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WORKSHOP

DIVISIONS ON EUROPE BETWEEN ELITES AND CITIZENS

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Abstract: Scientific observers as well politicians have noted for a long time that European integration is a process led by the elites but supported much less enthusiastically by the public at large. The first part of this paper documents systematically and for the first time how pervasive the split between elites and citizens has become over the last decades; the rejection of the "Constitution for Europe" by clear majorities of the French and Dutch voters in 2005 was only the last and most spectacular event in this regard. The paper proposes two theses which help to explain this split: (1) European integration has brought and still brings many advantages to the powerful elites involved, the political, economic and new "Eurocratic" elites ; (2) for the population at large, the gains from integration are much less obvious; significant subsections of the populations in different EU member countries have been affected negatively by integration. These theses are documented by empirical evidence from many different sources: Data about the origins, careers and privileges of European politicians and bureaucrats; historical and contemporary data about the role of economic interests and the successful strategies of economic elites concerning integration; statistical data about the socioeconomic development of the EU and "Euroland" compared to other large advanced countries and macro-regions of the world; and survey data about the perceptions and evaluations of European integration both among the elites and the populations in the different member states.

Keywords: elite, European integration, public opinion

After the negative outcomes of the 2005 referenda on the European Constitution in France and the Netherlands it became clear that a deep split has arisen between elites and citizens about European integration. This fact, recognized by the elites themselves, is highly challenging from the academic point of view. How can we explain the fact that such a historically unique, seemingly successful process is pursued enthusiastically by the political, economic and bureaucratic elites, and seen as a model for the world among some social analysts (Beck and Grande 2004; Rifkin 2004), but accompanied by much more sober, sceptical and critical attitudes among the citizens?

Is it true that citizens do not recognize the achievements of integration, as the political elites argue? Or is it simply false that integration has brought with it all the blessings which are ascribed to it? This division is highly problematic also from the viewpoint of the legitimacy of the European Union. Even a huge new political community such as the EU is based on feet of clay if it is not supported by a clear majority of citizens. Both its stability and its capacity to act will be seriously undermined if it does not possess an adequate degree of identity, that is, a consensus on its basic characteristics and its ultimate aims.

In this paper these questions shall be investigated in four steps: First, the growing division between the elites and citizens is documented by presenting facts about the differences between the outcomes of referenda and parliamentary votings, and survey results about attitudes of elites and citizens toward integration. Second, the interests of the different elites – political and professional, economic, and bureaucratic – are investigated in order to understand their enthusiasm for integration. Third, it will be investigated if "output legitimacy", that is, efficiency of political steering, can provide a substitute for "input legitimacy", that is, the possibility of citizens to participate directly in political decisions in the case of the EU. Fourth, it will be shown that the attitudes toward integration are quite different – both among the elites and the citizens – in the different countries and macro-regions of the EU.[1]

THE INCREASING DIVISION BETWEEN ELITES AND CITIZENS ABOUT EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Already in the referenda about the Maastricht treaty in the early 1990s a split emerged between elites' and citizens' evaluation of the integration process. This treaty was accepted by only small margins of the French and rejected by the Danes. Later on, only small majorities of the Swedes and Finns voted for joining the EU and the Norwegians and Swiss rejected membership altogether, in spite of the fact that also their elites had proposed it strongly. In this section, three kinds of evidence are presented, documenting the deep-going division between elites and citizens concerning integration.

The signing of the *Constitution for Europe* in October 2004 was rightly seen as a significant step forward in European integration. The Treaty contained important new elements making the Union more efficient and democratic. It included also a *Charter of Fundamental Rights* and all the long and complicated earlier treaties were condensed into one single (although quite long) text. In France president Chirac decided that a popular referendum should be held about the Constitution. After this announcement a very vivid debate unfolded in France. The Constitution itself and books about it appeared in millions, in the printed media and TV a very vivid discussion was going on. A very high turnout rate (70%) characterized the referendum

1 This paper relies heavily on my recently published book "European Integration as an Elite Process. The Failure of a Dream?" (Haller 2008) and has been presented at the Workshop on "European Union and World Politics: Consensus and Division", Cambridge, 28–29 March 2008.

itself. The Constitution was rejected by a clear majority of 54.8% of the voters – in spite of the fact that all large and governing parties and politicians had supported it. Only three days later the Dutch people rejected the Constitution with an even larger majority, 61.6%. Also in this country, the ruling economic and political elites had advocated its acceptation unanimously. These results were a shock for the political establishment in Europe; the Constitution was declared as "dead" and the EU and their national proponents lapsed into a kind of throe (officially called "period of reflection") for a considerable period of time.

In two other popular referenda the Constitution was accepted: in Spain with 76.2% and in Luxembourg with 56.5%. However, the latter proportion was surprisingly low, given the wholehearted support of integration in this small country. In Spain and Luxembourg later on parliamentary votings were held about the Constitution. Their results were 94.2 and 97.4% in Spain (parliament/senate), and 100% in Luxembourg. In these referenda three characteristics emerged which are typical for the two dozen popular referenda and the preceding or successive parliamentary votes about important steps of European integration which have been held since the early 1970s.

First, a much higher level of endorsement came out in the parliaments than in the popular referenda. To give just a few examples:

- In Norway joining the EU was endorsed in 1992 by the parliament with 67.0%; in 1994 citizens rejected it again (they had already done so in 1972) with 52.2%.
- In Switzerland participation in the *European Economic Area* was supported by 85%/62% of the parliaments (Council of States/National Council) in 1992, but the citizens rejected it (50.3%);
- The French Congress accepted the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 with a majority of 89%, citizens with only 51.1%;
- In Sweden, access to the EU was supported by 88% in the Riksdag, but by only 52.7% of the voters in 1994; similar (although not so large) splits emerged in Finland and Austria.

