

The Importance of Actor Cleavages in Negotiating the European Constitution

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore government preferences and cleavages in the bargaining process on the European Constitution, across the range of twenty-five European Union (EU) member states. The study focuses on preferences concerning socio-economic policy-making and explores whether divisions can be discerned between preferences held by actors according to locations on the left-right policy scale, actors in older as compared to newer EU states, net EU budget positions, domestic rates of support for European integration, and smaller as compared to larger states. The analysis also controls for possible external effects, such as recent domestic macroeconomic developments. Negotiations on the European Constitution are found to notably be determined by cleavages according to length of EU membership and the size of EU states, but less by general transnational left-right divisions.

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I. Introduction

The Convention on the Future of Europe, conducted between February 28, 2002 and July 10, 2003, aimed to integrate a broad range of societal actors in Europe into discussions on the future shape of the European Union (EU). Clearly, discontent in public opinion about the path and scope of European integration alerted officials to the fact that societal actors and representatives of various groups had to be accounted for in discussions on Europe's future. The Jean Monnet method, a “top-down” approach in which European integration would be furthered without the approval of national parliaments or citizens, appeared to be no longer feasible. The Convention aimed to include a wide range of societal actors into discussions on Europe’s future. During the Convention process, a total of 6474 contributions were submitted from 197 distinct speakers located in 28 different countries (Benoit et al. 2005: 292). After intensive debates among a wide range of actors on the domestic and European levels, the Convention presented a draft text for the Constitutional Treaty. The subsequent Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) revised some aspects of the text but approved a majority of its elements. In referendums at the end of May and at the beginning of June 2005, however, citizens in France and in the Netherlands rejected the project. This brought into sharp relief the gap between governmental preferences on EU integration and citizens' priorities regarding the endeavor.

This paper aims to explore which division lines can be seen among actors in discussions and negotiations on the new EU Constitution, specifically regarding socio-economic policy making. Were governments in the EU's new member states, notably those located in Central and Eastern Europe, advocating different positions than did their fellow EU

states in the Western parts of the EU? The 2005 referendum outcomes indicate that dissatisfaction with the Constitution project might be particularly pronounced in the founding states of the EU (or at the time, the European Community, EC). Can differences be discerned between the EU's original member states and those that joined in the course of later enlargements? Did domestic macroeconomic conditions, such as unemployment rates, influence the contents of aspects governments aimed to have incorporated into the final treaty text? Could, in the bargaining process, divisions predominantly have occurred between the EU's larger and smaller states or between states with higher as compared to lower levels of domestic support for European integration? Another possibility is that the distribution of preferences in the EU is not homogeneous within member states, but rather follows divisions across the EU, such as those based on the left-right policy scale. If the left-right division is one of the major cleavages -- possibly alongside an integration-independence policy dimension -- structuring discussions on European integration (e.g. Hix 1998, 1999), then it is likely that affiliation with political parties, across the range of the EU states, may have shaped bargaining on Europe's Constitution.

In order to discern whether there were division lines in the negotiation process either in a comparison between newer and older EU states, on the basis of the size or budget status of EU member states, or in a comparison between actors located at different positions on the left-right policy scale across the entire range of the EU, this paper will explore preference divisions by resorting to the analysis of two data sets: (a) information on preferences held by a range of governmental and partisan actors regarding elements of the European Constitution as collected in the framework of the Domestic Structures and European Integration (DOSEI) research project; (b) data on government positioning on a left-right continuum. We describe some relevant data and test differences mirroring these potential cleavage lines by employing

quantitative techniques: binary logistic regression for an analysis of binary response variables and ordered probit regression for the analysis of categorical actor responses with more than two (and ordered) answer categories.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section provides an overview of recent work on possible division lines among actors regarding the process of European integration. Section III of the paper provides a short description of techniques we use to analyze preference divisions regarding the European Constitution. Section IV presents the results of our empirical analyses. The final section of the paper (V) provides an evaluation of our findings and illustrates their potential merits regarding discussions on cleavage lines across Europe.

II. Actor Cleavages and European Integration

As mentioned above, the 2005 referendum outcomes in France and the Netherlands suggest that dissatisfaction with the current path of EU integration and the adoption of the new construct of the European Constitution may have been particularly widespread in the EU's founding states. French voters declined ratification of the Constitution on May 29, 2005 by a margin of 54.7 against 45.3 percent. In the Netherlands, in a referendum on June 1, 2005, 61.6 percent of the electorate voted against ratification with only 38.4 percent in favor of it. Could this suggest that dissatisfaction with the current path of EU integration is most pronounced in the EU's older member states? Hug (2002: 85) finds that EU states that joined in the latest round of enlargement (at the time being those that entered in 1995) and members of the first round of enlargement (i.e. members as of 1973) may be among those least supportive of EU integration. Hence, could there be differences in preferences on various aspects of the Constitution in a comparison between the EU's member states that joined in May 2004 and

those that have been members for several decades? During the bargaining process on the Constitution, were such differences mirrored in the priorities of these states' delegates?

Relative preference homogeneity among EU member states of the same entry groups (i.e. those that joined in the same year) might be explained, for example, by a gradual process of socialization of these states into patterns of EU policy-making, "learning" the culture of negotiation within the EU, and the gradual development of similar expectations regarding EU integration. In a sense, this logic would follow elements of the constructivist research agenda (e.g. see Checkel and Moravcsik 2001), and accordingly, newer EU states could be expected to advocate similar interests in negotiations about future provisions for the EU.

