after the electorate has made its choice. This is especially true in parliamentary systems with proportional electoral laws, which tend to reduce the possibility of any one party from winning an electoral majority (Grofman & Lijphart, 1986; Farrell, 1997). Finally, in a collegial-executive system, collusion in the formation of executive office is institutionalised. Nonetheless, because of this institutionalised oversized-majority, parties can compete in legislative behaviour without bringing down the government, in setting the policy-agenda and in building issue-specific coalitions on the basis of their policy promises to the electorate (Lehner & Homann, 1987). In other words, we should expect the levels of party competition in the different types of multi-level systems to be as illustrated in the ‘competition’ column of Table 2.

3. Empirical Findings

With such a small sample (N) of states, it is difficult to draw causal inferences about the impact of the institutional structure on parties and elections. As Lijphart famously argued, ‘the intensive comparative analysis of a few cases may be more promising than a more superficial statistical analysis of many cases’ (Lijphart, 1971, p. 685). Lijphart also recommended that possible strategies for coping with the ‘small-n

problem' are: to focus on 'comparable cases'; and to reduce the number of variables (*ibid.*, pp. 686-8; cf. Przeworski & Teune, 1970; Lijphart, 1975; Collier, 1993). Hence, by following Lijphart's advice - looking only at multi-level systems in western democracies, and focussing on the impact of institutional design on parties and elections - this research at least reduces the probability that any inferences are purely accidental.

Elections: First or Second Order?

Table 3 shows the mean levels of voter turnout in the central and state elections in the eight cases. It is impossible to draw any conclusions by comparing the level of turnouts *between* the different cases. As discussed, voter turnout is very much a result of particular environmental factors: such as a culture of political responsibility, the level of peer pressure, or electoral laws preventing citizens from receiving state benefits if they do not vote. Nonetheless, a common variable *within* each system is the 'order' of the election, as determined by the political significance of the election. In this respect, the variation within each of the systems closely resembles the expected order of elections, as set out in Table 1 above (in Table 3, the 'first order' elections are in bold).

INSERT TABLE 3

In the parliamentary/independent systems, turnout in the central parliament elections (first order) is higher than in the elections for the state parliament (second order) in all cases except Canada. The average difference in the level of turnout in first-order and second-order elections for Austria, Australia and Belgium is 5%. In contrast, in Germany - a parliamentary/interlocking system - the average difference in turnout in Federal and *Länder* elections is only 1%. In Canada, turnout is on average slightly higher in Provincial elections than in Federal elections. But, this average is offset by Quebec, where turnout is on average almost 8% higher in Provincial than Federal elections. This suggests that Canada is on the borderline between an independent and interlocking system: where for most Provinces,

Federal politics is more important, but for Quebec (and Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland - on the far eastern periphery), Provincial politics is more important.

INSERT FIGURE 2

American elections has always been low in comparison to the European democracies (esp. Lijphart, 1997). There is, moreover, an average difference of 9% in the level of participation in the first-order Presidential elections (52.6%) compared to the second-order Congressional and Gubernatorial elections (42.3 and 45.6% respectively). However, even these figures hide the real differences in participation rate between the first-order and second-order elections at the US. As Figure 2 illustrates, turnout in Congressional elections in the US is significantly dependent on whether the elections are held at the same time as Presidential elections or in the 'mid-term' period. When second-order elections in the US are held concurrently with a first-order election the level of voter turnout is only marginally lower in the second-order election. However, when Congressional elections are held when no Presidential election is held, the level of voter turnout is on average 17% lower, at approximately 36% of the electorate.

In Switzerland, turnout is low in all elections in comparison to the other European democracies. But, turnout is on average 7% higher in Cantonal and Communal elections than in Federal elections. Although this might suggest that Cantonal elections may be first-order in Switzerland, the two sets of elections can both be treated as second-order since there are higher participation rates in Swiss referendums than in either set of election (Linder, 1994: 91)

Finally, the levels of participation in the EU confirm the proposition that national elections are first-order elections and EP elections are second-order elections: with a staggering difference in turnout between the two types of election of almost 20%. Compared to the other systems, these figures suggest that in the minds of the voters, the EU is an 'upside-down political system': where the focus of public and media attention is on national politics. This has a significant consequence for the agents of

democracy, the political parties. In all the other multi-level systems, parties will either treat the electoral competition for the central political offices as the main event (as in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada and the United States) or will treat both levels of competition as significant arenas for battle (as in Germany, Switzerland and some parts of Canada). In the EU in contrast, there is a strong incentive for parties to fight EP elections as a collection of sub-system contests - with national manifestos (instead of European manifestos), and on the performance of the national governments (not on the performance of the EP or the Commission).

This has been pointed out ever since the first direct elections of the EP in 1979 (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). However, the context of the EP elections has rarely been compared to other multi-level systems. This analysis consequently sheds new light on the problem of creating representative-democracy in the EU. The results from the other systems give some indication as to what may happen in the EU under different institutional circumstances. For example, if the EP is given more power over the European Commission (as the SV of the democratic-deficit implies), EP elections will still be second-order contests if the Commission remains a collegial-executive (i.e. the Swiss system). Similarly, if the Commission derives its direct political authority from a permanent majority in the EP (i.e. a parliamentary system), the EP elections may be more important in the minds of the voters, however there is every reason to suggest that national level elections will still predominate, because the national governments will still possess greater state authority than the Commission (i.e. the German system, but with the national governments even more powerful than the *Länder*). This would be true as long as voters are able to think about European election choices in terms of national politics. Consequently, in such a system, for EP elections to at least parallel those for national office, the political authority of the Commission relative to national governments would have to be increased beyond anything which is feasible at present, or perhaps even in the foreseeable future.

The aim, therefore, should be to make a differentiation between the European electoral contests and the national electoral contests, without significantly increasing the power of the European Commission. This will not simply result from a uniform electoral procedure, as parties could still fight

European elections as national contests (as they do in all the member states where different electoral rules are already used in European elections). However, if the EU were to move towards a presidential system, with the Commission President being elected separately from the EP, this may allow a European electoral contest to be fought along fundamentally different lines than those in national contests. In this model, the elections to the EP would remain second-order contests, and the elections for national governments *and* the Commission President would be first-order contests. Nevertheless, this conclusion would only hold if the electoral organisations and alignments were different between national/EP and Commission-President elections. Hence, this can only be confirmed by looking at the nature of party cohesion and competition across the various systems.

In sum, the levels of voter turnout *within* the various multi-level systems indicate a connection between the institutional design of the system - which determines the degree of importance of the various electoral contests - and the levels of voter participation in these contexts. This is not a novel conclusion. However, it has implications for the EU: that neither the parliamentary (interlocking or independent) nor the Swiss (collegial/independent) model may be viable options for the EU, and that the direct election of the Commission President may be the only way to establish genuine 'European' elections.

Party Organisational Development

Unlike the levels of voter participation, the level of party organisational development can be analysed *across* systems. Table 4 looks at five different elements of party organisational development in the various multi-level systems. In each of these elements, certain characteristics facilitate strong hierarchical organisational structures and internal party cohesion (in bold in the Table), while others effectively prevent cohesive party organisations (in italics in the Table). The analysis considers two different types of party organisations in the US and the EU that exist almost completely independently of each other: the 'presidential parties' and 'congressional parties' in the US (Katz & Kolodny, 1994); and the 'party federations' and 'EP Groups' in the EU (Bardi, 1994; Hix & Lord, 1997).

