UACES 40th Annual Conference

Bruges, 6-8 September 2010

www.uaces.org

What Kind of Public Sphere for the European Union?

Prospects for improving democracy through mediated politics

Paul Statham

Paper for UACES Conference, Bruges, 6-8 September 2010

Panel: Making Europe Public: Political Communication and Contestation

Address:

Professor Paul Statham
Director EurPolCom
CENTRE for EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS
http://www.eurpolcom.eu
&
Research Director
School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies
University of Bristol
3 Priory Rd,
University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TX

email: paul.statham@bristol.ac.uk

Please do not cite paper without permission

New Book:

Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, 2010, *The Making of a European Public Sphere. Media Discourse and Political Contention.* Cambridge University Press. http://www.amazon.co.uk/Making-European-Public-Sphere-Communication/dp/0521138256/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1281268942&sr=1-3

What Kind of Public Sphere for the European Union?

Prospects for improving democracy through mediated politics

> *Wäre es da*
> *Nicht doch einfacher, die Regierung*
> *Löste das Volk auf und*
> *Wählte ein anderes?*
>
> *Would it not be easier*
> *In that case for the government*
> *To dissolve the people*
> *And elect another?* [1]
>
> Bertolt Brecht

Abstract

This article addresses the prospects for the public politicization of the European Union. It outlines a conceptual framework that identifies general types of *European public politics*. Theoretically, its stance on the public sphere combines two approaches: perspectives on the accountability and responsiveness of decision-making in European multilevel governance, and those on a field of mass-mediated political communication that facilitates or constrains this process. By combining two conditions of performance by media and political systems on the supply-side, *visibility* in the mass media, and *inclusiveness* in decision-making, four general types of European public politics are identified: *executive bargaining*; *corporatist interest group politics*; *elite-dominated public politics*; and *inclusive public politics*. These are discussed and evaluated in relation to available evidence for their existence and the academic theories which support and oppose them. Finally, the concluding discussion assesses the prospects for an effective European public politics starting from the current context of media and democratic performance. In the absence of an effective civil society in European public politics, and because of the inherent structural weakness of European-level party politics, it is argued that mediation through party competition at the national level is the best way forward to democratize European decision-making.

---

[1] This is from *The Solution* by Bertolt Brecht. The English translation is from Bertolt Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956*, eds. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (Methuen 1976), p. 440.

What Kind of Public Sphere for the European Union?
Prospects for improving democracy through mediated politics[2]

Introduction: the public politicization of Europe

The European Union (EU) of 27 countries is the world's most advanced cooperation across borders and political levels and has resulted in a close regional interpenetration of societies, markets and governments. The EU's multi-levelled political architecture is historically unprecedented and its decision-making power has grown beyond recognition. However, this substantial advancement of European integration was driven by political elites and for the 'permissive consensus'[3] era largely out of the public eye, leading eventually to prominent debates about perceived 'democratic deficits'. The watershed moment came in the rejection of Europe's Constitutional efforts by the French and Dutch peoples in the 2005 referendums, taken against the expressed wishes of all main national political parties and mass media. The fallout from the 2005 referendums dealt a fatal blow to an idea already in decline: that political elites can simply build Europe in the absence of Europeans. Beyond a focus on the EU's 'democratic deficit', the case of Europe's missing public is indicative of a general problem for democratic politics facing advancing globalisation and increasing intergovernmental power: How is it possible to maintain adequate links between elite decision-making and citizens when power shifts to a level beyond the nation state?

A quick solution to Europe's 'deficit' might be sought in the increasing self-identification of European citizens with the European Union. However, it is well documented that although policy decisions are increasingly taken in supranational and intergovernmental arenas, nation states remain the primary focus for citizens' collective identification processes, voting preferences and political mobilisations. Also, as Gabel (1998: 112) concludes from his study of public opinion data 'only a small proportion of the public holds strong affective supranational attachments'. Nonetheless, change is occurring. Today, the European Union is visible most days to most Europeans, should they care to glance at their driving licenses, passports or the coins in their pockets. In addition, Fligstein demonstrates that the expansion of markets and economic growth has produced Europe-wide economic, social and political fields that he argues have led to an increasing density of social interaction and willingness of people to sometimes identify themselves as Europeans. But even he concedes ultimately that self-identification with Europe is still for most people secondary and that a gap remains between structural change and public perceptions (Fligstein 2008: 2), 'What has struck me most about the creation of a European society is the degree to which people in Europe are unaware of it.' Given that the prospects for Europeans evolving in the 'culturally thick' sense *en masse* are slim, while Europe remains a

---

[3] Under conditions of "permissive consensus" a positive or neutral majority of public opinion allows for elite autonomy and imagination in managing foreign affairs (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970).

secondary form of identification, an 'identity-lite' (Risse 2003), then attention shifts to the contextual performance of media and political systems in mediating the linkages between elite decision-making and citizens. This article looks at the prospects for an effective European public politics through an examination of the evidence and literature on media and democratic performance for the case of the European Union.

There are many theoretical contributions on the possibility for a European public sphere, emphasizing the need for an open means of public communication through mass media to democratize political institutions (see especially, Habermas 2005, 2006). As Trenz and Eder put it (2004: 7), 'The basic function of a public sphere is to democratize political institutions.' Most agree that in the relative absence of a supra- or pan-national media system this transformation will be located within national public spheres (Schlesinger 1999).

While there is disagreement over the substance and degree of Europe's perceived 'democratic deficit', and how best to overcome it, most scholars agree that the public dimension of politics is transforming and growing in importance, so that elites can no longer simply push European integration forward without enhancing their resources of public legitimacy. However, this need for an unfolding public space for European politics does not appear to have been driven in the first instance by a recent dramatic change in public attitudes to the European Union. As Hooghe and Marks claim (2008: 13), 'A brake on European integration has been imposed not because people have changed their minds, but because, on a range of vital issues, legitimate decision-making has shifted from an insulated elite to a mass politics.' Taking this further, it is less that public preferences over the EU have changed, but more that they have been unleashed and are now increasingly subjected to dynamics of political competition by executives, political parties, the media and interest groups in the public domain. The important point to draw is that, at least for now, we are witnessing a transformation in the *supply-side mechanisms* of European politics, more than in public demand and the cleavage structure over which it is constructed. Public attitudes over Europe measured by opinion polls remain relatively stable over the last decade, and many citizens show low levels of interest in and knowledge of the EU. However, we are starting to witness a process of the *public politicization* of the European Union and in the first instance this is being driven from the supply-side by political and media systems.

Politicization has long been advocated as essential to overcome the 'deficit' by public sphere theorists, including Habermas, who argues (2006: 106), 'The overwhelming majority of the population which is apparently hostile, or at best hesitant, can only be won over for the European cause if the project is rescued from the pallid abstractions of administrative measures and technical discourse; in other words the project must be politicized.' However, this approach like similar federalist ones within political science has been criticised for a lack of realism. For example, Moravcik notes a tendency (2002: 605), 'to analyse the EU in ideal and isolated terms. Comparisons are drawn between the EU and an ancient, Westminster-style, or frankly utopian form of deliberative democracy. While perhaps useful for philosophical purposes, the use of idealistic standards no modern government can meet obscures the social context of contemporary European policy-making.'