Cleavages could also occur, however, on the basis of other policy dimensions. Recent literature, utilizing different methodological techniques, aims to assess the dimensionality of the "European political space" For example, Robert Thomson et al. (2004), analyzing a large-scale data collection on actor preferences in European decision-making between 1999 and 2002, found that European political space is multi-dimensional. According to this study, no clear cleavage lines can be discerned in EU decision-making, except for a moderate North-South division. This claim is reiterated by Thomson and Stokman (2006) in their contribution to the book *The European Union Decides*. Analyzing the same data set, the authors claim that if any structure exists in positions governments take regarding various issues of European integration, it is quite weak. The authors attribute this weak association to the sectoral nature of EU decision-making, whereby different interests are important depending on the specific topics being negotiated. Hence, if a specific division line exists in EU policy-making, it mostly appears to be a "North-South" cleavage. Similarly, in research focusing on decision-making in the Council of the EU, Elgstrøm et al. (2001) find little evidence for cleavages in processes of coalition-formation and EU decision-making, apart from a North-South division. Based on an

analysis of other data and using different methodological approaches, this finding is confirmed by the analysis of Zimmer et al. (2005).

Another kind of investigation into the dimensionality of the aforementioned political space is research based on party manifestos. For example, on the basis of content analysis of manifestos issued by European Parliament (EP) political groups, Paul Pennings (2002) finds that there are significant differences regarding policy preferences both within and between European party groups, generating meaningful political choices for voters. Also, on the basis of techniques used by the Party Manifestos Group Project, notably an analysis of positions of the Socialist, Christian Democrat, and Liberal party leaders in the EP between 1976 and 1994, Simon Hix (1999) finds the prevalence of two major dimensions in EU politics: an integration-independence and a left-right dimension. This result reinforces claims made by Hix (1998) that the EU may be profitably analyzed on the basis of tools used in comparative politics, rendering both the left-right dimension and the integration-independence dimension salient to the study of EU politics. A model developed earlier by Simon Hix and Christopher Lord (1997) posits that in EU politics, a European integration and a left-right dimension exist which are largely independent of each other. The findings regarding a possible two-dimensional setup of EU policy-making are corroborated in Gabel and Hix (2002). By comparison, a recent in-depth study of voting within the EP by Simon Hix, Abdul Noury and Gérard Roland (2006), finds that in essence, within the EP, only the left-right policy dimension matters.

According to Arend Lijphart (1999), the left-right policy scale is a cleavage existing on the domestic level in a wide range of advanced industrialized countries. Based on expert interviews regarding positions of domestic political parties, Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2001) identify a left-right dimension in EU politics ranging from social democracy to market liberalism and, in addition to this, a European integration dimension spanning the range from

nationalism to supranationalism. According to these authors, however, some aspects of European integration are likely to be absorbed into the left-right dimension. Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks and Carole Wilson (2002) find that both a left-right and a libertarian-authoritarian dimension can be discerned in positions of national political parties regarding the EU, but that the latter is more prevalent. According to their analysis, in addition to the left-right dimension, a New Politics dimension structures EU politics, ranging from Green, Alternative and Libertarian (GAL) to Traditional, Authoritarian and Nationalist (TAN). Finally, according to Tsebelis and Garrett (2000), politics of European integration may largely be subsumed into the left-right policy dimension. By comparison, in an analysis of voting behavior within the Council of the EU exclusively, Mattila (2004) does not find left-right positioning to significantly affect voting outcomes.

In addition to this, Hooghe et al. (2002), as well as Marks et al. (2007), find that the relation between party support for European integration and left-right positioning is based on an “inverted U-curve”: more extreme parties on both the left and right ends of the policy scale tend to be least supportive of European integration. Similarly, Aspinwall (2002), in an analysis of party preferences for European integration, finds centrist positions correlating with support for integration, but extreme parties on the policy scale advocating less support.

Ken Benoit et al. (2005) assess preferences of actors on four relevant policy dimensions. Correlations between the preferences of domestic political parties as assessed by expert surveys and positions derived on the basis of semi-automated text analysis (from contributions by national representatives of political parties to the European Convention) demonstrate the potential of the “wordscoring” technique. In addition to three EU dimensions used in earlier work by Laver and Benoit -- “accountability,” “authority,” and “security” -- a left-right dimension is added to the analysis in this article. A fairly close correspondence is

found between the earlier expert assessments and the wordscoreing technique applied to Convention documents, with correlations being particularly high, however, regarding the policy dimensions “accountability,” “authority,” and “security.”

Hence, various empirical investigations into possible cleavages in EU integration demonstrate that different policy dimensions may be salient in EU politics. However, in most work, the left-right policy dimension is found to constitute a major division line across the entire EU. This cleavage can be expected to be particularly prominent in policy areas in which aspects of socio-economic policy-making are directly at stake and may hence be assumed to structure competition of political actors within the European political space. In addition, the North-South division, an integration-independence dimension, or cleavages between older and newer EU states might be relevant.

However, economic and political challenges on EU states’ domestic levels may have influenced the preferences actors voiced during the Convention. In order to control for such possible external influences on actor preferences, we will account for recent macroeconomic developments within the EU by including domestic rates of unemployment.¹

Finally, it is possible that in the bargaining process on the European Constitution, interests of larger member states may have partially contradicted those of smaller ones. Such cleavages have been visible, for example, in negotiations regarding the total number of Commissioners for the EU, where several smaller states appear to have advocated maintenance of their national Commissioner seat. A similar division materialized in discussions on voting weights to be used in the Council of the EU.