INSERT TABLE 4

In the classic ‘party government’ model, parties have highly developed organisational structures. This is the case in four of the five parliamentary systems (Australia, Austria, Canada and Germany) and in Switzerland: where party membership is either individual or federal; the extra-parliamentary executive committee (which usually comprises the leaders of the parliamentary group, members of the party in government, and representatives from state-level parties) is able to impose its will on the parties’ office-holders; and the party leader is chosen by the party congress.¹² Moreover, the central party organisations are responsible for selecting (or at least overseeing the selection of) election candidates and, as a result, office-holders who defect from the official party line can be forced to resign from a government. In the party-government model, therefore, there is a ‘chain’ from the individual party members, via the leadership cadre and the party leader, to the execution of party policies by the party office-holders.¹³

In the US and the EU, in contrast, party organisations are weak. Party membership is confederal in the US Congress, the EP Groups and the Euro-party federations - the Party of European Socialists (PES), the European People’s Party (EPP), the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR), and the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP). In US presidential elections, ‘party members’ do not really exist: any citizen who registers as a ‘voter’ for a party can participate in the election of the presidential candidate of that party. Similarly, the main decision-making organs for the Groups in the EP are the executive committees of the parliamentary groups (such as the Bureau of the PES Group), who play a more significant leadership and agenda-setting role than the ‘party leaders summits’ of the EU party federations (that meet at least twice a year) and the national committees/congressional caucuses of the US parties. These organs are useful fora for discussing strategy and exchanging ideas but have few powers to impose their wishes on the party members holding legislative or executive office.

In the US Congress and the EP, the ‘group leader’ is chosen internally, by a majority of the members of the parliamentary ‘faction’. The leader of the ‘presidential party’ in the US is selected in a nation-wide primary, and the Presidents of the EU party federations are chosen by a consensual-

agreement of the national party and EP Group Leaders (and subsequently ratified by the Euro-party congresses). Only in the case of the EPP are the offices of the leader of the party federation and leader of the EP Group merged: the position is held by Wilfried Martens. In the organisational structure of the PES, the leader of the EP Group (Pauline Green) is on equal footing with the leaders of the national member parties of the PES. These later methods mean that the 'leader' is only the head of a particular hierarchy (i.e. a parliamentary group or a leadership caucus), and is not the genuine figurehead of a united and vertically-integrated party organisation.

Finally, in the EU and the US, the parliamentary or extra-parliamentary leaderships have no say in candidate selection. In the US, the individual party members (the registered voters) decide who stands in the elections. As a result, party office-holders cannot be removed from central decision-making structures by the central party leaderships. In the case of the US 'presidential parties', for example, once elected the party has zero possibility to deselect the incumbent. This is the sole choice of the electorate as a whole.

The weakness of party organisation in the EU is further illustrated in the legislative behaviour of the EP groups. A number of scholars have pointed out that in general the level of cohesion of the EP groups has risen since 1979 (e.g. Attinà, 1990; Brzinski, 1996; Raunio, 1996). As Brzinski states:

Though the European Parliament does not have a government to support, and despite the fact that political groups have little ability to sanction defection, the level of voting cohesion of groups in the European Parliament is much closer to that found in European Parliamentary systems than in the US Congress (Brzinski, 1996: 144).

Studies of the US Congress produce indices of agreement between 55 and 89, with an average of about 70 (e.g. Fiorina, 1987: 285-6). As Table 5 shows, in contrast, in all the 'roll call votes' between 1989 and 1994, the average index of agreement for the EP Groups was 79.8.

INSERT TABLE 5

However, this result hides the real weakness of party organisation in the EP. Most votes in the EP have little impact on the organisational success of the sub-units of the groups: the national parties. Consequently, although national parties control candidate-selection, on most occasions the sub-units have little reason to threatened deselection of MEPs who vote against the position of the national parties. The EP groups have some sanctions against individual members but little sanction against defection by a whole national delegation. Any national delegation could easily leave the group and join another or sit with the 'non-attached' members. To prevent this, the EP groups all have a 'conscience clause', allowing any national party delegation to vote against the group line without the threat of sanctions. As a result, when national party interests are mobilised, the level of EP Group cohesion falls dramatically for those parties where the national party interests are in conflict with the position of the EP Group.

As Table 5 shows, this was the case in the July 1994 EP vote on the investiture of Jacques Santer as Commission President (Hix & Lord, 1996; Hix & Gabel, 1997). Because the European Council had to choose the candidate, parties in government at the national level had a strong stake in the result of the EP vote. When it came to the EP vote, therefore, these governing parties were able to force their MEPs to support the Santer nomination (or face deselection), where the official position of the EP Group was to vote against the nomination. For example, the Spanish, Danish and Irish social-democratic party delegations voted in favour of Santer (against the PES group line) which significantly undermined the usually high cohesion of the PES. The average index of agreement for EP Groups with internal conflicts in the Santer vote - where parties in government at the national level (who backed Santer) were opposed to the EP Group position (against Santer) - was only 48.26.

One could hence conclude that this is in fact more similar to the dynamics of party organisation in the Swiss parliament or in the US Congress than in parliamentary systems. In the US Congress, 'Southern Democrats' often collaborate to vote against the caucus position if the official party line threatens their common interests, without the threat of sanctions. And, in Switzerland, research has

found that the three truly ‘national’ parties - the Socialists, Christian Democrats and Radical Democrats (akin to the PES, EPP and ELDR in the EP) - all have relatively low levels of cohesion. Like the EP, there are few sanctions available to parties in the Swiss parliament. If members defect from the party line the government will not fall, and their Cantonal party organisation is still likely to select them for re-election. This later sanction, also like the EP, ensures that Swiss parties from a small number of Cantons are more cohesive than those that have members from all (or almost all) territorial sub-units (Hertig, 1978).

In sum, as expected, the strongest party organisations can be found in the parliamentary systems. However, there appears to be little difference as a result of variation between independent and interlocking vertical institutions. Parties in Switzerland also appear relatively strong, but the parties are weakened by their inability to impose their will on the party members of the collegial executive (Lehner & Homann, 1987). The level of development of parties in the EU is somewhere between the parallel party-organisational structure of the US system and the weak central party organisations of the Swiss system. Moreover, if the EU develops further towards a parliamentary system, where EP votes would have a significant impact on the behaviour of the Commission and the competitive position of domestic parties, there is evidence to suggest that EU party cohesion is likely to break down (esp. Hix & Gabel, 1997). With confederal organisational structures, and the selection of candidates by domestic parties, the EP Groups show high levels of organisational cohesion only when their behaviour is isolated from the exercise of executive authority in the EU system. Therefore, it may be advantageous for the EP to remain independent from the Commission: as in the existing collegial-executive system, or if the EU moves towards a presidential system.

Party Competition: Fragmentation, Polarisation and Convergence

Table 6 looks at the three standard measures of party competition: the *fragmentation* of the party system (the number of parties in the system); the *polarisation* of the party system (the distance between the most extreme parties at either end of the left-right spectrum); and the level of *convergence* in the system (the

distance between the two largest parties). As the first column shows, there is some evidence to suggest a relationship between the type of multi-level system and the degree of party system fragmentation. The results do not suggest any inferences about the influence of independent/interlocking vertical institutions on the level of party system fragmentation, but they do suggest some conclusions about the impact of horizontal institutions. Duverger was the first to argue that majoritarian/plurality elections (such as the ‘winner-takes-all’ contest in a presidential election) tend to produce two-party or two-bloc systems and proportional-representation elections (such as the elections of most European parliaments) tend to produce multi-party systems (Duverger, 1963, 1986; Rae, 1971). This seems to be partially confirmed in our results: where the Belgian and German proportional/parliamentary systems have significantly more parties than the US majoritarian/presidential system.