Following this insight, one might argue that not enough conceptual effort has been spent within the public sphere literature for specifying the potentially democratizing conditions from a realist perspective. While significant gains have been made in understanding where, when, how and to what extent a mass-mediated European public sphere is emerging (e.g., Trenz 2004, Sifft et al 2007), there has been less focus on the type of European public politics that may realistically emerge from the existing conditions. Since the gap between what Hooghe and Marks call 'insulated elite' and 'mass politics' is large, leaving open a wide range of different possible trajectories for development, this requires some conceptual work. Indeed the term 'public politics' is more appropriate than their 'mass politics' because it is still not clear that Europe will become a mass phenomenon in its public form. What is needed is a study of the possible types of *public politicization* of the EU. This article aims to contribute by addressing the performance of the media and political systems that are carrying this transformation, and by drawing a roadmap of possible paths where this development may lead. It largely side-steps issues of whether, or not, there is a new cleavage structure emerging over European integration.[4] Instead the focus is on the interaction between media and political systems and on the performance of the supply-side mechanisms that exist to deliver a *European public politics*. First, we outline what types of 'public politics' are possible for the EU, then consider evidence on which type is supplied by the existing media and political systems, before taking a stance on what is the most likely effective and realistic type to democratize Europe in the conclusion.

The next section elaborates the dimensions of *visibility* and *inclusiveness* which are conditions for a European public politics supplied by media and political systems. It presents an analytic framework that defines a conceptual space for four possible general types of European public politics: *executive bargaining*; *corporatist interest group politics*; *elite-dominated public politics*; and *inclusive public politics*. Subsequent sections discuss these four possible types of European public politics by critically examining the scientific literatures from which they are derived and the available evidence for their real world existence. So far, many assessments of Europe's 'democratic deficit' have tended to talk past each other, because they are based on different assumptions of what would constitute an adequate democratic politics for Europe's multi-level governance system. In addition, political science perspectives assessing the 'democratic deficit' by examining the institutions of the European multilevel polity refer little to media and political communication. Conversely, public sphere perspectives searching for the 'deficit' in the discursive contents of mass mediated communication, tend to be insufficiently linked to the institutional forms of multi-level governance. By mapping the conceptual terrain it becomes possible to see the basis for major differences, as well as points of overlap and synthesis. More importantly, charting these viewpoints along side the available historical and contextual evidence for their existence, allows for a realistic appraisal of Europe's 'deficit'. From this, the conclusion speculates on where we are now, and the future prospects for a democratizing European decision-making through public politics.

Towards a mediated politics for Europe: visibility and inclusiveness

Although there is disagreement about the degree and form of change, there is widespread acknowledgement that a transformation of politics has occurred due to the increasing importance

---

[4] On this, see Kriesi et al 2008, Marks 2004.

of mass media in modern democracies. For example, Mair (1997) argues that political parties' organisational networks are in decline as a result of party leaders' increasing ability to directly appeal to voters through the media, while Manin (1997) talks of 'audience democracy'. Such perspectives are close to those of communications scholars, such as Hallin and Mancini, who consider that such processes (2004: 33-4), 'have made the media an increasingly central social institution, to a significant extent displacing churches, parties, trade unions, and other traditional organisations of 'civil society' as the central means by which individuals are connected to the wider social and political world.'

One way of examining this 'mediated politics' (Bennett and Entman 2000) is along the dimensions of the mass media's supply of political information –*visibility*– and the accessibility which it provides to decision-making –*inclusiveness*. This insight partly draws from the influential work of Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht on the public sphere in contemporary democracies. They emphasise the interrelatedness between accountability and responsiveness in decision-making and the public communication that makes it visible, pointing out that (2002a: 289), 'There is a close link between theories of the public sphere and democratic theory more generally. Democratic theory focuses on accountability and responsiveness in the decision-making process; theories of the public sphere focus on the role of public communication in facilitating or hindering the process.' This insight can be applied to the possibility of a public sphere for European decision-making. When decision-making shifts up to the European-level, however, the role of the media becomes even more important for maintaining a link between elites and citizens than it is within national politics, because of the high barriers facing non-state actors in their efforts to organise and create direct channels of mediation beyond the nation-state.

A first important dimension is the *visibility* of European decision-making to publics. For there to be anything that meaningfully resembles a public sphere at all, European decision-making needs to be made visible to citizens. All normative models of democracy require some degree of visibility for decision-making so that a public can make informed choices. Publics have to be able to see what is going on. Essential here is the performance of mass media in making Europe visible to people. Apart from those ideologically opposed to the EU, all scholars think that democracy would improve across the region, if European decision-making was adequately present and represented publicly in the media.

Second, the degree to which European decision-making is *inclusive* of publics is also important. This refers to the accessibility of European decision-making to publics. First, as an electorate the public have their interests represented by competing political parties, and second, collective actors and social movements mobilise their demands in an effort to influence policy makers. Here it is the democratic performance of the political system that matters and the degree to which the public is able to gain access to, and be included within European decision-making processes, through institutional channels and formal mechanisms. However, there are divergent starting points for what constitutes adequate access to decision-making that is mediated through a public sphere.

As mentioned, Ferree et al (2002a; 2002b) demonstrate the different standards for what an adequately performing public sphere should consist of are derived from specific different

traditions of democratic theory. While representative liberal theories see the adequate standards for inclusiveness within a public sphere as *elite dominance*, participatory liberal and discursive theories set the standards as *popular inclusion*. The basic differences stem from views on the role of the citizen. The relatively passive citizen of representative liberal theory (e.g., Schumpeter 1942) where the public sphere standard is elite dominance is contrasted to the more engaged and active citizen of the participatory liberal and discursive traditions (e.g., Barber 1984, Habermas 1989), where the standard is popular inclusiveness.[5] In the *elite dominance* perspective of representative liberal theory, citizens need only to be minimally informed to make sure that policy-makers are ultimately accountable to them, while their loyalty primarily to political parties, and to a lesser extent the societal institutions –such as Churches and Trade Unions– representing social groups, aids the effectiveness of these political representatives. In this view, citizens need not participate directly in public discourses, but decision-making should be sufficiently visible to allow for informed choices, especially at election time, so that individuals can choose between political parties which compete to represent their interests and values. The media's role is to ensure transparency by exposing corrupt and incompetent political representatives and it largely limits itself to providing the public with reliable information about what is happening in the political world. Too much mediated debate may even be detrimental, for example, leading to distortions of issues, and obscuring differences between the elite-led representative political organs over issues, values and interests. By contrast, the *popular inclusiveness* standards for a public sphere are that, 'public discourse can and should empower citizens, give them voice and agency, build community, and help them to act on behalf of their interests and values. The normative standard here is one of engaging citizens in the democratic process by encouraging their active participation in the public sphere' (Ferree et al 2002b: 297). The media becomes pro-active as an opinion leader and ensuring that all sections of society, including the weak, are able to voice their demands.