¹ It is conceivable, for example, that the domestic rate of unemployment influences an actor's preferences regarding incorporation of a high level -- or even of full -- employment as a goal into the European Constitution (DOSEI question 5b)

III. Data on Actor Preferences and Analytical Techniques

The main data source for the subsequent analysis is information on preferences of EU member state governments during the negotiation process on the European Constitution. These data are derived from the DOSEI data set.² More specifically, the basis for the subsequent analysis is the set of DOSEI questions related to socio-economic policy-making. Table 1 provides an overview of DOSEI questions in these domains and respective answer categories.

[Table 1 about here]

The DOSEI project collected information on the “official government position” of EU states (including “accession countries” at the time) as well as preferences of various domestic actors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office, or, for some countries, parliament or major economic interest organizations. In the following analysis, information on preferences of different domestic actors will be partially used in order to provide more detailed information on specific issues negotiated in the Convention process. However, the quantitative analysis will resort to official government positions only. Although this results in small sample sizes, assessment for some of the independent variables – e.g. population size or government left-right positioning – are all on the aggregate level and generate comparable and consistent results for the analysis across twenty-five EU states.

² For further information on these data, e.g. see König (2005), Hug and Schulz (2005) or König, Finke and Daimer (2005).

As far as the statistical analysis is concerned, we will use multivariate techniques, but account for the fact that the dependent variable is categorical in nature.

Several variables in the DOSEI data set contain information on a pro-integration versus anti-integration dimension in the EU. This is true, for example, of questions asking whether an actor would like to have policy responsibilities in specific areas shifted to the EU level (notably DOSEI question 17), and whether an actor would prefer to have the Council of the EU act on the basis of qualified majority voting (QMV) instead of unanimity (question 18) in given policy areas. Apart from the effect of independent variables such as “length of EU membership” or “population size,” it is interesting to see whether government positions on the left-right policy dimension explain variance on variables mirroring elements of the pro-integration versus anti-integration scale. We also explore the effect of government Galtan position as an independent variable. Finally, we include variables measuring actors’ positions on the left-right scale in terms of distance from the average, indicating how extreme actors are on these scales.

The generic model we will apply in order to test for possible systematic effects on government preferences in the negotiation process on the European Constitution has the following basic form:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ government left-right position} + \beta_2 \text{ extremity on left-right scale} + \beta_3 \text{ government Galtan position} + \beta_4 \text{ extremity on Galtan scale} + \beta_5 \text{ length EU membership} + \beta_6 \text{ population size} + \beta_7 \text{ net budget position} + \beta_8 \text{ support for European integration} + \beta_9 \text{ unemployment} + \varepsilon$$

where “government left-right position”, in our empirical analysis, is operationalized on the basis of two alternative measurements. The first one uses information given in Benoit and Laver (2006) and the second one utilizes data from the 2002 Chapel Hill Party Data Set.³

Resorting to expert surveys, Benoit and Laver (2006) provide data on various dimensions, including the left-right location of political parties for forty-seven countries, on a scale ranging from 0 to 20. The higher the value on this scale, the more “rightist” is the party.⁴ The Chapel Hill data set (2002) offers information, for example, on parties’ “broad ideological stance” on the left-right scale as well as their Galtan position.⁵ In order to obtain data regarding the left-right location of EU member state governments (including their Galtan positions), we weight the number of cabinet posts held by each domestic political party (for the time the DOSEI interviews were conducted) by the Benoit-Laver and Chapel Hill 2002 left-right scores, respectively, and calculate appropriate values for the twenty-five EU member states as of 2004.

³ The Benoit-Laver data set, unfortunately, lacks information for France and Italy. By comparison, the Chapel Hill data has no information on Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg and Malta. We have filled in the missing entries in these two data sets by extrapolations from the respective alternative data source (Benoit-Laver for the Chapel Hill data set and *vice versa*), while accounting for the different scales used in these surveys.

⁴ All data can be downloaded from <http://www.politics.tcd.ie/ppmd/>.

⁵ Galtan estimates are only available in the Chapel Hill data set for twenty-one of the twenty-five EU states included into our analysis. This reduces our sample size (main questions) to twenty-one.

“Length of EU membership” is measured as the number of years in which a member state has belonged to the EU (or European Community, EC, before the EU started)⁶ and as an alternative to this, as a categorical variable with the following coding founding members (1); members as of 1973 (2); members as of 1981 or 1986 (3), members as of 1995 (4) and members as of 2004 (5). “Population size” measures the size of an EU member state in terms of population in 2003 (in million). “Net budget position” is based on calculations by the European Commission (European Commission 2004) on a member state’s budget position in the EU, here expressed as a percentage of its Gross National Income (GNI). Domestic support for European integration is measured on the basis of Eurobarometer public opinion data for 2003.⁷ Data for the macroeconomic control variable unemployment are from the year 2003 (European Central Bank 2004).

Since our dependent variables derived from the DOSEI data set usually either have a limited number of answer categories or are just binary choices (where experts usually had the option to answer with either “yes” or “no”), we employ generalized linear models for which

⁶ We thank Frank Schimmelfenning for suggesting to actually measure this variable on the interval scale, as the number of years of EU membership may influence the degree to which an EU member state is “socialized” into the EU. The score for the members as of 2004 is negative (-1). For some parts of the analysis, notably where we expect that length of membership may not necessarily have a linearly increasing or decreasing effect on government preferences in specific subject areas, we nonetheless cluster states into EU entry groups and test this explanatory variable as categorical.