INSERT TABLE 6

However, the findings also suggest something interesting about the impact of the collegial-executive system. The highest levels of fragmentation are in the Swiss and European elections. Although this is an extremely small sample, these results may reflect the fact that there is ‘less at stake’ in elections that do not alter the make-up of the executive, and hence less incentive against voters supporting minor parties. Similarly, Bardi (1994) has argued that the nature of EP election campaigns (with their national-foci) facilitates a fragmentation of the EU party system, and that the internal organisational rules of the EP are instrumental in preventing any further fragmentation of the system. A note of caution, however: the level of fragmentation in Switzerland and the EU (as in Belgium) is also an indication of the existence of very heterogenous societies (i.e. Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

Moving on to the polarisation of party systems, the only pattern that emerges from the different levels of polarisation of the party systems is that the US system is by far the least polarised. Again, this may result from the significance of socio-economic status (i.e. class) as the only major cleavage in US politics at the federal level (Lipset, 1959). However, class-voting has fallen dramatically in the US since

the mid-1950s. The US is a highly fragmented multi-ethnic, multi-religious, geographically-dispersed and increasingly multi-lingual society. Hence, the low level of polarisation may in fact be because the two parties are forced by the majoritarian rules to construct broad alliances in order to win a plurality in the presidential contests. In other words, the presidential system suppresses the political impact of a highly polarised society, just as it seems to undermine the development of a multi-party system. In all the parliamentary and collegial systems, in contrast, the party system is relatively highly polarised, with parties on the extreme left and right being able to remain in the party system. Again, as expected, the variation between independent and interlocking systems does not appear to matter: the polarisation of the German and Canadian systems are only marginally higher than in the independent/parliamentary systems.

Finally, the horizontal institutional design of the system also seems to have an impact on the level of convergence in the party system. In all the parliamentary systems, despite high levels of fragmentation and polarisation, the distance between the two main parties is low (between 1.5 and 2.6). This cannot be explained by a Downsian model of electoral competition, where the two main parties will converge on the median-voter, as this model only holds in a two-party system. In multi-party systems, if the two major parties converge on the median-voter, more extreme parties can 'steal' the votes at either end of the spectrum (Shepsle, 1991). Consequently, the convergence in these parliamentary systems is more as a result of 'cartel' tendencies inherent in the party-government model: where there is probably little electoral-cost and high financial and policy-benefits from collusion in the legislative or governmental arenas.

In contrast, in the US, despite a low level of fragmentation and polarisation, there is an important difference between the Republicans and the Democrats. For many European commentators, who have traditionally viewed the Democrats and Republicans as members of the same (or very close) party families (e.g. Beyme, 1987), this may be a surprising result. However, this indicates how far the major parties in the parliamentary democracies have moved since the 1960s and 1970s towards the cartel model in response to the collapse of their traditional electoral bases. In other words, the results suggest that

whereas parties are forced to compete at the electoral level for presidential office in the US system, in the parliamentary democracies their competition in the electoral arena may not be matched in the legislative and governmental arenas. This hence confirms the hypotheses from Table 3, above, that electoral competition between parties is likely to be lower in parliamentary than presidential systems.

Moreover, the predictions from Table 3 also hold for the degree of collusion in collegial-executive systems. The results show a relatively high distance between the two major parties in the Swiss and EU party systems. As argued, this suggests that rather than the collegial arrangements precluding competition in the legislative arena, the existence of a fixed executive-coalition may by a blank-cheque for open competition in parliament: because the parties do not need to collude in the legislative arena to share the spoils of executive office (as they have to in parliamentary systems). Although, again, because of the small sample, this would need to be further tested.

In sum, these findings partially confirm the hypotheses: parliamentary systems tend to produce moderate multi-party systems, but with a high level of collusion between the main parties; the one example of a presidential system has a two-party system, but a clear distinction in the policy-location of these parties; and collegial-executive systems have highly-fragmented multi-party systems, but with a high degree of competition between the main parties. In other words, it may again be undesirable for the EU to follow the parliamentary route. The party systems in parliamentary systems *do* seem to be more susceptible to cartelisation, as one type of the criticisms of the SV theory argues. And, moving to the direct election of the Commission President may enable a limited number of options to be presented to the European electorate, without undermining competition in the EP between the party groups.

4. Conclusions: Towards an Alternative Institutional Design

From this theoretical framework and these empirical findings, two tentative conclusions can be drawn about the viability of the agenda inherent in the Standard Version of the EU democratic-deficit, and about the salience of the critiques of that agenda:

First, a classic parliamentary-democracy at the European level (as implied by the 'Standard Version' of the democratic-deficit) may not be the best option for the EU. The evidence suggests that making the Commission permanently accountable to a majority in the EP would *not* guarantee that EP elections become 'first-order' contests: fought on 'European' issues, by 'European' parties. For at least the foreseeable future, the EU is an 'upside-down political system': the institutions at the national level exercise greater executive authority in most areas of public policy than the European institutions, and the media and the general public are primarily concerned with who controls these national offices. Hence, the 'power' and 'prestige' rewards for party leaders are greater at the domestic level than at the European level. National political parties will consequently fight EP campaigns as 'mid-term' referendums on the performance of the parties that 'won' the last real elections. At the electoral level, therefore, in such a system transnational parties will constantly be undermined by the competing interests of domestic parties.

Furthermore, if the Commission is made permanently accountable to a majority in the EP within this overarching structure, rather than increasing EU democracy, it would undermine party cohesion *and* undermine party competition in the legislative process. Because national party organisations (the sub-units of the EP Groups) control the selection of EP election candidates, they possess more powerful sanctions over the MEPs than do the EP Groups. In every-day EP business, a conflict-of-interests between the EP and national party organisations does not occur. However, if the EP Groups are able to alter the make-up of the Commission, as in a parliamentary system (and as they do in the present Commission investiture procedure), parties holding national government office (who sit in the EU Council) would have an incentive to enforce their wishes on their MEPs. In this situation, cohesive EP parties are almost impossible to maintain - as was the case in the EP vote on the investiture of the Commission President, in July 1994. This would change if the EP Groups controlled candidate selection.

However, such a change is unlikely: especially when one considers the ‘De Gucht Report’ proposals for a uniform electoral procedure, which would still allow national parties to control the nomination of at least 90% of MEP candidates. Finally, protected from electoral competition (by the ‘national’ character of EP elections), the EP Groups are more likely to collude (form ‘cartels’) in the legislative process in a parliamentary system than they do in the present collegial-executive system. At least in the present system, inter-party competition in the legislative arena can continue without the threat of undermining the stability of the executive.

In other words, if the EU follows the parliamentary-democracy route, voters will *not* be able to choose between rival European agendas, and their electoral choices will *not* be translated into legislative and executive action by cohesive and competitive parties. This may even be worse than the present system! In this respect, the critics of the SV are probably right.

Second, however, the critics of the SV may be mistaken to suggest that EU democracy is neither likely nor desirable. A full-blown parliamentary-system is not the only option. The aim should be to design institutions that do facilitate genuine European elections, on the one hand, and cohesive but not collusive Euro-parties, on the other. From the theoretical and empirical analyses, an alternative way of doing this would be to reform the EU not into a parliamentary system but into a (partial) presidential one!¹⁴ This may initially sound subversive, but the direct election of the Commission President has been floated by various political and academic figures since the 1970s (cf. Bogdanor, 1986; Laver et.al., 1995; Duverger, 1997). There seems to be strong evidence for this idea to be revived.