This distinction is useful to our discussion of *inclusiveness* because it gives two basic competing viewpoints for an adequate public sphere: *elite dominance* is the more restricted, top-down, elite-dominated one, whereas *popular inclusiveness* is the more open, egalitarian, and public participatory one. Obviously, there is a wide range of possible stances between these two ideal-typical positions. However, the distinction serves to guide different expectations for how the components of a public sphere work effectively in their inclusion of citizens to public debates over decision-making. In the next section we apply these insights on visibility and inclusiveness to define a conceptual space for European public politics.

Which path to European public politics?

---

[5] Within *popular inclusiveness*, Ferree et al (2002a; 2002b) distinguish between the participatory liberal tradition, for which they cite Barber (1984) on 'strong democracy' and Hirst (1994) on 'associative democracy', and the discursive tradition exemplified by Habermas (1989). However they stress that the theories are very strongly interrelated in their requirement for popular inclusion for a public sphere. Simply put, the former contrasts participatory self-government by the citizens which it favours above representative government in the name of citizens, whereas the latter emphasises that it is crucial when important normative questions are at stake, that the discussion not be limited to actors at the centre of the political system but includes those on the periphery, especially civil society actors and social movements. The traditions come together in the notion of a 'deliberative democracy' (e.g., Gutmann and Thompson 1996) where citizens ought to be able to transcend their narrow interests to consider what can be reasonably justified to people who disagree with them.

Although most agree about the need for a European public sphere in response to advancing institutional integration, scholars and politicians arrive at this position by applying different normative and empirical standards for democratic and media performance. Mapping out the range of perspectives allows insight into the different understandings of, and disputes over, what constitutes an adequate European public politics. Moreover, it provides a road map for the actual development of the European public sphere, in relation to where it has come from, and where it might possibly go to. To design this conceptual map for the possible types of *European public politics*, we combine the two analytic dimensions visibility and inclusiveness. First, a necessary condition for a public sphere to exist at all is that the decision-making process is made sufficiently and adequately visible to citizens, which occurs primarily through mass-mediated communication. Second, the public legitimacy of decision-making depends on whether citizens and civil society organisations are adequately included to be able to see decisions and be empowered to voice their preferences. At stake are the communicative links between polity and citizens for representing and mediating the popular will. The primary mechanisms are political parties and collective action. By combining the degree of public visibility and the degree of public inclusiveness of European decision-making, we arrive at four possible types of European public politics that are represented in Figure 1.

-Figure 1-

Figure 1 shows a two-by-two model depicting a conceptual space for four ideal types of European public politics: *executive bargaining*; *corporatist interest group politics*; *elite-dominated public politics*; and *inclusive public politics*. Moving from top to bottom, European decision-making becomes more mediated and publicly visible. Positions on the vertical axis are an output of the mass media system. Obviously, media performance in giving attention to the European-level of actors, issues and policies is crucial here. Positions on the horizontal axis are an output of the political system, in particular, the structure of political opportunities for gaining access to the multi-level European polity. Moving from left to right, European decision-making becomes less dominated by executive, state and party elites and more inclusive of collective action by actors from civil society and social movements. All liberal democracies have party systems representing citizens. So we assume the European decision-making process to be more inclusive, the more it additionally provides open access for, and responsiveness to, collective actors from civil society. At stake here is democratic performance of the polity.

Although the ideal types in Figure 1 do not exist in pure form in the real world, this conceptual space provides a heuristic framework to guide different expectations for how the components of a European public sphere –executives, policy-makers, citizens, parties, interest groups, social movements, and mass media– interact to work effectively. Generally, one can expect the overall picture of European decision-making to resemble a type of public politics at a given time and so it is possible to identify possible trajectories of change over time. The model is not deterministic in that it does not presume a specific trajectory of development. Nor does it assume evolutionary stages of development. It is quite possible to shift back from a more to a less inclusive, and from a more to a less visible type of public politics, dependent on the degree to which European decision-making is accessible through institutional channels, and the density of media coverage

it receives, respectively. Although this article discusses general types of public politics for European decision-making, one can also expect to find variation across different policy fields, which provide different degrees of access and receive different densities of media coverage. In the next sections, we unpack the substance of the four types of European public politics at the general level.

Executive bargaining politics

The logical starting point is *executive bargaining* in the top-left of Figure 1, where European decision-making has low public visibility due to sparse media coverage and low civil society inclusion resulting from weak institutional channels of access. Here European decision-making is not public: it proceeds in the elite-dominated world of political institutions and state bureaucracies, largely without party competition, without collective action, and away from the media spotlight. This situation closely approximates Europe's 'permissive consensus' era from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. In the immediate postwar period and for a considerable time afterwards, European integration was neither politically salient, contested, nor publicly visible in the participating countries. State elites were largely free to act on behalf of the people. Europe-building took on a functional logic orchestrated by state elites and bureaucracies as a series of common foreign policy acts. European integration was driven by a politics of inter-state diplomacy as national and the emerging European-level political elites built Europe largely in the absence of Europeans. Citizens were not called on to directly ratify the international treaties through which integration advanced and European institutions' powers grew. The exceptions were national referendums where countries contemplated joining or leaving the common project, e.g., Denmark and Ireland in 1972, and the UK in 1975. But even in these cases the peoples of existing member countries were not asked to directly ratify the inclusion of potential newcomers. Major left and right political parties supported the project, saving competition for domestic affairs. Before 1979, Europeans were not called on to vote for a European Parliament (EP). When it came on the scene the EP remained an impotent talking-shop that Europeans could hardly see or hear, but nor did they show any desire to do so. If at all, national media reported Europe through a lens of foreign affairs and international relations. As Weale puts it (2005: 2), 'For most citizens, for most of the time while integration was occurring, Europe was merely a geographical expression.'

In this permissive consensus era, the European Commission and its bureaucracy established itself as a supranational actor in the inter-state game and adopted federalist aspirations. However, the closest contact of the European elite to people came through its Eurobarometer opinion polling, which served as an ersatz indicator for public preferences and as a quasi-test to see whether Europe's citizens had reached a stage of evolution where they could appreciate the benefits bestowed on them from on-high. Eurobarometer was the EU-level technocratic solution *par excellence* to Europe's missing public. Paradoxically, policy makers at the supranational level started to act as if citizens with national loyalties no longer existed, whereas the citizens of member states acted as if the European-level of politics and administration had not come into being (de Beus forthcoming 2010). The more evident and irreversible the substantive impact of European decision-making became, however, the more this contradiction came to the fore as a political issue. Only then did talk of 'democratic deficits' begin.