⁷ We take the percentage of EU citizens that state they consider the EU to be a “good thing” minus the percentage stating it was a “bad thing”. We average responses given on the basis of two surveys conducted in the year 2003: Eurobarometer 59 and 60.

the response variables have a discrete rather than a continuous distribution. In the case of questions 5a, 5c, 18, 20, and 21 of the DOSEI data (see table 1), the possible responses were binary.⁸ Hence, multiple logistic regression models will be utilized for each case in which there either is a binary response, allowing for assessment of how the “proportion of successes” (response “1” instead of “0”) depends on multiple possible predictors, or in which there is a limited number of possible answer categories. The distribution of responses on such questions does not follow the pattern of the normal distribution. Instead, the analysis has to depart from the assumption of a binomial distribution. For the analysis of DOSEI questions 5b and 17, containing four ordered answer categories, we will use ordered probit.

IV. Actor Cleavages and Preferences Regarding the European Constitution

In order to discover possible cleavage lines among actors, we will subsequently apply the models presented above to the DOSEI questions related to socio-economic policy-making (see table 1). It has to be kept in mind, however, that the scope and shape of respective passages of the Constitutional Treaty were largely framed by pre-existing treaty texts (including the Treaty of Nice).

Analysis of DOSEI question 5a generates the following results: In the negotiations on the European Constitution, all governmental actors advocated inclusion of the overall goal of a “market economy” into the new Constitution. This may be a consequence of the fact that essentially, all earlier Treaty provisions -- from the Rome Treaty to the Treaty of Nice -- were supportive of neo-liberal visions of European (economic) integration. The sign for left-right

⁸ Question 5a had three possible answer categories, but as only values 2 and 3 were chosen as responses in practice, the analysis will be based on binary logistic regression instead.

positioning in the statistical analysis indicates that the more to the right governments were located on the left-right scale, the less they were inclined to support the option of a “social market economy.” However, applying the model as outlined above, or breaking it into smaller segments, indicates that none of the explanatory variables has a significant effect on actor choices.⁹ As regards question 5b, whether and what kind of reference to employment should be inserted as an objective into the European Constitution, descriptive statistics reveal that “no reference” was chosen as an official position by only one government (Hungary). Twelve governments chose the option of a “high level” of employment, seven “full” employment, and five “full with qualified jobs.” However, in an attempt to predict those patterns, ordered probit does not indicate significant influences of our independent variables. Nor does Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) regression of actor responses on “length of EU membership,” clustering states by EU entry dates, show significant results. Nonetheless, a means plot, as given in figure 1, showing answer categories on the y-axis in a simplified interval-scale representation of actor responses,¹⁰ visually illustrates that references to “full” employment (or even “full with qualified jobs”) were favored most by the 1981/86 entry group (Greece, Portugal and Spain),

⁹ An exception to this general finding is the variable “distance from average government left-right position”, as assessed on the basis of the Benoit-Laver data set: in a combination of this variable with governments’ general left-right positioning (again based on data Benoit-Laver), this variable has a negative, but barely significant ($p = 0.094$) effect on the probability that a government supported a “social market economy” in the negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty. This indicates that actors located at the extreme ends of this policy scale indeed tended to support inclusion of the term “social market economy” into the treaty text (i.e. not just those located at the left of the traditional left-right policy scale).

¹⁰ Responses are ordinal in reality.

and supported least by the states that joined in 1973 (Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom).

[Figure 1 about here]

Analysis of question 5c, whether “competitiveness” should be inserted as an economic objective into the Constitution, reveals that only two governments were opposed to this suggestion: Hungary and Slovenia. This indicates that a division between “older” and “newer” EU states might exist on this issue. However, this cleavage is not confirmed by our statistical analysis (based on the sample of twenty-five EU states).

Analysis of the aggregation of the five socio-economic sub-questions to question 17 (see table 1) generates some interesting insights. This question asked whether governments prefer to assign less powers to the EU in a given policy field, to leave things as they are (i.e. as set out in the Nice Treaty), or to assign more powers to the EU. Descriptive statistics reveal that concerning most of these issues (69.6 percent), governments preferred to stay with the existing distribution of powers between national governments and the EU. The attribution of fewer powers to the EU is preferred in only 2.4 percent of all cases; whereas a shift of more powers to the EU is favored in 28 percent of the total cases.

A more detailed exploration of information contained in the DOSEI expert data set shows that the governments of the Czech Republic, Germany and Sweden preferred assignment of fewer powers to the EU within the domain of agriculture. By comparison, the governments of Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Malta and Slovakia preferred assignment of more powers to the EU in this area. As regards Structural and Cohesion policies during the negotiations on the European Constitution, no government officially advocated the attribution of fewer powers to the EU. It is interesting to note, however, that both the Swedish Prime

Minister's Office and Downing Street preferred the attribution of fewer powers to the EU in this domain. However, the governments of Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Slovakia supported the contrary.

As regards economic policy, in which the EU currently holds rather few policy competencies, no government preferred the attribution of fewer powers to the EU. The governments of Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovakia, and Slovenia preferred more integration, i.e. the attribution of more powers to the EU. No government officially favored the attribution of fewer powers to the EU in the domain of employment policy. Within the DOSEI data collection, the German Federal States (*Bundesländer*) were the only actors found to have officially advocated fewer powers for the EU regarding employment. The governments of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, and Sweden, however, preferred the allocation of more powers to the EU. Finally, regarding social policy, in which the EU again holds comparatively few policy competencies, no government officially advocated attribution of fewer powers to the EU, but the governments of Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Sweden supported more integration.

In order to statistically explore preferences as regards assigning additional powers to the EU, we add the data entries for each member state for the different sub-categories of question 17 (five in total) and, since the three answer categories are ordered -- ranging from a preference for attributing less to more powers to the EU -- conduct ordered probit analysis. Comparing EU states' inclination to either opt for the assignment of fewer powers (response 1) or more powers (response 3)¹¹ to the EU, we first estimate the full model as specified above

¹¹ The coefficient in ordered probit only takes the extreme values of the ordinal dependent variable into account.