In terms of European elections, a direct election of the Commission President - or the first step towards this via a special ‘presidential convention’ (similar to the early American model) - may be the only way to allow Europe’s citizens to actually ‘choose’ between rival agendas for European action. The problems inherent in the second-order situation for EP elections would not necessarily hold in elections for the Commission President. If candidates are required to be nominated by at least one party in a large majority (or even all) member states, parties would be responsible for fighting the election campaign on the basis of the candidates they support, and not on whether the national government is doing a good job

(as they do in the present elections to the EP). Furthermore, rather than relying on cohesive party organisations to translate voters' preferences into policy actions, this system would encourage loose electoral alliances, and allow voters (not parties) to decide who exercises executive authority at the European level. The European electorate would have someone to 'throw out', and the national parties that supported the winning candidate would be accountable to the national electorates for his/her actions once in office. And, without the threat of conflicts with national party organisations and an institutional incentive to collude to support the executive, the EP Groups would maintain their present level of cohesion and structure of competition. In other words, against the *anti-Europarty critique* (as set out in Section 1), it *is* feasible that competitive-but-not-collusive parties could exist at the European level under a different institutional design.

As Lord Bryce warned, nonetheless: 'The student of institutions is apt to overrate the effect of mechanical contrivances in politics' (Schlesinger, 1985). Any theory of parties and elections cannot ignore the significance of societal divisions (e.g. Lipset, 1959; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Lijphart, 1977). For example, in most multi-level systems 'societal federalism' (a territorially-fragmented social structure) is as much a limitation on the emergence of cohesive political parties as the design of the institutions of government (Truman, 1955). But more significantly for the argument presented here, the existence of societal 'segmentation' - instead of societal homogeneity or cross-cutting cleavages - is often cited as a major reason why presidential systems fail (Linz, 1978, 1990; Lipset, 1990; Linz & Valenzuela, 1992; Mainwarring, 1993). In such societies (e.g. the EU), majoritarian presidential coalitions are invariably built between rival societal/territorial segments rather than broad cross-segmental or trans-territorial alliances (Lijphart & Rogowski, 1991). In applying this principle to the EU, Weiler has often used the analogy of a hypothetical *Anschluss* between Denmark and Germany, that would place the Danes in 'perpetual opposition' despite representation in the Bundestag (e.g. Weiler, 1995: 228). In other words, the direct election of the Commission President would be undesirable and illegitimate because it would leave whole nations opposed to the majority-winning coalition.

However, for two reasons this *anti-Euromajoritarianism critique* may also be questioned. First, a direct election of the Commission President would not transform the EU into a completely majoritarian system. The EU legislative process would remain highly consensual: requiring ‘oversized majorities’ in the EP and the Council. And, executive authority would remain shared with the Council - which when acting as an executive is a collegial body (requiring a unanimity of national governments). If the interlocking structure of the vertical institutions is unchanged (i.e. the EU becomes a ‘presidential/interlocking’ rather than ‘presidential/independent’ system), therefore, the role of national governments in the legislative and executive processes would be maintained, as a counter weight against the naturally enhanced status of a directly elected Commission President, and the existing accountability links to national parliaments and electorates would be preserved. In other words, such a change to the process of selecting the Commission President would leave most of the ‘consociational’ elements of the EU constitution untouched (Taylor, 1991, 1996; Chrysochoou, 1994), particularly in the exercise of ‘state power’ in the Justice and Home Affairs and Common Foreign and Security Policy fields. The election of the Commission President would be a ‘safety valve’ in a system which is prone to policy *immobilisme* as a result of too many ‘veto players’ in the decision process (Tsebelis, 1995). This would be similar to the use of referendums in the Swiss system to break collegial deadlocks and drive the policy agenda forward - and is hence in the same vain as proposals for European-wide referendums (e.g. Schmitter, 1996c; Weiler, 1997b).

Second, the rules for electing the Commission President can be drafted in a such a way as to ensure that a majority-winning coalition is trans-national and not inter-national. For example, candidates could be required to be nominated by at least one party in a *every* member state. This would most likely restrict the nominations to one from each ‘party family’ - Socialists, Liberals, Christian Democrats/Conservatives and maybe Greens (cf. Laver et.al., 1995). Such a nomination rule would ensure that at least one group of elites (and supporters) in every nation would be associated with the winning candidate. In other words, a system could be constructed that guarantees cross-segmental support for executive

authority, and does not leave any single territorial/national group subjugated. The majoritarianism of a presidential election could hence be moderated by non-majoritarian nomination rules.

All in all, the exercise of political authority at the European level is increasingly questioned by Europe's citizens. To address these grievances, social science must combine normative reasoning with theoretical, comparative and empirical research. In so doing, we find that democracy in the European Union is certainly desirable *and* maybe possible, but only if we are more ingenious about the design of institutional mechanisms for holding executive power accountable to Europe's voters.

Figure 1. A Typology of Multi-Level Political Systems

		<u>Vertical Institutions</u>	
		Independent	Interlocking
<u>Horizontal Institutions</u>	Parliamentary	1 Australia Austria Belgium Canada	2 Germany
	Presidential	3 United States	4 (no cases)
	Collegial-Executive	5 Switzerland	6 European Union

Table 1. Expected Order of Elections in Multi-Level Systems

Order of Election: Type of Multi-Level System:	First	Second
Parliamentary/Independent	central parliament	state parliament
Parliamentary/Interlocking	central/state parliament	---
Presidential/Independent	president	congress/state executive
Presidential/Interlocking	president/state executive	congress
Collegial/Independent	---	state/central parliament
Collegial/Interlocking (EU)	state parliament	central parliament

Table 2. Expected Patterns of Party Behaviour in Multi-Level Systems

Level of Party:	Cohesion	Competition
Type of Multi-Level System:		
Parliamentary/Independent	high	low
Parliamentary/Interlocking	medium	low
Presidential/Independent	medium	high
Presidential/Interlocking	low	high
Collegial/Independent	medium	medium
Collegial/Interlocking (EU)	low	medium

Notes: Cohesion = level of organisational development (e.g. hierarchical leadership and decision-making structures) between legislators and executive-office holders from the same political parties in parliamentary business and in legislative-executive relations.

Competition = degree to which parties compete rather than collude in elections, in the legislative process and in legislative-executive relations.

Table 3. Voter Turnout in Central and State Elections, 1974-1994

Type of Multi-Level System	Case	Turnout in central elections	Turnout in state elections	Avg. turnout difference (1st-2nd order)
Parliamentary/Independent	Australia	92.5	88.5	4.0
	Austria	89.3	81.5	7.8
	Belgium	92.5^a	90.1 ^a	2.4
	Canada	72.3^b	74.4 ^b	-2.1
Parliamentary/Interlocking	Germany	84.9	83.7	1.2
Presidential/Independent	United States	52.6 / 42.3^c	45.6 ^c	9.0 / 16.9 ^d
Collegial/Independent	Switzerland	62.0 ^e	69.0 ^e	---
Collegial/Interlocking	European Union	63.6	82.4	18.8

Sources: Kerr (1987), Mackie & Rose (1991), European Journal of Political Research - Political Data Yearbook (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995), Dyck (1996), election returns.

Notes: Bold type = expected first-order elections.

It is compulsory to vote in Australia and Belgium and in several member states of the EU.

^(a) The data for Belgium are for the first elections to the Regional and Community Councils, in October 1994 and the closest general election to these elections, in June 1995.

^(b) The data for Canada are for the six Federal and Provisional elections prior to 1994 (Dyck, 1996: 646).

^(c) In the case of the US, at the central level, the Presidential elections are in bold and the Congressional elections are in plain text, and at the state level, the data are for Gubernatorial elections.

^(d) In the case of the US, when first and second order elections are not held concurrently, the turnout in the first order (i.e. Presidential) elections is on average 16.9% higher than in the second-order elections.