It needs pointing out, however, that there are still those in academia, the so-called intergovernmentalists among whom Moravcik (2002) is prominent for whom Europe has 'no deficit' and is still largely in the top-left hand corner of Figure 1. These scholars see the European Union largely as an intergovernmental organisation where national governments have decided to pool their sovereignty in a limited number of policy fields to gain mutual benefits. For them, a European public sphere is unnecessary because European Union institutions derive their political legitimacy from nationally elected governments who for the most part shape European policy decisions. The EU has no 'democratic deficit', since citizens, if they wish, can vote out governments in national elections. In this view, national political elites and parties continue to dominate the public sphere while the media remains relatively inattentive to the European-level. The Moravcik stance largely sees the debate over Europe's 'democratic deficit' to be a result of flawed abstract scholarly theorisation, based on a fixation with the democratic benefits of participation regardless of context: 'Concern (about the democratic deficit) appears to result, above all, from a tendency to privilege the abstract over the concrete. Most critics compare the EU to an ideal plebiscitary or parliamentary democracy, standing alone, rather than to the actual functioning of national democracies adjusted for its multi-level context' (2002: 621). However, given this requirement for realism and that he makes the symbiotic relationship between national and EU policy the central plank of his assessment of EU legitimacy, it is highly surprising that he attributes no role to political communication over Europe in carrying or shaping this relationship. Surely, his realist perspective should still require that European-level decision-making is made publicly visible as a condition for allowing democratic accountability, even if legitimacy is underwritten at the national-level? By dismissing theories of transnational political parties, identities and discourses for what he sees as a flawed commitment to an abstract ideal-type notion of European participation, he misses the actual role of public communication in potentially supplying resources of legitimacy. An accurate realist position on EU legitimacy needs also to consider political communication processes, even if these are supplied primarily by national mass media and discourses.

As most observers agree that the 'permissive consensus' way of legitimating European decision-making is over, the important question is into what type of politics does it show signs of transforming?

Corporatist interest group politics

Moving across the top of Figure 1, a possible development is the inclusion of collective actors from civil society in European decision-making, but without this receiving media attention. Such a situation results when elites extend the formal channels of access to the European decision-making process, facilitating the participation of interest and lobby groups, but without this receiving media attention. This takes us towards a *corporatist interest group politics*. Indeed an important growth area within the European multi-level system of administration has been the inclusion of lobby groups. In policy fields which are most Europeanized – e.g., environment, agriculture, trade – there has been a proliferation of lobby groups in Brussels and in national capitals (see contributions to Featherstone and Raedelli eds. 2003; Greenwood and Aspinwall eds. 1998). For some, including Lahusen (2004), this increasing access to the European-level policy process and insider treatment for specialist collective actors constitutes the emergence of a

latent or restricted semi-public sphere. In this optimistic view, the Brussels cocktail circuit and its national-level counterparts serve as forums for lobbyists and social movements to adapt, gain influence and deliberate within the European policy game. Europe's lack of visibility to the general public is not considered an obstacle to collective actors mobilising on behalf of constituency groups who are directly affected by European policy decisions. Against such optimism, however, it is well documented in social movement research that weak and marginal collective actors often need media attention and a public discourse to exert credible and effective pressure on an issue (e.g., Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Without media attention for European decision-making, this route is effectively blocked for many collective actors from civil society. However, this absence of public visibility may be less harmful to the chances of success for more powerful lobbies, such multinational banks and petroleum companies, who arguably even benefit from this more collusive form of politics where decisions are less open to public scrutiny. So far, the interest groups and NGO sectors that have mushroomed in Brussels strongly represent powerful institutional interests, such as state quangos, multi-national business corporations, professions and labour unions (Aspinwall and Greenwood 1998). In addition, plenty of think tanks and consultants are on hand to be co-opted and supply technocratic expertise. There is relative little 'demos' in evidence. Also, if there is contestation and deliberation over different viewpoints between elites and lobbyists, then this remains behind closed doors. The public face of corporatist interest group politics is precisely that of deals done in secrecy behind closed doors. Sabine Saurugger's review of empirical research conducted on European interest groups concludes that, 'the elite characteristics of these actors question their capacity to increase democratic legitimacy' (2008: 1274). For the most part, efforts by the European-level administration to introduce a wider civil society inclusion, or to enhance the say of weaker groups, have been initiated from the top-down as a form of co-optation. For example, in the migration field, European migrants' organisations are unrepresentative of migrant communities, undemocratic in structure, and almost wholly dependent on EU-subsidies for their survival (Koopmans et al 2005). Overall, it seems that there are barriers to overcoming a civil society participation deficit, when European decision-making lacks public visibility. Nonetheless, corporatist interest groups politics remains a possible path of development. It was the one sponsored by EU institutions for many years as a supplement to executive bargaining, before it became clear that further advancements of integration and a consolidation of EU power would require a greater degree of public representation and more opportunities for public scrutiny.

As power and competences move to the European-level, then there is more chance of increasing mass media attention, not least because journalists see their professional role to publicize and expose policy decision-making to scrutiny (on journalism over Europe, see Statham 2008). This leads us to the bottom-half of Figure 1, where European decision-making receives denser coverage in mass media reporting.

Elite-dominated public politics

Starting again from Europe's permissive consensus, but moving down the left hand side of Figure 1, we reach a situation of *elite-dominated public politics*. Here there is dense media coverage of European decision-making, but weak formal channels of access for collective actors

to participate in the process. How can European executive bargaining transform into this situation?

An obvious answer is that increasing media attention for the European-level erodes the basis for a permissive consensus by bringing European actors, policies and issues more centrally into public view. This *mediatisation* leads to a public politicisation of European decision-making. Another possibility, related to this development, is that as the EU takes on more competences, adopts features of a supranational polity, and increasingly wields powers that directly affect citizens, the substance of European politics also changes from the permissive consensus era. This latter view is the stance of intergovernmentalism's critics within political science. Thus for Hix (2008), the EU is already a supranational polity whose decisions directly affect citizens, but without providing adequate institutional channels for their representation. In this view, the European Commission's lack of direct accountability combined with the European Parliament's limited powers constitutes a 'democratic deficit'. However, this is an institutional 'democratic deficit' located in the EU's inadequate representative political architecture, in particular, its inability to replicate anything resembling a national party system on the European-level. The proposed solution is an institutional-fix for the European Union polity, and in particular a European Parliament worthy of the name, where parties vote along ideological rather than national lines. Surprisingly, Hix makes no systematic reference to mass-mediated communication as a possible mechanism for enhancing the transparency of European decision-making to citizens. If mentioned at all, it is assumed that media coverage will simply result automatically from the implementation of institutional reforms. There is little consideration of possible barriers to a transnational European mediated politics from the supply side of the media system, or alternatively, of the possibility that the media is sufficiently autonomous to provide attention to European politics before it is institutionally-fixed. Hix's concluding chapter to his aptly titled, *What's Wrong with the European Union and How to Fix It*, contains only one short reference to the media, stating that, 'More (EU-level) open contestation and coalition-building would increase the stakes, which in turn would also encourage the media to cover the Brussels soap opera for the first time' (2008: 185/6). In addition, his proposed shopping list of reforms makes no direct reference to a central role for the media.