(model 1). However, as some of the independent variables are correlated with each other, we also present results of more parsimonious models. Bivariate correlation analysis indicates that the two alternative specifications of government left-right positioning are highly correlated with each other ($r=0.9082$), as are absolute Galtan positions with either of the two alternative general left-right measurements ($r=0.7830$ with the assessment based on Benoit-Laver data and $r=0.6892$ with the one based on the Chapel Hill survey, respectively). Apart from this, there are only fairly large bivariate correlations between the two alternative specifications of “extremity” on the general left-right policy scale ($r = 0.4511$), between length of EU membership and population size ($r = 0.5285$) and finally, between net budget status and length of EU membership ($r = -0.451$).¹²

[Table 2 about here]

Accordingly, in our statistical exploration of responses to question 17, we estimate a second model (model 2) in which we drop the independent variables “government left-right position” and “distance to average left-right position” as based on the Benoit-Laver data set. In addition, we give results (see model 3) for an estimation keeping only those variables that generated significant results in model 2 (see table 2). Models 1 and 2 indicate that general government left-right position does not really influence response choices on this issue, although there is some modest evidence (model 2) that governments located further to the right – according to their general ideological orientation on this scale -- tend to be more supportive of attributing more powers to the level of the EU. By comparison, a government’s Galtan position has a significant, negative effect on its propensity to opt for the assignment of additional powers to the EU (although effect and significance of this variable are smaller when

¹² A correlation matrix is available in the appendix to this paper.

estimated by model 3). These results indicate that, holding the influence of other variables constant, governments located more to the left on the Galtan scale -- i.e. those supported by green, alternative and liberal parties as compared to traditional, authoritarian and nationalist ones -- were more in favor of allocating additional powers to the EU than were those located at the “Tan”-end of this policy scale.

Length of membership, as models 1 and 3 demonstrate, has a positive, significant effect on the likelihood that a government supports attributing more powers to the EU. The analysis (all models) also clearly demonstrates, holding the potential influence of all other independent variables constant, that larger states were more concerned with the maintenance of policy competencies on the national level of EU states and favored less assignment of additional powers to the EU than smaller states did. Results for the control variable “unemployment”, finally, indicate that countries faced with higher unemployment in 2003 were more in favor of attributing additional powers to the level of the EU (see results of models 1 and 3).

Question 18 of the DOSEI data set aimed to see which actors preferred either unanimous decision-making or the application of QMV in specific policy areas. A descriptive exploration of the data indicates that no actor for which preferences were assessed -- whether a government delegation, foreign minister's office, or leading domestic political actor -- preferred application of the unanimity rule for agricultural policy. Hence, concerning decision rules to be incorporated into the new European Constitution, QMV was preferred unanimously for decisions concerning agriculture. Regarding Structural and Cohesion policies, the picture is somewhat more mixed: The governments of the Netherlands and the UK, as well as some important domestic actors within these states (e.g. the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

and Her Majesty's Treasury, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch Parliament), advocated application of the unanimity rule.¹³

Regarding the application of the decision rule for issues concerning the EU's internal market, with just a few exceptions -- the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Estonian Ministry of Finance -- all actors for which data were available favored the QMV rule. Similarly, as regards monetary policy for the Euro states (question 18a.6) and economic policy (question 18a.7), most actors preferred application of the QMV rule. In Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and Portugal, all relevant actors, including the government, preferred non-application of the QMV rule (i.e. maintenance of unanimity) for both areas. In Hungary, all domestic actors that the DOSEI data set provides information on preferred QMV for monetary policy, but unanimity to be applied in the domain of economic policy-making.¹⁴

As regards the areas of employment policy and social policy (questions 18a.8 and 18a.9, respectively), opposition to the application of the QMV rule, across the range of domestic actors, materialized in Denmark and Estonia. With respect to social policy exclusively, all domestic actors in Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and finally, Slovakia were opposed to the application of QMV. Actors in other EU states opposing QMV in the domain of social policy include the Finnish Parliament, the German *Bundesländer*, Slovenia's Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industrialists.

Application of the (full) model as specified above to response choices for question 18, based on ordered probit analysis, seems to reveal that government general left-right positioning

¹³ By comparison, Downing Street preferred QMV regarding Structural and Cohesion policy.

¹⁴ In the case of Hungary, data were collected for the Hungarian government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Minister for EU Coordination, Ministry of Justice, and Parliament's 'EU Big Committee'.

and budget status as a percentage of GNI have a (marginally) significant, negative effect on the propensity of governments to opt for QMV instead of unanimity (implying that governments located to the left on the general left-right scale, and net payers into the EU budget, are most inclined to support unanimity as a decision rule in areas of socio-economic policy-making). However, dropping the correlated independent variables from the estimation shows that these variables no longer have a significant effect on response choices in this area.

A last variable relevant to socio-economic policy-making in the DOSEI data set is actor responses to two questions concerning the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP): question 20 asks whether the SGP should be made more flexible¹⁵ and question 21 inquires whether the debt to GDP ratio should be incorporated as a criterion into the SGP. Results of the application of logit regressions for responses to these questions are shown in tables 3a and 3b. Regarding question 20, only the explanatory variable “length of EU membership” has a significant effect across the full and the more parsimonious estimation model, with older EU states being less inclined to opt for answer category 2 (“yes”, i.e. the response that the SGP should be made more flexible). By comparison, neither government left-right position, size, public opinion nor budget position has a significant systematic effect on actor responses.¹⁶

[Tables 3a and 3b about here]

Regarding question 21, whether the debt to GDP ratio should be incorporated into the SGP, the variable “length of EU membership” again generates some significant results: Older

¹⁵ Note that preferences on these issues were assessed clearly before the rules of the SGP were significantly loosened in 2005.