^(e) The data for Switzerland are for 1947-1983 (Kerr, 1987).

Figure 2. Turnout in United States Elections

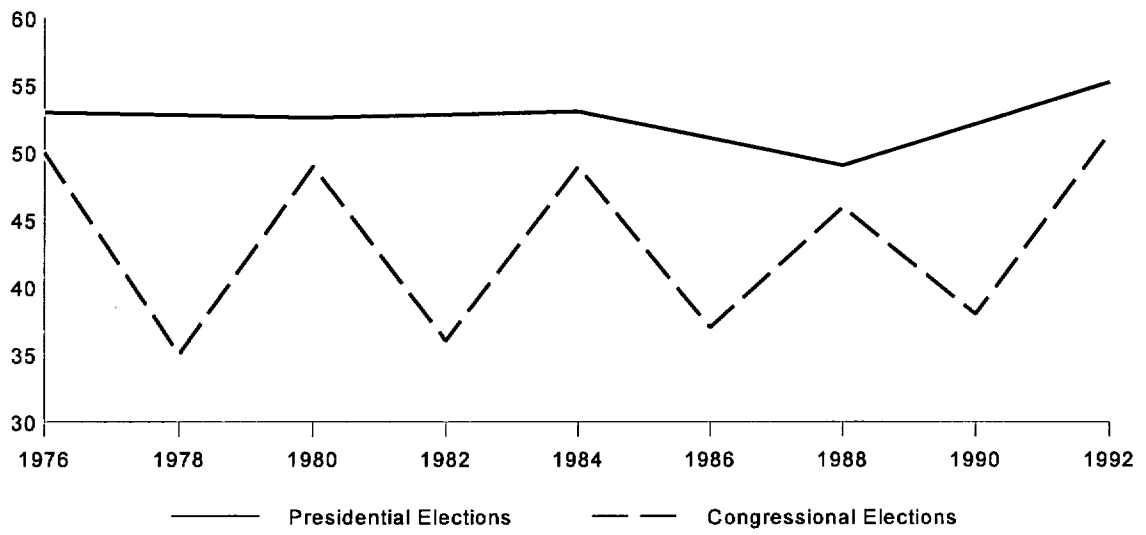


Table 4. Level of Party Organisational Development

Type of System	Case	Membership structure	Main decision-making organ	Selection of party leader	Selection of election candidates	Highest sanction by party
Par/Ind	Australia	federal	extra-parliamentary executive	elected by party congress	central & state parties	deselection/ forced resignation
	Austria	federal/ individual	extra-parliamentary executive	elected by party congress	central & state parties	deselection/ forced resignation
	Belgium	<i>confederal</i>	<i>informal parliamentary liaison</i>	<i>no single leader</i>	state parties	<i>none (but can pressure state party)</i>
	Canada	federal	extra-parliamentary executive	elected by party congress	state parties	expulsion from parliamentary group
Par/Int	Germany	individual	extra-parliamentary executive	elected by party congress	central & state parties	deselection/ forced resignation
Pre/Ind	US-president-ial parties	<i>voting registration</i>	<i>president/ national committee</i>	<i>primary of registered voters</i>	<i>primary of registered voters</i>	<i>none</i>
	US-congress-ional parties	<i>confederal</i>	<i>congressional caucus / national committee</i>	majority of congressional group	<i>primary of voters/ state parties</i>	<i>exclusion from decision-making</i>
Col/Ind	Switz.	federal	extra-parliamentary executive	elected by party congress	state parties	expulsion from parliamentary group
Col/Int	EU-party federations	<i>confederal</i>	<i>caucus of state and EP leaders</i>	<i>unanimity of party leaders</i>	---	expulsion from party
	EU-EP groups	<i>confederal</i>	parliamentary group executive	majority of parliamentary group	state parties	<i>expulsion (if supported by state party)</i>

Sources: Australia - Epstein (1977), Jaensch (1983); Austria - Müller (1992, 1994); Belgium - Deschouwer (1992, 1994); Germany - Wildenmann (1987), Poguntke (1992), Poguntke & Boll (1994); Canada - Wearing (1981), Smith (1985); United States - Fiorina (1987), Kolodny & Katz (1992), Katz & Kolodny (1994); Switzerland - Kerr (1987), Lehner & Homann (1987); European Union - Bardi (1992, 1994), Hix (1995), Hix & Lord (1997).

Notes: Bold type = characteristic of a strong party organisation; Italics = characteristic of a weak party organisation. For Belgium, for the sake of comparison with the EU, the table refers to the organisations within each 'party family' (i.e. incorporating the Francophone and Flemish parties of each family).

Table 5. Party Cohesion in the European Parliament

Party Group (Left to Right)^a	1989-1994	Investiture of Commission President, 1994
Left Unity (Orthodox Communists)	98.6	---
European Unitarian Left (Radical Left)	91.5	100.0
Green Group (Greens & Allies)	85.0	81.0
Party of European Socialists (Socialists/Social-Democrats)	90.4	50.0
European Radical Alliance (Left-Liberals)	---	100.0
Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (Liberals/Centrists)	70.8	26.3
European People's Party (Christian Democrats)	85.3	98.7
European Democratic Alliance (French Gaullists/Irish FF)	74.9	84.0
European Democratic Group (British Conservatives)	84.5	---
Forza Europa Group (Forza Italia & Allies)	---	100.0
European Right (Extreme Right)	91.2	---
Rainbow Group (Regionalists & Anti-Europeans) ^a	25.9	---
Europe of Nations Group (Anti-Europeans) ^a	---	00.0
Average	79.8	71.1

Sources: 1989-1994 - Brzinski (1996); Commission Investiture - Hix & Lord (1996).

Notes: Index of Agreement = [(highest modality - sum of the other two modalities)/total number of votes cast by the group] x 100 (Attinà, 1990).

^(a) The Regionalists and the Anti-Europeans are not easy to position on a Left-Right dimension, as they each contain parties from across the Left-Right spectrum, and are hence aligned on a different dimension of politics (Hix & Lord, 1997).

Table 6. Measures of Party Competition

Type of System	Case	Effective no. of parties	Party system polarisation	Distance between two main parties
Parl/Indep	Australia	2.5	5.5	2.4
	Austria	2.4	5.8	1.5
	Belgium	4.6	3.9	2.0
	Canada	2.4	6.1	2.2
Parl/Inter	Germany	3.2	7.8	2.6
Pres/Indep	United States	1.9	2.7	2.7
Coll/Indep	Switzerland	5.1	5.7	3.4
Coll/Inter	European Union	5.0	6.7*	2.8 ^a

Sources: Column 1 - Farrell (1996), Bardi (1996); Columns 2 and 3 - Huber & Inglehart (1996).

Notes: For the calculation of 'Effective Number of Parties' see Laakso-Taagepera (1979).

Columns 2 and 3 are based on 'expert judgements' of party positions on a Left (1)-Right (10) scale.

(^a) The positions of the EU parties are calculated from the mean positions of the member parties of the European party federations - the PES, EPP, ELDR and EFGP.