Against this claim that European decision-making remains invisible and unmediated, the findings from the largest and most wide-ranging study of media contents to date, the Europub.com collaborative project, led by Koopmans and Statham, clearly shows that important Europeanization trends are evident in mediated policy discourses and these serve to make the European-level visible to general publics. This study looks at seven countries Britain, Germany, Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland on the basis of contents analysis of a data sample of more than 20,000 cases retrieved from four newspapers in each country. This research demonstrates that the emergence of visible Europeanized communication is strongly related to the structures of access provided by the multi-level polity. Crucially, the clearest explanatory determinant for whether a communicative act—that is, a public 'claim'—in a policy field is Europeanized is the extent to which competences have shifted up to the EU-level. For example, EU-level actors have a strong visible say in monetary politics and agriculture debates, where integration has shifted decision making up to the supranational level, but very little in debates over immigration, troop deployment, education, and pensions, where national sovereignty

remains powerful. The general rule is that the more a policy field is supranationalized, the more it has a public policy debate that includes and makes the EU-level visible to citizens and the more vertical communication flows are found. Turning to trends across time, the research shows that the visibility of EU actors has grown markedly from 9% in 1990 to 15% in 2002 over a period when integration has advanced. In addition, the increase in the monetary policy field, which experienced monetary union in this period, was dramatic from 9% in 1990 to 29% in 2002.[6] At least when viewed quantitatively, this goes against the oft-heard thesis that the EU has a communication deficit. This latter point is corroborated by Trenz's media contents analysis of 11 quality newspapers from six EU countries, which supports the general idea that Europe has a significant visibility in national media: 'one out of three articles in a European quality newspaper makes political reference to Europe, and one out of five directly reports on at least one European issue' (2004: 311).

Thus we do not have to wait for Hix's proposed EU-level political institutional-fix for the media to enter the equation, the media has already put itself on the Brussels and Strasbourg scene. The emergence of a sizeable press corps of European correspondents on national newspapers is also well documented (Meyer 2009). Media attention for competing elites and political parties –at national, EU-level or both– is an essential ingredient for an effective representative politics. If voters cannot see executive and party elite stances over European decisions to make informed electoral choices, then democratic control cannot be exerted adequately. The available evidence shows that the supply-side conditions from the mass media for providing attention and public visibility to European decision-making are to a large degree already existent. Although questions can be raised over the quality of public communication about Europe, there seems not to be a 'deficit' in its quantity. This shifts the focus onto what an adequate mediated politics looks like from the perspective of elite-dominated public politics. Basically, if the Hix thesis is rectified for its failure to systematically include mass media, what does elite-dominated public politics look like and how does it work?

In a situation of elite-dominated public politics, legitimacy is based on citizens' trust in effective representation by political elites and parties. The politicisation of elite decision-making and its public visibility depends to a large extent on the degree to which parties compete over European policy issues. Media attention largely follows the agenda set by elites and parties, with high levels of party competition generating high levels of coverage. Hence, the public sphere is dominated by political elite actors. The news is full of political elites – national governments, EU institutions and administrations, national political parties, Euro-parties, and the occasional expert or technocrat – and their claims and counter-claims over European policy decisions. Civil society inclusion is underdeveloped, with elites co-opting professional groups and interest groups mostly for their technical expertise, not to widen participation. Also the media's role remains largely descriptive, limited to naming and shaming incompetent and corrupt political elites and supplying sufficient information for the electorate to make informed choices. In this view, media interpretation and opinion leading can distort issues and choices by taking the focus away from the opinions of competing elites. Generally, the citizen is passive and minimally informed under

---

[6] The detailed findings appear in Koopmans and Statham (forthcoming 2010). Further details on the Europub.com project, including detailed national reports, a comparative report on the findings from the analyses of media discourse, and description of the research design, are available at http://europub.wzb.eu/.

these conditions. European decision-making is mediated through institutionalised political channels – voting and co-opted lobbying – with the public sphere largely downgraded to a monitoring function. In a sense, this type of public politics for European decision-making has a public sphere 'lite'.

Although this type of Europeanized politics is adequate from the viewpoint of political science approaches drawing from representative liberal theory, the power and strong presence of elites is problematic, and constitutes a participation 'deficit' for those who require a greater involvement of civil society in democratic politics.

Inclusive public politics

The participatory potential of a mass-mediated public discourse and enhanced opportunities for collective action are more fully realised as we move to the bottom-right of Figure 1 to an *inclusive public politics* for European decision-making. Here the mass media provides high public visibility to European decision-making whereas formal access is provided not only through representation by competing political parties, but also by open channels that facilitate bottom-up mobilization by a wide range of civil society actors and social movements in the public domain. This can result from an increasing mediatisation and public politicisation of the corporatist interest group variant, moving down the right-hand side of Figure 1, or from an expansion of mediated party competition to include mobilisation by collective actors from civil society, moving left to right across the bottom of Figure 1. The high degree of visibility and inclusiveness of European decision-making leads to a 'spill over' of public *contestation* over it. The more publicly visible the European-level of politics becomes, the more it is likely to be subject to party competition and challenges by civil society organisations in the public domain. Thus increasing media visibility is likely to lead to an increasing contestation mobilised by demands for more inclusion. If realised, these mutually reinforcing dynamics of increasing visibility, political contention and demands for inclusion can potentially lead to an inclusive public politics. At least, that is the stance depicted in the related theories on a European public political sphere (see especially, Habermas 2006) and a European contentious politics and social movements (see especially, Imig and Tarrow 2001), which advocate greater public participation in decision-making through protest, mobilisation and claim making in public discourses.

In the public discourse version, an inclusive public politics comes in the form of a deliberative European policy discourse, where people use mass media reporting to form and mobilise opinions. In Habermas' words, 'the democratic deficit can only be redressed by the simultaneous emergence of a European political public sphere in which the democratic process is embedded. In complex societies, democratic legitimacy results from the interplay of institutionalised consultation and decision-making processes, on the one hand, and informal public processes of communication in which opinions are formed via the mass media, on the other' (2006:102). Finding evidence to support this discursive performance in actual mass media debates tends to result in negative findings, partly because the normative thrust of the perspective is to advocate ever more participation as the goal, a demand that cannot be satisfied nor reach an end.[7] In short,

---

[7] This criticism can be levelled at the research by Sifft et al who examine mass media discourses looking for evidence of a 'discursive integration' of references to Europe, which they define as a 'profound transformation

it is more of a normative stance than a realistic path forward. Generally, public discourse theories look for increasing participation through public communication, which is depicted, for example by Sifft et al (2007), as potentially building a Europe-wide political community from the bottom-up. However, as Moravcik (2002), who is no fan of abstract theorisation points out, increasing public participation does not necessarily provide the foundations for a European-wide political community. Also there is so far little evidence for the building blocks of a common European culture and identity that could provide this. As Shore's cultural analysis of the EU concludes (2000: 202), 'The European Commission has invented a new repertoire of 'post-nationalist' symbols, but these are pale imitations of nationalist iconography and have so far failed to win for the EU the title deeds upon which national loyalties and allegiances are claimed.'