¹⁶ In addition, the significance of the full model as applied to this question is quite low.

EU members were more inclined than newer ones to incorporate the debt to GDP ratio as an SGP criterion into the European Constitution.¹⁷ In the case of this DOSEI question, the analysis also reveals that the explanatory variable “size” has a significant effect: Larger states were more likely to have a government advocating inclusion of the debt/GDP ratio into the SGP in negotiations on the European Constitution. This result again shows the potential relevance of a cleavage between larger and smaller states in European integration.

V. Conclusions

In negotiations on the European Constitution, it might be expected that usual conflict dimensions in EU politics determined the bargaining process, notably in domains related to socio-economic policy-making. Using information on government preferences, this paper aims to reveal cleavages that materialized in the negotiation process on the European Constitution. Some studies on the dimensionality of the EU political space demonstrate that EU political contestation is based on a two-dimensional setup: a left-right and an anti-/pro-integration dimension (e.g. Hix 1999). Recent work, however, finds that political contestation, at least when analyzing voting behavior in the EP, is almost exclusively based on a uni-dimensional (left-right) policy scale (e.g. Hix et al. 2006).

By comparison, work by Hooghe and Marks (2001) and Hooghe Marks and Wilson (2002) finds that in addition to a general ideological left-right policy scale, another dimension is crucial in EU political contestation: the Galtan dimension. This dimension is related to the general left-right scale, but focuses on its non-economic elements.

¹⁷ Note that as compared to question 20, coding of the answer categories in DOSEI was reversed in question 21, with 1 indicating “yes” and 2 “no”.

In addition to this, based on empirical explorations, several authors find a “North-South” cleavage to structure contestation in the EU (e.g. Elgstrøm et al. 2001, Thomson et al. 2004, Zimmer et al. 2005). By comparison, constructivist scholars emphasize effects of socialization and learning; accordingly, they expect a gradual convergence of actor priorities as regards EU integration, including preferences of governments in EU bargaining processes.

Work on the dimensionality of the EU political space explicitly or implicitly formulates expectations as regards actor cleavages in European integration. Our paper aims to test whether such cleavages can be discerned by an analysis of government positions on the preferred contents of the European Constitution.

Our empirical exploration shows that the general economic left-right policy dimension does not seem to be a major crosscutting line regarding preferences of EU governments for issues encompassed by the European Constitution. Whereas the effect of party positioning often reveals expected signs, results of the analyses conducted here do not indicate significant effects. This implies that whereas the left-right policy dimension might be a major cleavage significantly explaining, for example, vote choice within the EP, it does not yet seem to be a major dimension on which preferences of European governments regarding EU politics are aligned. By comparison, our study finds that governments’ positions on the Galtan dimension partially explain government preferences (notably as regards the question whether fewer or more powers should be assigned to the EU).

Divisions among member states according to the length of EU membership materialize regarding aspects such as preferences for the attribution of powers to the EU and preferred provisions for the SGP (notably inclusion of the debt to GDP ratio). Accordingly, it seems that theories hypothesizing that EU states gradually learn and socialize into structures of EU

decision-making might partially explain some major cleavage lines in negotiations on the European Constitution.

Although one might expect that government preferences could be systematically determined by the degree to which domestic public opinion is in favor of EU integration, our analysis reveals that the link between government preferences (here in areas of socio-economic policy making as incorporated in the EU Constitution) and domestic pressures stemming from public opinion is not straightforward. In other words, public support for European integration did not constitute a major cleavage line among governments in negotiations on the European Constitution.¹⁸

The analysis as conducted in this paper also shows a certain cleavage between larger and smaller EU states in the negotiation process on the EU Constitution: for example, smaller states favored the attribution of more powers to the EU than larger EU states did. But again, this dimension does not seem to be a systematic cross-cutting line.

None of the explanatory variables used in this study adds significantly to the explanation of government preferences for the use of either QMV or unanimity in the Council for policy areas related to socio-economic policy-making. Hence, the analysis could not systematically predict preferences for “more integration” in this sense by the choice of a range of independent variables.

Domestic unemployment rates in 2003, a control variable aiming to capture recent macroeconomic developments, partially influenced government preferences regarding provisions for the SGP. It also incites some support for the attribution of more powers to the

¹⁸ In future work, we aim to explore whether preferences of political parties for EU integration offer an alternative explanation for a potential pro- /anti-European integration dimension in EU politics.

level of the EU. However, in other cases, the variable is not found to significantly affect actor preferences as voiced in the bargaining process on the European Constitution.

This paper operates on the basis of a small number of data points (one data entry for each question analyzed for each of the twenty-five EU states as of 2004). In future research, it might be beneficial to see how more data points, e.g. for domestic actors, could potentially be included into the analysis, while aiming to avoid biases created by the use of independent variables having identical values for several cases.