References

- Almond, G.A. (1956). Comparing Political Systems, *Journal of Politics*, 18, 391-409.
- American Political Science Association (1950). Towards a More Responsible Two-Party System, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 44, Supplement.
- Andersen, S.S. & Burns, T. (1994). The European Union and the Erosion of Parliamentary Democracy. In S.S. Andersen & K.A. Eliassen (eds), *The European Union: How Democratic Is It?* London: Sage.
- Andersen, S.S. & Eliassen, K.A. (1994). Democracy: Traditional Concerns in New Institutional Settings. In S.S. Andersen & K.A. Eliassen (eds), *The European Union: How Democratic Is It?* London: Sage.
- Attinà, F. (1990). The Voting Behaviour of the European Parliament Members and the Problem of Europarties, *European Journal of Political Research*, 18, 557-79.
- Attinà, F. (1992). Parties, Party Systems and Democracy in the European Union, *International Spectator*, 27, 67-86.
- Axelrod, R. (1970). *Conflict of Interests*. Chicago: Markham.
- Bakvis, H. & Chandler, W.M. (eds) (1987). *Federalism and the Role of the State*. Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press.
- Bardi, L. (1992). Transnational Party Federations in the European Community. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *Party Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Bardi, L. (1994). Transnational Party Federations, European Parliamentary Party Groups and the Building of Europarties. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *How Parties Organize*. London: Sage.
- Bardi, L. (1996). Transnational Trends in European Parties and the 1994 Elections of the European Parliament. *Party Politics*, 2, 99-114.
- Beyme, von K. (1987). *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. London: Gower.
- Blondel, J. (1984). Dual Leadership in the Contemporary World: A Step Towards Executive and Regime Stability? In D. Kavanagh & G. Peele (eds), *Comparative Government and Politics*. London: Heinemann.
- Bogdanor, V. (1986). The Future of the European Community: Two Models of Democracy, *Government and Opposition*, 21, 161-76.
- Bogdanor, V. (1989). Direct Elections, Representative Democracy and European Integration, *Electoral Studies*, 8, 1-11.
- Bogdanor, V. (1990). *Democratising the Community*. Federal Trust Discussion Paper No. 2. London: Federal Trust for Education and Research.
- Brzinski, J. Bay (1996). Political Group Cohesion in the European Parliament, 1989-1994. In C. Rhodes & S. Mazey (eds), *The State of the European Union, Vol. 3*. London: Longman.
- Budge, I. & Keman, H. (1990). *Parties and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Chandler, W.M. (1987). Federalism and Political Parties. In H. Bakvis & W.M. Chandler (eds), *Federalism and the Role of the State*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Chandler, W.M. & Chandler, M.A. (1987). Federalism and Political Parties, *European Journal of Political Economy*, 3, 87-101.
- Chrysochoou, D.N. (1994). Democracy and Symbiosis in the European Union: Towards a Confederal Consociation, *West European Politics*, 17, 1-14.
- Chrysochoou, D.N. (1996). Europe's Could-Be Demos: Recasting the Debate, *West European Politics*, 19, 787-801.
- Collier, D. (1993). The Comparative Method. In A.W. Finifter (ed.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association.
- Committee on the Constitutional System (1982). *A Bicentennial Analysis of the American Political Structure*. Washington, D.C.: Committee on the Constitutional System.
- Corbett, R., Jacobs, F. & Shackleton, M. (1995). *The European Parliament*, 3rd edn. London: Catermill.
- Corwin, E.S. (1950). The Passing of Dual Federalism, *Virginia Law Review*, 36, 1-24.
- Curtin, D. (1993). The Constitutional Structure of the European Union: A Europe of Bits and Pieces, *Common Market Law Review*, 30, 17-69.
- Daalder, H. (1992). A Crisis of Party?, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 15, 269-88.
- Dahl, R.A. (1956). *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dehousse, R. (1995). Constitutional Reform in the European Community: Are There Alternatives to the Majority Avenue?. In J. Hayward (ed.), *The Crisis of Representation in Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Deschouwer, K. (1992). Belgium. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *Party Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Deschouwer, K. (1994). The Decline of Consociationalism and the Reluctant Modernization of Belgian Mass Parties. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *How Parties Organize*. London: Sage.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Dunleavy, P. (1990). *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*. London: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Duverger, M. (1963). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. New York: Wiley.
- Duverger, M. (1986). Duverger's Law: Forty Years Later. In B. Grofman & A. Lijphart (eds), *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences*. New York: Agathon.
- Duverger, M. (1997). Reflections: The Political System of the European Union, *European Journal of Political Research*, 31, 137-46.
- Dyck, R. (1996). *Provincial Politics in Canada*, 3rd edn. Scarborough: Prentice Hall.

- Eijk, C. van der, Franklin, M. & Marsh, M. (1996). What Voters Teach Us About Europe-Wide Elections: What Europe-Wide Elections Teach Us About Voters, *Electoral Studies*, 15, 149-66.
- Elazar, D.J. (1987). *Exploring Federalism*. University of Alabama Press.
- Elazar, D.J. (1994). *Federal Systems of the World*, 2nd edn. London: Longman.
- Elazar, D.J. (1995). Federalism. In S.M. Lipset (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Democracy*, 2, 474-82.
- Epstein, L.D. (1977) 'A Comparative Study of Australian Parties', *British Journal of Political Science*, 7, 1-21.
- Farrell, D. (1997). *Comparing Electoral Systems*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Fiorina, M.P. (1987). Party Government in the United States - Diagnosis and Prognosis. In R.S. Katz (ed), *Party Governments: European and American Experiences*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Grofman, B. & Lijphart, A. (eds) (1986). *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*. New York: Agathon.
- Heath, A., McLean, I. & Taylor, B. (1995). How Much is At Stake? Electoral Behaviour in Second-Order Elections, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the APSA, San Francisco, 29 August-1 September 1996.
- Heidenheimer, A.J., Hecl, H. & Adams, C.T. (1990). *Comparative Public Policy*, 3rd edn. New York: St. Martin's.
- Hertig, H.-P. (1978). Party Cohesion in the Swiss Parliament, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 3, 63-81.
- Hix, S. (1994). The Study of the European Community: The Challenge to Comparative Politics, *West European Politics*, 17, 1-30.
- Hix, S. (1995). *Political Parties and the European Union System*, PhD Thesis. Florence: European Univ. Institute.
- Hix, S. (1996). Parties at the European Level and the Legitimacy of EU Socio-Economic Policy, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33, 527-54.
- Hix, S. & Gabel, M. (1997). The Ties that Bind: The European Parliament and the Commission President Investiture Procedure, unpublished mimeo.
- Hix, S. & Lord, C. (1996). The Making of a President: The European Parliament and the Confirmation of Jacques Santer as President of the Commission, *Government and Opposition*, 31, 63-76.
- Hix, S. & Lord, C. (1997). *Political Parties in the European Union*. London: Macmillan.
- Inglehart, R. & Huber, J. (1995). Expert Judgements of Party Space and Party Locations in 42 Societies, *Party Politics*, 1, 73-111.
- Jachtenfuchs, M. (1997). Democracy and Governance in the European Union, *European Integration On-Line Papers*, Vol. 1, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/1997.002a.htm>.
- Jaensch, D. (1983) *The Australian Party System*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Joerges, C. & Neyer, J. (1997). Constitutionalising the European Polity through the Transformation of Intergovernmentalist Bargaining into Deliberative Political Process, unpublished mimeo.