Another thesis for an inclusive public politics is that it comes from the increasing participation of 'contentious Europeans' in the European policy decision-making process. This perspective is from social movement theory, where the bottom-up mobilisation of protest by social movements challenges the state and institutional powerholders of the multi-level polity. As Tarrow (2001: 250/1) puts it, 'Democracy, if it evolves at the European-level will grow out of the capacity of social movements, public interest groups, and other non-state actors to make alliances with combinations of national government actors, supranational institutions, and with each other in Europe's increasingly composite polity.' Compared to public discourse theories, social movement approaches make a more direct link between the accessibility and openness of the political institutional framework, its 'opportunity structure', and the field of mobilised public demands that is produced by the challenges of collective actors and social movements. It is precisely the contradictions in the structure of the multi-level polity that is likely to stimulate increasing demands for participation by actors from civil society. In this vein, Imig and Tarrow argue (2001: 16), 'Europe is a composite polity composed of semisovereign states quasi-autonomous European institutions, and virtually represented citizens. This kind of polity fosters ambiguity, perceptions of uncertainty, and shifting alliances - exactly the combination of properties .. most likely to produce contentious politics', and that (2001: 23), '(I)t is the struggle over European policy making that may, in the long run, create European citizens.' Again, however, the aim is increasing participation and the forum of mass media is crucial.

So what does the vision of an inclusive public politics consist of? In this view, mass-mediated communication is a vital field of interaction that extends politics beyond institutional arenas to wider public forums, and provides opportunities for the mobilisation of collective actors and social movements, thereby allowing alternative viewpoints to be heard. Mediated politics is an interface for deliberative exchanges between European decision-makers and their challengers, under the gaze of an informed and active public. Media debates allow citizens to see, be informed about and have access to European decision-making, which makes decision-makers accountable. From one side, it gives decision-makers the chance to respond to expressed public preferences, and from the other, it gives collective actors, including marginal ones, the chance to

---

characterised by intensified discursive interaction among EU Member States and the emergence of a *common European discourse*' (2007: 130/1). This effectively raises the bar to Habermas' ideal for the emergence of a common transnational 'community of communication', which is a normative standard that is so high that even positive findings about references to Europe are likely to fall short. Since national political discourses fail to reach such standards, it seems unfair to place the bar so high for Europeanized ones.

participate in public policy debates and voice alternative viewpoints. Through this politics becomes legitimate. The media's role is to represent all significant interests in society and facilitate public participation and input into the framing of public policy. It encourages, opens and expands the public discourse and participation that is vital to democracy. As a result, the public sphere is populated by a wide range of state and civil society actors, including those from the EU level and other European countries, as well as domestic ones. Policies, issues and discourses have Europeanized frames of reference to the degree that competencies are held at the European-level. Through all this, the seeds are sown for an active European citizenry to identify with a common European political culture, through collective action, mobilization and claim making, even if this does not require becoming a culturally thick 'European', but a secondary form of identification, Europe as an 'identity-lite'.

Is the idea of an inclusive public politics just abstract theorisation, or is there supportive evidence for such developments? Again the findings of the Europub.com collaboration are instructive. An important finding is that the only actors systematically overrepresented in Europeanized forms of claim making are government and executive actors (Koopmans 2007). These alone mobilize about one half of Europeanized political communication, whereas they make a third of claims in the purely national public sphere. By contrast, the big-time losers within Europeanized public discourses are civil society actors, who mobilize only an eighth of claims, compared to more than a third nationally. Even among civil society actors, less resourceful groups, such as consumers' associations, environmentalists, and pensioners, are even more strongly underrepresented in Europeanized public politics than the powerful interest groups representing capital and labour. Within these trends EU-level civil society actors are remarkably absent from Europeanized discourses compared to EU-level executive actors (Koopmans et al forthcoming 2010). In addition, a further finding by Kriesi et al (2007) within the Europub.com collaboration is that powerful state actors use public-oriented strategies heavily, even though they do not consider them to be crucial in gaining access and influence, whereas social movement organisations (SMOs) that consider public strategies to be very important for them, only use them if they consider it to be highly necessary. From this, social movements face a trade-off between the high costs of 'going public' and the dependency of going through insider channels. By contrast, powerful state and executive actors are dominant in the insider policy domain, but also swamp the public domain, even if they view this of secondary importance. Such findings make especially grim reading for social movements. It seems that Europeanization leads to a pattern of adaptation for social movements, where, on one side, some SMOs are largely co-opted clients dependent on national state or EU-level patronage, and on the other, if they exist at all, the SMOs that mobilise an independent voice are extremely weak. Taken together, this cumulative evidence gives no indication that Europeanization has been accompanied by greater inclusiveness for civil society actors that approximates their discursive and substantive empowerment in national politics. On the contrary, civil society actors appear relatively much less well positioned and equipped to profit from the opening up of Europeanized discursive spaces for politics. Generally, it seems that Europeanization enhances the power of the already powerful: national and EU executive elites. This is problematic from the viewpoint of democratic legitimacy, not least because it appears that the conditions are lacking for enhancing the inclusion of civil society within the Europeanization process. On the basis of this evidence, the normative theories demanding ever greater inclusiveness are perhaps best understood as claims

that Europe has a 'democratic deficit' of participation within its public communication, rather than as realist assessments for a way forward. What certainly transpires is that European public politics is certainly much closer to the elite-dominated and a long way away from the inclusive variant.

Conclusion and discussion: realistic prospects for a European public politics?

To legitimate, sustain, and build Europe as a collective idea and viable political project, the emergent system of multi-level governance needs to demonstrate that it expands rather than shrinks democracy. It has to present itself as a form of politics that compares favourably to the norms of democratic performance that ordinary people are familiar with at the national level. An emergent European society with a European polity needs some form of European public, otherwise decision-making lacks accountability and legitimacy. Here we have addressed the forms that European public politics has taken.

The emergence of a European public sphere of political communication is an important case of democratic transformation beyond the nation-state. However, it is apparent that the processes of transformation that have occurred are problematic from the viewpoint of democratic legitimacy. This is not because Europe lacks visibility: Europeans now live in an era where European-level decisions receive attention and are reported by the mass media. It is largely because the shift of policy competences to the European-level has resulted in Europeanized public debates that are less inclusive of civil society than national ones. The Europeanization of public policy debates has led to an empowerment of the already powerful executive actors. In this way the actual path of European public sphere development remains a long way from the inclusive public sphere advocated by normative participatory democratic theories of Europeanization, such as Habermas' (2005, 2006). It seems that the discursive disempowerment of civil society is dynamically embedded in the Europeanization process because it is much easier for executive and elite actors to build relationships and operate effectively at the European-level, where strong barriers to civil society development persist. The aggregate effect of shifting the political game to a level beyond the nation-state gives all the trump cards to executive actors. It allows executives to increase their influence over decision-making relative to their national parliaments and civil societies. It makes those civil society actors who are influential nationally more dependent on their domestic executive masters who conduct bargaining on their behalf at the European-level. At the same time, executive voices also dominate the Europeanized political discourse carried by the media, which means it is hard for independent NGOs and social movements to mobilize an alternative message over an issue in the public domain. While gaining access to mass media discourse has been an important way for civil society and social movements to mobilize challenges to governments nationally, so far it does not provide opportunities to the same degree to challenge European decision-making. So what are the realistic ways forward for democratizing this elite-dominated public politics?