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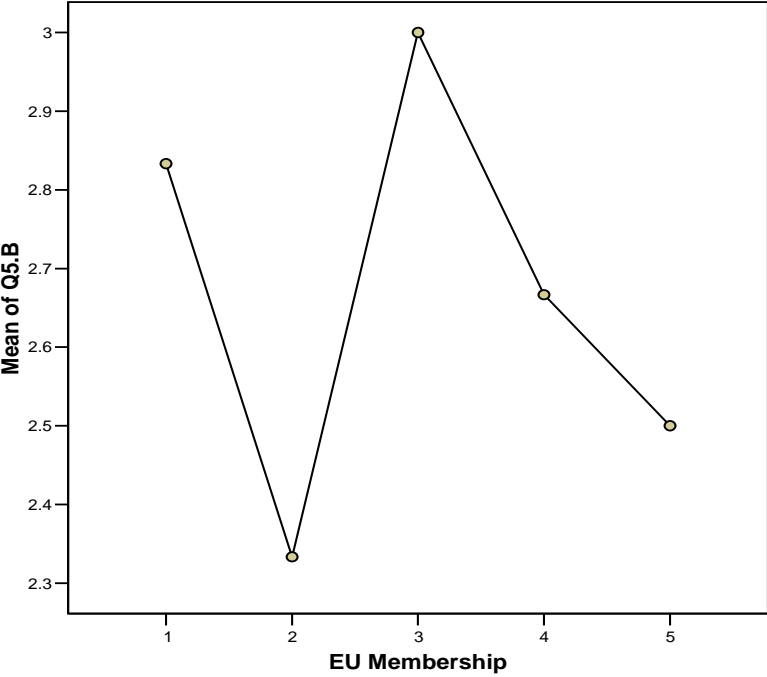
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Figure 1: Means Plot Response to Question 5b (Employment) According to “Length of EU Membership”



Notes: Coding of EU Membership according to entry dates: 1=1958; 2=1973; 3=1981/86, 4=1995, 5=2004;

Coding of answer categories (reference to economic objective “employment”): 1=no reference; 2=high level; 3=full level, 4=full with qualified jobs.

Table 1: Overview of DOSEI Questions Related to Socio-Economic Policy-Making

<i>DOSEI Question</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Answer categories</i>
<p><i>Question 5: From the list of economic objectives below, please indicate what the [government / EP / Commission] prefers to be included in the final version of the Constitution. For objectives with subcategories please choose a specification. Are there any relevant actors of those you have mentioned that have a different position? (Or more specifically: What is the position of the [actor XY]?) (More than one answer possible).</i></p>		
<i>5a</i>	<i>Market economy</i>	<i>1 no 2 free single 3 social</i>
<i>5b</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>1 no 2 high level 3 full 4 full with qualified jobs</i>
<i>5c</i>	<i>Competitiveness</i>	<i>1 no 2 yes</i>
<p><i>Question 17: Compared to the current situation (as defined in the treaties) in which policy areas does the [government / EP / Commission] prefer to have more, less or the same jurisdiction at the EU level? Are there any relevant actors of those you have mentioned that have a different position? (Or more specifically: What is the position of the [actor XY]?)</i></p>		
<i>17.1</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>1 Assignment of less powers to the EU 2 Leave things as they are (as set out in the Nice Treaty) 3 Assignment of more powers to the EU</i>
<i>17.2</i>	<i>Structural and cohesion policies</i>	<i>1 Assignment of less powers to the EU 2 Leave things as they are (as set out in the Nice Treaty) 3 Assignment of more powers to the EU</i>
<i>17.5</i>	<i>Economic policy</i>	<i>1 Assignment of less powers to the EU 2 Leave things as they are (as set out in the Nice Treaty) 3 Assignment of more powers to the EU</i>
<i>17.7</i>	<i>Employment Policy</i>	<i>1 Assignment of less powers to the EU 2 Leave things as they are (as set out in the Nice Treaty) 3 Assignment of more powers to the EU</i>
<i>17.8</i>	<i>Social Policy</i>	<i>1 Assignment of less powers to the EU 2 Leave things as they are (as set out in the Nice Treaty) 3 Assignment of more powers to the EU</i>
<p><i>Question 18a: What is the [government's/ EP's/ Commission's] position on the role of the Parliament and the voting rule in the Council in the following policy areas? Are there any relevant actors of those you have mentioned that have a different position? (Or more specifically: What is the position of the [actor XY]?)</i></p>		
<i>18a.1</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.2</i>	<i>Structural and cohesion policies</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.4</i>	<i>Internal market</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.6</i>	<i>Monetary policy (for the Euro states)</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.7</i>	<i>Economic policy</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.8</i>	<i>Employment policy</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>
<i>18a.9</i>	<i>Social policy</i>	<i>1 no (unanimity) 2 yes (QMV)</i>

<p><i>Question 20: Should the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) be made more flexible?</i> <i>Are there any relevant actors of those you have mentioned that have a different position?</i> <i>(Or more specifically: What is the position of the [actor XY]?)</i></p>		
20	<i>SGP more flexible</i>	1 no 2 yes
<p><i>Question: Should the debt/GDP ratio be incorporated as a criterion in the SGP?</i> <i>Are there any relevant actors of those you have mentioned that have a different position?</i> <i>(Or more specifically: What is the position of the [actor XY]?)</i></p>		
21	<i>Debt/GDP ratio in SGP</i>	1 yes 2 no

Table 2: Coefficients Predicting Government Preferences for Allocation of Fewer or More Powers to the EU (Five Elements of Question 17 DOSEI, Ordered Probit)