- Katz, R.S. (1986). Party Government: A Rationalistic Conception. In F.G. Castles & R. Wildenmann (eds), *Visions and Realities of Party Government*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Katz, R.S. (ed.) (1987). *Party Government: European and American Experience*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Katz, R.S. & Kolodny, R. (1994). Party Organization as an Empty Vessel: Parties in American Politics. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *How Parties Organize*. London: Sage.
- Katz, R.S. & Mair, P. (1995). Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party, *Party Politics*, 1, 5-28.
- Kerr, H.H. (1987). The Swiss Party System: Steadfast and Changing. In H. Daalder (ed.), *Party Systems in Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Belgium*. London: Pinter.
- King, A. (1981). What do Elections Decide? In D. Butler, H.R. Penniman & A. Ranney (eds), *Democracy at the Polls*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute.
- Kolodny, R. & Katz, R.S. (1992). The United States. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *Party Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Laakso, M. & Taagepera, R. (1979). "Effective" Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to Western Europe, *Comparative Political Studies*, 12, 3-27.
- Laver, M.J., Gallagher, M., Marsh, M., Singh, R. & Tonra, B. (1995). *Electing the President of the European Commission*, Trinity Blue Papers in Public Policy: 1. Dublin: Trinity College.
- Laver, M.J. & Shepsle, K.A. (1990). Coalitions and Cabinet Government, *American Political Science Review*, 84, 873-90.
- Lawson, K. & Merkl, P. (eds) (1988). *When Parties Fail*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lehner, F. & Homann, B. (1987). Consociational Decision-Making and Party Government in Switzerland. In R.S. Katz (ed.), *Party Government: European and American Experience*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Lenaerts, K. (1991). Some Reflections on the Separation of Powers in the European Community, *Common Market Law Review*, 28, 11-35.
- Lijphart, A. (1968). *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in The Netherlands*. Berkeley: California University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational Democracy, *World Politics*, 21, 207-25.
- Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative Politics and Comparative Method, *American Political Science Review*, 65, 682-93.
- Lijphart, A. (1975). The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research, *Comparative Political Studies*, 8, 158-77.
- Lijphart, A. (1968). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Explanation*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

- Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1981). Political Parties: Ideologies and Programs. In D. Butler, H.R. Penniman & A. Ranney (eds), *Democracy at the Polls*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute.
- Lijphart, A. (1992). Introduction. In A. Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary Versus Presidential Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1997). Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma, *American Political Science Review*, 91, 1-14.
- Lijphart, A. & Rogowski, R. (1991). Separation of Powers and the Management of Political Cleavages. In K. Weaver & B. Rockman (eds), *Political Institutions and their Consequences*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Linder, W. (1994). *Swiss Democracy: Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*. London: Macmillan.
- Linz, J.J. (1978). Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibrium. In J.J. Linz & A. Stepan (eds), *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Linz, J.J. (1990). The Virtues of Parliamentarism, *Journal of Democracy*, 1, 84-91.
- Linz, J.J. & Valenzuela, A. (eds) (1992). *Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset, S.M. (1959). *Political Man*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Lipset, S.M. (1990). The Centrality of Political Culture, *Journal of Democracy*, 1, 80-3.
- Lipset, S.M. & Rokkan, S. (eds) (1967). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. New York: Free Press.
- Lodge, J. (1995). The Future of the European Parliament. In J. Lodge (ed.), *The 1994 Elections to the European Parliament*. London: Pinter.
- Mackie, F. & Rose, R. (eds). *The International Almanac of Electoral History*, 3rd edn. London: Macmillan.
- Mainwarring, S. (1993). Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination, *Comparative Political Studies*, 26, 198-228.
- Mair, P. (1995). Political Parties, Popular Legitimacy, and Public Privilege. In J. Hayward (ed.) *The Crisis of Representation in Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Majone, G. (1992). Regulatory Federalism in the European Community, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 10, 299-316.
- Majone, G. (1996a). A European Regulatory State? In J. Richardson (ed.), *European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Majone, G. (1996b). Regulatory Legitimacy. In G. Majone, *Regulating Europe*. London: Routledge.
- Marquand, D. (1978). Towards a Europe of Parties, *Political Quarterly*, 49, 438-45.

- Müller, W.C. (1992). Austria (1945-1990). In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *Party Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Müller, W.C. (1994). The Development of Austrian Party Organizations in the Post-war Period. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *How Parties Organize*. London: Sage.
- Newman, M. (1996). *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union*. London: Hurst.
- North, D.C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Obradovic, D. (1996). Policy Legitimacy and the European Union, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34, 191-221.
- Pederson, M. (1996). Euro-parties and European Parties: New Arenas, New Challenges and New Strategies. In S.S. Andersen & K.A. Eliassen (eds), *The European Union: How Democratic Is It?* London: Sage.
- Poguntke, T. & Boll, B. (1992). Germany. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *Party Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Poguntke, T. (1994). Parties in a Legalistic Culture: The Case of Germany. In R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds), *How Parties Organize*. London: Sage.
- Pridham, G. & Pridham, P. (1979). *Towards Transnational Parties in the European Community*. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Przeworski, A. & Teune, H. (1970). *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley.
- Rae, D.W. (1971). *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, 2nd edn. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Raunio, T. (1996). *Party Group Behaviour in the European Parliament*. Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Reif, K.-H. & Schmitt, M. (1980). Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results, *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, 3-45.
- Reiter, J.L. (1989). Party Decline in the West: A Skeptic's View, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1, 325-48.
- Riker, W.H. (1962). *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Riker, W.H. (1964). *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Riker, W.H. (1975). Federalism. In F.I. Greenstein & N.W. Polsby (eds), *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 5*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Riker, W.H. (1980). Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions, *American Political Science Review*, 74, 432-46.
- Risse-Kappen, T. (1996). Exploring the Nature of the Beast: International Relations Theory and Comparative Policy Analysis Meet the European Union, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34, 53-80.
- Rose, R. (1974). *The Problem of Party Government*. London: Macmillan.
- Sartori, G. (1994). *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*. London: Macmillan.

- Sbragia, A.M. (1992). Thinking About the European Future: The Uses of Comparisons. In A.M. Sbragia (ed.), *Euro-Politics*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Scharpf, F.W. (1988). The Joint-Decision Trap: Lessons from German Federalism and European Integration, *Public Administration*, 66, 239-78.
- Scharpf, F.W. (1997). Economic Integration, Democracy and the Welfare State, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 4, 18-36.
- Scharpf, F.W., Reissert, B. & Schnabel, F. (eds) (1976). *Politikverflechtung*. Kronberg: Scriptor.
- Schattschneider, E.E. (1942). *Party Government*. New York: Rinehart.
- Schattschneider, E.E. (1960). *Semisovereign People*. Hinsdale: Dryden Press.
- Schlesinger Jr., A.M. (1985). Leave the Constitution Alone. In D. Robinson (ed.), *Reforming American Government*. Boulder: Westview.
- Schmitter, P.C. (1996a). Imagining the Future of the Euro-Polity with the Help of New Concepts. In G. Marks, F.W. Scharpf, P.C. Schmitter & W. Streek (eds), *Governance in the European Union*. London: Sage.
- Schmitter, P.C. (1996b). Is It Possible to Democratize the Euro-Polity? unpublished mimeo.
- Schmitter, P.C. (1996c). How to Democratize the Emerging Euro-Polity: Citizenship, Representation, Decision-Making, unpublished mimeo.
- Schumpeter, J. (1943). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Shepsle, K.A. (1979). Institutional Arrangements and Equilibrium in Multidimensional Voting Models, *American Journal of Political Science*, 23, 27-59.
- Shepsle, K.A. (1986). Institutional Equilibrium and Equilibrium Institutions. In H.F. Weinberg (ed.), *Political Science: The Science of Politics*. New York: Agathon.
- Shepsle, K.A. (1989). Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from Rational Choice, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1, 131-47.
- Shepsle, K.A. (1991). *Models of Multiparty Electoral Competition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shugart, M.S. & Carey, J.M. (1992). *Presidents and Assemblies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, D.E. (1985). Party Government, Representation and National Integration in Canada. In P. Aucoin (ed.), *Party Government and Regional Representation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Smith, G. (1990). *Politics in Western Europe*, 5th edn. Aldershot: Dartmouth.
- Strom, K. (1990). A Behavioural Theory of Competitive Political Parties, *American Journal of Political Science*, 34, 565-98.