One possible way forward that we have not considered so far is through an enhanced performance for party politics linking citizens directly to the European-level. Hix (2008) claims that Europe's perceived democratic deficit should be addressed by an institutional-fix of the EU's political architecture, largely by increasing the powers of the European Parliament and

voting for a President, leading to a more effective supranational party politics characterised by 'Euro-parties' working across national borders. Earlier, we pointed out the absence of mediated politics in the Hix thesis. For elites to introduce such a radical measure without it appearing as an authoritarian act requires public legitimacy, for which mass-mediated discourse is an important source. Without such minimum resources of public legitimacy, the new political system could not even begin to perform, plus its introduction top-down from above would most likely repeat the Constitution debacle. In addition, regardless of the difficulty of publicly legitimating this 'institutional-fix', others have pointed out that the envisaged EU-level political parties would still lack many of the governance-populace linkages performed by national ones. As Weale states, 'From the point of view of citizens, strengthening parliament is not the same as strengthening democratic input, when the line of connection between voters and legislators is a long one' (2005: 140). Also without a substantive transfer of executive power to the EU-level polity, its politics will continue to be perceived as 'second order' by the public. Perhaps the strongest argument for not reinforcing the power of the EU-level political system, however, is that there is no evidence for a popular will to do so.

Voters obviously do not rate European elections anywhere close to the importance of national ones, judging by their low levels of turnout, plus their willingness to use them to register protests against national governments over domestic issues. Turnout has dropped in every European election since they started in 1979. The June 2009 EP elections produced a record low turnout of 43.4% across the 27 countries, and was especially low in Germany (42.2%) and France (40.5%), two of Europe's largest countries who have carried the torch for advancing integration. This occurred despite the European Parliament's advertising campaign costing 18 million euros, encouraging people to vote and publicising its increased powers in key policy fields. There were also joint initiatives by the EP, Communication Commissioner Margot Wallström, national broadcasters and European Broadcasting Union in an effort to focus media coverage of the election more on the EU level. Nonetheless, the 2009 election results show few signs of emerging pan-European understandings at least from the side of the voters. The net effect of European elections is to undermine the EU's public legitimacy, by making the EU level appear far more meaningless to people than it is, when judged by the actual decision-making power it wields over them. On European election day, voters have no idea how their MEPs performed in Brussels and Strasbourg in the last Parliament, no idea about the programmes of the European People's Party (EPP) and Party of European Socialists (PES), and no idea which issues will be coming up in the European Parliament. Whatever the good intentions, in its search for legitimacy through the ballot box, the EU hoists itself by its own petard by demanding a direct input from a still strongly inattentive and disinterested general public.

Making people vote at the European-level, when for the most part they lack the knowledge to form opinions about preferences, simply demonstrates to them that European voting is meaningless, compared to the values and understandings of democratic practice to which they are accustomed at the national level. Journalists and other informed public elites, such as academics, think tanks, and public intellectuals, know the truth that considerable power is held at the supranational level and have some idea of how the EU works. However, no amount of indirect legitimacy provided by supportive media discourses, plus self-validation by policy and opinion elites, can challenge the outcomes of calls on the people to participate directly at the

ballot box. Like the case of the Constitution referendums, European elections are self-defeating in achieving their public legitimacy aims. People are asked from on high to vote at a political level where there has never been a popular demand for suffrage. This actually detracts from the normal sources of support and public legitimation for policy and elite opinion, which at least receives some attentive debate from journalists and informed public elites in the media discourse.
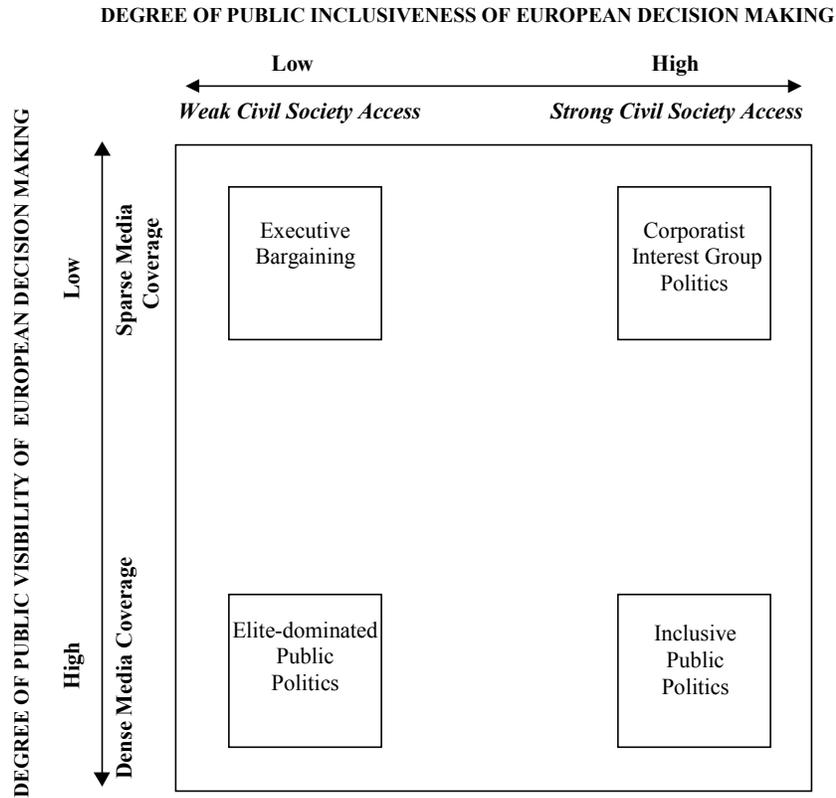
If implementing a European public from the top-down is self-defeating, then perhaps the emergent critique these efforts stimulate is a source for carrying a more legitimate European public politics forward. Allowing the national politics that people understand to do the job of providing legitimacy to the EU is much more likely to be sustainable, meaningful and effective. For this reason, mediated political party competition at the national level is perhaps the most realistic starting point for generating a democratized European public politics. This is not simply the old national party politics, but one addressing the structural changes resulting from globalisation identified by the 'winners and losers' perspective. In looking for a 'fix' from within national party politics we agree with the perspective developed by Kriesi, Grande et al., that globalisation impacts need to be studied at the national level (2008: 3): '(P)aradoxically, the political reactions to economic and cultural globalisation are bound to manifest themselves above all at the national level: given that the democratic political inclusion of citizens is still mainly a national affair, nation states still constitute the major arenas for political mobilisation.'