DOSEI questions	Question 17					
	Assignment of Powers to the EU (1 fewer powers to EU; 2 leave things as they are; 3 more powers to EU)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Explanatory and control variables	b (std. err.)	Probability (p > z/)	b (std. err.)	Probability (p > z/)	b (std. err.)	Probability (p > z/)
Government left-right position (based on data Benoit-Laver)	0.237 (0.150)	0.114	--	--	--	--
Distance from average government left-right position (based on data Benoit-Laver)	-0.269 (0.182)	0.139	--	--	--	--
Government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	0.091 (3.252)	0.978	4.396 (1.865)	0.018	--	--
Distance from average government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	3.290 (2.867)	0.251	3.76103 (2.695)	0.163	--	--
Government Galtan position (based on Chapel Hill data)	-6.618 (2.071)	0.001	-5.742 (1.882)	0.002	-1.777 (0.974)	0.068
Distance from average government Galtan position	2.266 (2.634)	0.390	-1.463 (2.001)	0.465	--	--
Length of EU membership (in years)	0.030 (0.017)	0.072	-0.341 (0.174)	0.050	0.035 (0.174)	0.001
Net budget status (in percent of GNI)	0.240 (0.286)	0.401	0.506 (0.232)	0.029	0.128 (0.166)	0.439
Support for European integration (public opinion)	-0.014 (0.014)	0.320	-0.0149 (0.012)	0.215	--	--
Population size (2003)	-0.022 (0.010)	0.029	-0.019 (0.010)	0.054	-0.025 (0.008)	0.002
Unemployment (2003)	0.105 (0.060)	0.081	0.057 (0.056)	0.308	0.117 (0.042)	0.006
Cut-off score 1	-2.507 (.958)		-3.985 (1.196)		-1.952 (0.746)	
Cut-off score 2	.675 (.892)		-.818 (1.109)		1.148601 (0.727)	
-2 Log Likelihood	-51.726		-54.629		-57.540	
Pseudo R Square	0.2401		0.1974		0.1547	
LR Chi-Square	32.68		26.88		21.05	
Prob > Chi2	0.0006		0.0015		0.0008	
n	105		105		105	

Table 3a: Coefficients of Logit Regressions on Question 20 of the DOSEI Data Set

DOSEI questions	Question 20			
	"Should the SGP be made more flexible?" (1 no; 2 yes)			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Explanatory and control variables	b (std. err.)	Probability (p > z/)	b (std. err.)	Probability (p > z/)
Government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	4.915 (12.290)	0.689	--	--
Distance from average government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	-1.109 (18.378)	0.952	--	--
Government Galtan position (based on Chapel Hill data)	2.644 (11.020)	0.810	--	--
Distance from average government Galtan position	-34.038 (19.650)	0.083	-18.067 (11.531)	0.117
Length of EU membership (in years)	-0.358 (0.170)	0.036	-0.124 (0.062)	0.044
Net budget status (in percent of GNI)	-1.407 (1.905)	0.460	--	--
Support for European integration (public opinion)	0.148 (0.086)	0.186	0.040 (0.047)	0.386
Population size (2003)	0.177 (.097)	0.068	0.062 (.041)	0.131
Unemployment (2003)	-0.540 .408	0.186	--	--
-2 Log Likelihood	-7.0359		-9.8725	
Pseudo R Square	0.4958		0.2926	
LR Chi-Square	13.84		8.17	
Prob > Chi2	0.1282		0.0857	
n	21		21	

Table 3b: Coefficients of Logit Regressions on Question 21 of the DOSEI Data Set

DOSEI questions	Question 21			
	"Should the debt/GDP ratio be incorporated as a criterion in the SGP?" (1 = yes; 2 = no)			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Explanatory and control variables	b (std. err.)	Probability (P > z/)	b (std. err.)	Probability (P > z/)
Government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	-8.222 (5.966)	0.168	--	--
Distance from average government left-right position (based on Chapel Hill data)	4.948 (9.409)	0.599	--	--
Government Galtan position (based on Chapel Hill data)	--	--	--	--
Distance from average government Galtan position	--	--	--	--
Length of EU membership (in years)	0.244 (0.119)	0.041	0.132 (0.072)	0.068
Net budget status (in percent of GNI)	0.078 (0.949)	0.934	--	--
Support for European integration (public opinion)	-0.048 (0.043)	0.260	--	--
Population size (2003)	-0.147 (0.080)	0.065	-0.080 (0.046)	0.083
Unemployment (2003)	0.447 (0.232)	0.055	0.262 (0.163)	0.109
-2 Log Likelihood	-9.1525		-11.2157	
Pseudo R Square	0.383		0.243	
LR Chi-Square	11.34		7.22	
Prob > Chi2	0.124		0.065	
n	25		25	

Appendix: Correlation Matrix

	GovLR_BL	DistLR_BL	GovLR_ChH	DistLR_ChH	GovGaltan	DistGaltan	LMembership	Pop Size	Budget Pos	Supp Int	Unempl
GovLR_BL	1.0000										
DistLR_BL	-0.1165	1.0000									
GovLR_ChH	0.9082	-0.0902	1.0000								
DistLR_ChH	-0.0842	0.4511	-0.1701	1.0000							
GovGaltan	0.7830	-0.1970	0.6892	-0.0514	1.0000						
DistGaltan	0.0645	0.0101	0.2442	0.0659	0.0715	1.0000					
LMembership	0.2780	-0.1838	0.3091	-0.1746	0.1457	-0.2020	1.0000				
Pop Size	-0.0730	0.0642	-0.0098	-0.0582	-0.0354	-0.2436	0.5285	1.0000			
Budget Pos	0.0654	-0.0491	-0.0649	0.0117	0.1570	0.1574	-0.4510	-0.3372	1.0000		
Supp Int	0.0664	0.2542	0.0474	0.0340	-0.0741	0.1911	0.2944	-0.1233	0.1206	1.0000	
Unempl	-0.0811	0.3442	-0.0418	0.1685	-0.2684	-0.1360	-0.3185	0.1582	0.3071	0.0056	1.0000