- Taylor, P. (1991). The European Community and the State: Assumptions, Theories and Propositions, *Review of International Studies*, 17, 109-25.
- Taylor, P. (1996). *The European Union in the 1990s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tocqueville, A. de (1985). *Selected Letters on Politics and Society*, ed. R. Boesche. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Truman, D. (1955). Federalism and Party Systems. In A. MacMahon (ed.), *Federalism*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Tsatsos, D. (1995). European Political Parties? Preliminary Reflections on Interpreting the Maastricht Treaty Article on Political Parties (Article 138a of the EC Treaty), *Human Rights Law Journal*, 16, 1-9.
- Tsebelis, G. (1990). *Nested Games*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tsebelis, G. (1995). Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism, *British Journal of Political Science*, 25, 283-325.
- Vredeling, H. (1971). A Common Market of Politics Parties, *Government and Opposition*, 6, 448-61.
- Weale, A. (1995). Democratic Legitimacy and the Constitution of Europe. In R. Bellamy, V. Bufacchi & D. Castiglione (eds), *Democratic and Constitutional Culture in the Union of Europe*. London: Lothian.
- Wearing, J. (1981). *The L-Shaped Party: The Liberal Party of Canada, 1958-80*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.
- Weber, M. (1942 [1918]). Politics as a Vocation. In H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weiler, J.H.H. (1995). Does Europe Need a Constitution? Demos, Telos and the German Maastricht Decision, *European Law Journal*, 1, 219-58.
- Weiler, J.H.H. (1997a). Legitimacy and Democracy of Union Governance. In G. Edwards & F. Pijpers (eds), *The Politics of European Treaty Reform*. London: Pinter.
- Weiler, J.H.H. (1997b). Proposals for Democratising the EU, presentation at the conference on 'European Citizenship', London School of Economics and Political Science/Goethe Institute, 20-22 March 1997.
- Weiler, J.H.H., Haltern, U.R. & Mayer, F.C. (1995). European Democracy and Its Critique. In J. Hayward (ed.), *The Crisis of Representation in Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Wheare, K.C. (1953). *Federal Government*, 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wildenmann, R. (1987). The Party Government of the Federal Republic of Germany: Form and Experience. In R.S. Katz (ed), *Party Governments: European and American Experiences*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Williams, S. (1991). Sovereignty and Accountability in the European Community. In R.O. Keohane & S. Hoffman (eds), *The New European Community*. Boulder: Westview.
- Wittman, D.A. (1973). Parties as Utility Maximisers, *American Journal of Political Science*, 67, 490-8.

1. AUTHORS NOTE: Earlier versions of this article were presented at the workshop on 'Regional Integration and Multi-Level Governance', at the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research, 27 February - 4 March 1997, Bern, Switzerland, and at the panel on 'EU Democracy in Global Perspective', at the 5th Biennial Conference of the European Community Studies Association, 29 May - 1 June 1997, Seattle, Washington. I am especially grateful to Liesbet Hooghe, Peter Leslie, Gary Marks, Philippe Schmitter, Hermann Schmitt and William Wallace for the comments on these earlier drafts.

2. As Tocqueville (1985: 191) argued: 'Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed'.

3. The concept of 'dual-leadership' comes from Blondel (1984). He uses the term to refer to dual monarchies, semi-presidential republics and the constitutional arrangements in some communist systems. However, the theoretical and normative principles of Blondel's dual-leadership (e.g. the existence of two political constituencies) also exists in interlocking-federal systems.

4. There are numerous other multi-level systems, such as Mexico, Brazil, India, Nigeria, South Africa and Russia. However, I focus on western systems to control for the influence of culture. By taking systems where the cultural constraints on actors' behaviour are relatively similar, we can focus on the structure of institutions as the main explanatory variable. This consequently avoids the problem of making generalisations about the performance of parliamentary and presidential systems across different cultures (Lipset, 1990).

5. In Australia, Belgium and Canada, both chambers of the central legislatures are elected independently of the state governments, and the policy competences of the central and state administrations are strictly defined. The Austrian *Länder* governments sit in the upper-house of the central legislature, the *Bundesrat*. Nevertheless, the Austrian system is still a case of independent-federalism because: the upper-house is considerably weaker than the lower-house; the *Länder* governments are weaker than the Austrian Federal Government in the exercise of executive authority (Smith, 1990: 168); and the representation in the Austrian *Bundesrat* is proportional to the whole electorate, and there is no over-representation of the smaller *Länder* (Lijphart, 1984: 174-5).

6. The German *Länder* governments not only sit in the upper-house of the central legislature, the *Bundesrat*, but also have a very powerful role in central policy formulation and adoption. Moreover, under the German constitution many policy competences are shared between the Federal and *Länder* governments, and the *Länder* governments have an extensive policy implementation and administration role. Canada is not included in this category, but has an 'interlocking' characteristic in the system: where the federal-provincial First Ministers' Conference has a central role in setting the medium- and long-term political agenda, particularly in the area of institutional reform.

7. The US is the archetypal case of an independent-federal system. The legal jurisdiction of the US states are protected under the US Constitution. Moreover, the 'Senate [has] established the principle that individual senators are not bound by the instructions of state legislature' (Schattschneider, 1960, p. 14).

8. Like the German *Bundestag*, the Swiss Cantons are represented in the second chamber of the Swiss parliament, *Ständerat*. However, like the US Senate, the *Ständerat* is more a central parliamentary chamber than an explicit 'organ of state interests'. Tax-raising and policy competences are also clearly divided between the federal and Cantonal governments in Switzerland, with the Cantons possessing more tax-raising powers than the Federal governments.

9. This, of course, assumes that EU institutional design will continue to be somewhat similar to the domestic political systems in the western world. Schmitter (1996a, 1996b) and others (e.g. Andersen & Eliassen, 1994; Andersen & Burns, 1994; Jachtenfuchs, 1997) argue, however, that a 'Euro-polity' cannot be based on these models because the EU is not a 'state'. Nevertheless, unless we abandon our basic democratic principles (about the relationship between executive and legislative power, for example) the institutional choices for the EU are necessarily limited.

10. The 'second-order elections theory', in its original formulation, also suggests that in second-order elections voters will tend to vote for different parties than the ones they really support - either as a protest or because there is lower risk that these parties will be elected (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). However, evidence from recent EP elections also suggests that if voters choose different parties this may be an indication of the elections developing some first-order characteristics (e.g. a genuine transnational element to the election, such as the anti-European votes in France and Denmark) (Eijk et.al., 1996). Consequently, in testing the second-order model, I focus on the voter-turnout hypothesis rather than the voter-choice hypothesis.

11. This method of expressing a discrete variable is based on Lijphart's (1981) assessment of the saliency of different issue-dimensions across party systems.

12. In practice, however, in many cases the choice of the party leader is really determined at the elite level and subsequently presented to the party congress as a *fait accompli* and/or the party leader (i.e. chairman/woman) is only one of several leaders (alongside the leader of the parliamentary group and/or the leading office holder/prime ministerial candidate).

13. In the case of Belgium, this party-government model only holds for the individual community parties (e.g. the Flemish and Francophone Socialists). However, the organisation structures within each Belgian 'party family' are weaker than even in the European Parliament.

14. To reiterate, I use the term 'partial' to emphasise that the direct election of the Commission President would not transform the EU into a full-blown Euro-Presidentialism because significant executive powers would still be held by the national governments, in the EU Council. In other words, the EU would be a type of 'dual-executive' or Presidential-Collegial system.