The basic conclusion is that the transformation of party competition within national politics in response to advancing European integration offers the best realistic chance for a legitimate European public politics. We think there is still some way to go before we can say that national Europeanized party politics has arrived, though the process has started. Although party consensus for Europe remains strong (Statham and Koopmans 2009), and Europeanized debates are dominated by the executive, we also think that a more mature critique of Europe is emerging through mediated party competition. As the 'credit crunch' and financial crisis starting in Autumn 2008 has already demonstrated, the politics for managing the consequences of globalisation (and Europeanization) are likely to come increasingly to the fore. Crises are the rare moments when even general publics start to pay attention.[8] Perhaps the increasingly self-evident impacts of economic globalisation will start to shape perceptions of the European Union's role in that story and as a possible way of managing its consequences. This makes an effective party competition and media performance vital for translating interpretations of the consequences of globalisation into voting choices for the people who are living with them. We think that in the future choices about different paths to Europeanization (including negative options) will be mobilised increasingly by parties in the media discourse. Also, civil society actors are best able to raise independent and critical voices to which parties can respond at the national level. This view locates Europe within national mediated politics, which is not a bad thing given that political will remains expressed through national governments. However, it is different from the intergovernmentalist approach of Moravcik (2002), because it recognizes the power of European-level decision-making and the importance of mediated politics. In our view of Europe, election results in neighbouring European countries – especially the larger ones – hold greater consequences for shaping the direction of EU policies than those of the European Parliament. This suggests that the supranational European institutions holding power would be

---

[8] Almond's (1960) study on attentive publics in relation to American foreign policy notes this effect of crises.

better off strengthening their communicative links to citizens and seeking public legitimacy through national parliaments and media, than another round of top-down efforts to engage a remote and inattentive citizenry. It also offers a way for legitimating the EU on the basis of performance on policies that concern people about globalisation – climate change, immigration, market regulation – instead of focussing public attention on institutional procedural changes that are little wanted or understood, and seem remote from everyday life. European politics will be 'real' when it is built over cleavages that people think matter and communicated to them in a language they understand. This public conversation is beginning, initiated through increasing national political party competition over Europe and carried by national media.

Figure 1: A two-dimensional conceptual space for types of European public politics

DEGREE OF PUBLIC INCLUSIVENESS OF EUROPEAN DECISION MAKING

	Low	**High**
	Weak Civil Society Access	*Strong Civil Society Access*

DEGREE OF PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF EUROPEAN DECISION MAKING

Low — **Sparse Media Coverage**

Executive Bargaining

Corporatist Interest Group Politics

High — **Dense Media Coverage**

Elite-dominated Public Politics

Inclusive Public Politics

References

Almond, Gabriel A. 1960. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Praeger.

Aspinwall, Mark and Justin Greenwood. 1998. "Conceptualising Collective Action in the European Union: An Introduction," pp. 1–30 in Justin Greenwood and Mark Aspinwall (Eds.), *Collective Action in the European Union*. London: Routledge.

Barber, Benjamin R. 1984. *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bennett, W. Lance and Robert M. Entman. 2001. "Mediated Politics: An Introduction," pp. 1–29 in W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman (Eds.), *Mediated Politics. Communication in the Future of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Beus, Jos. Forthcoming 2010. "The European Union and the Public Sphere: Conceptual Issues, Political Tensions, Moral Concerns, and Empirical Questions," in Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greenwood, Justin and Mark Aspinwall (Eds.). 1998. *Collective Action in the European Union*. London: Routledge.

Featherstone, Kevin and Claudio M. Radaelli (Eds.). 2003. *The Politics of Europeanization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferree, Myra Marx, William A. Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002a. "Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies." *Theory and Society* 31: 289–324.

Ferree, Myra Marx, William A. Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002b. *Shaping Abortion Discourse. Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fligstein, Neil. 2008. *Euro-Clash. The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gabel, Matthew J. 1998. *Interests and Integration. Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gutmann, Amy and Dennis Thompson. 1996. *Democracy and Disagreement.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2005. "Why Europe Needs a Constitution," pp. 19–34 in Erik O. Eriksen, John E. Fossum, and Agustín José Menéndez (Eds.), *Developing a Constitution for Europe*. London: Routledge.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2006. *Time of Transitions*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hallin, Daniel C. and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hix, Simon. 2008. *What's Wrong with the EU and How to Fix It.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hirst, Paul. 1994. *Associative Democracy: News Forms of Economic and Social Government.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2008. "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Consensus." *British Journal of Political Science*, 39:1-23.

Imig, Doug and Sidney Tarrow (Eds.). 2001. *Contentious Europeans*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Koopmans, Ruud. 2007. "Who Inhabits the European Public Sphere? Winners and Losers and Opponents in Europeanised Political Debates." *European Journal of Political Research* 46: 183–210.

Koopmans, Ruud, Paul Statham, Marco Giugni, and Florence Passy. 2005. *Contested Citizenship. Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Koopmans, Ruud and Paul Statham. Forthcoming 2010. (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Koopmans, Ruud, Jessica Erbe and Martin F. Meyer. Forthcoming 2010. "The Europeanization of Public Spheres: Comparisons across Issues, Time, and Countries", in Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Anke Tresch, and Margit Jochum. 2007. "Going Public in the European Union. Action Repertoires of Western European Collective Political Actors." *Comparative Political Studies* 40: 48–73.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, and Timotheos Frey. 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindberg, Leon and Stuart Scheingold. 1970. *Europe's Would-Be Polity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mair, Peter. 1997. *Party System Change. Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Manin, Bernard. 1997. *The Principles of Representative Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meyer, Christoph O. 2009. "Does the European Union Become Mediatized? The Case of the European Commission." *Journal of European Public Policy* 16: 1047–1064.

Moravcsik, Andrew. 2002. "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40: 603–644.

Risse, Thomas. 2003. *An Emerging European Public Sphere? Theoretical Clarifications and Empirical Indicators*. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the European Union Studies Association (EUSA), Nashville, TN, March 27–30.

Saurugger, Sabine. 2008. "Interest Groups and Democracy in the European Union." *West European Politics* 31: 1274–1291.

Schlesinger, Philip R. 1999. "Changing Spaces of Political Communication: The Case of the European Union." *Political Communication* 16: 263–279.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1942. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Shore, Cris. 2000. *Building Europe*. London: Routledge.

Sifft, Steffanie, Michael Brüggemann, Katharina Kleinen-von Königslöw, Bernhard Peters, and Andreas Wimmel. 2007. "Segmented Europeanization: Exploring the Legitimacy of the European Union from a Public Discourse Perspective." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45: 127–155.

Statham, Paul. 2008. "Making Europe News: How Journalists View Their Role and Media Performance." *Journalism. Theory and Praxis* 9: 395–419.

Statham, Paul and Ruud Koopmans. 2009. "Political party contestation over Europe in the mass media: who criticizes Europe, how, and why?" *European Political Science Review* 1(3): 435-463, 2009.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2001. "Contentious Politics in a Composite Polity," pp. 233–252 in Doug Imig and Sidney Tarrow (Eds.), *Contentious Europeans. Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Trenz, Hans-Jörg. 2004. "Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers." *European Journal of Communication* 19: 291–319.

Trenz, Hans-Jörg and Klaus Eder, "The Democratizing Dynamics of a European Public Sphere. Towards a Theory of Democratic Functionalism", *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(1):5-25.

Weale, Albert. 2005. *Democratic Citizenship and the European Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.