In the new Member States in Central Eastern Europe the referenda usually produced high percentages of "yes" voters (about 66% in the Baltic States, up to 90% in Slovakia and Slovenia); in the parliaments the result usually was 100%, a clear reminiscence to voting outcomes in former communist times.

Second, there exists a clear and statistically significant correlation between the level of turnout and the outcome of the referenda: The higher turnout, the lower the proportion voting "yes". High proportions of "yes"-votes, but low levels of turnout were characteristic for the post-communist new member countries, low levels of "yes"-votes, but high levels of turnout for the smaller West and North European countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland). Thus, in most of the former cases the majorities of the yes-voters represented less than half of the electorate of the respective countries. Analyses of these referenda have shown, in addition, that particularly in those countries were the decision was highly contested, at the time of the referendum the voters were quite well informed about the issues. It has been said – and it seems credible – that a normal French or Dutch voter knew more about the

Constitution than a member of the German *Bundestag* when he or she voted about the European Constitution in May 12, 2005.[2]

Third, referenda about the integration process were held more frequently in countries with a longer democratic experience and well-established democratic institutions. In all those countries which had experienced fascist periods in the twentieth century (Italy, Germany, Greece, Portugal), the citizens never or only recently (Spain) got a possibility to co-decide about this extremely important process which transferred significant competences from the level of nation states to the EU and thus changed all national constitutions in a significant way. Also in the two post-communist countries with the least democratic experience during the 20th century, Bulgaria and Romania, citizens were not asked about their consent.

Third, also several surveys carried out both among political elites and citizens show a deep split in the attitudes to European integration. In the late 1990s British and German political scientists investigated attitudes toward integration among members of the European Parliament, members of national parliaments and citizens in the 15 EU Member States (Schmitt and Thomassen 1999). It turned out that the first two groups, but particularly MEPs had much more positive views on integration than citizens. Pride in Europe, for instance, was very high among 75% of the first, 68% of the second, but 55% of the voters. The authors concluded from their findings: "One might wonder whether the governments and politicians responsible for the Maastricht Treaty were living in the same European world as the people they were supposed to represent" (Schmitt and Thomassen 1999: 4). In 1996 EOS *Gallup Europe* made a survey on behalf of the EU Commission among 3778 top decision makers in the 15 Member States.[3] The sample included politicians, high civil servants, business leaders, top media persons, and cultural, academic and religious leaders. Some of the questions put to the elites were taken over from the Eurobarometer series; thus they could be compared directly to citizens' opinions. Also here, a deep split between elites and citizens turned out. The statement "(our country's) membership in the EU is a good thing/ a bad thing/ neither good nor bad" was answered as follows: Elites 94% good, 2% bad, 4% neither good nor bad; citizens 48% good, 15% bad, 28% neither-nor. Among elites, 90% thought that their own country did benefit from EU membership; 8% saw no benefit, 2% said "don't know"; among citizens, the corresponding percentages were: 43% benefit, 36% no benefit, 36% don't know.

2 In the German television ("Panorama"), on the same day, a reporter put four quite simple questions about the content of the EU Constitution to deputies of the German parliament, representing four political parties. The answers disclosed an incredible ignorance of basic elements of the Constitution.

3 "The European Union. A View from the Top" Report prepared by Jacqueline Spence, conducted by EOS Gallup Europe, Wavre (Belgium). The report is also available on the internet: *http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/top/top.pdf*

Table 1. Attitudes toward the Role of the EU in World Politics among the Public and among Political and Bureaucratic Elites of the EU (% agree*)

	Public %	MEPs %	EU-Officials %
The European Union should have its own foreign minister, even if (country) may not always agree with the positions taken	69	79	96
The European Union should strengthen its military power in order to play a larger role in the world	48	71	65
The European Union should concentrate on its economic power and not rely on its military power when dealing with international problems outside Europe	82	66	64

* Rest up to 100%: disagree

Source: CIRCaP (2006), European Elites Survey 2006, Siena: Centre for the Study of Political Change. Survey method: Computer assisted telephone interviews, May–July 2006; N's: 205 MEPs, 50 top level officials of the EU Commission; public: representative population surveys in 9 EU member countries.

A deep split between elites and citizens is also evident if we look at the views concerning the political role of the European Union in the world, the topic of this volume. The *Centre for the Study of Political Change* (CIRCaP) at the University of Siena (Italy) has carried out a survey among the public in nine member countries of the EU, telephone interviews among Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and top officials of the EU Commission in Brussels. *Table 1* shows that large majorities of MEPs and top EU officials are in favor of an active role of the EU in foreign politics and of the use of military forces; the public, however, is much less sympathetic toward such a position and the majority opposes the use of military force altogether.

Quite interesting are also the differences between the countries, as far as the split between elites and citizens is concerned. It is largest in central, continental Europe, but smaller in Northwest, south and Eastern Europe. In the Schmitt and Thomassen study, for instance, the elite–citizen difference in pride in Europe was 41% in Germany and the Netherlands; in the Scandinavian countries it was about 25–30%, and in South Europe (except Greece) less than 20%. This could also reflect the fact that in the former two countries citizens never or only very recently had the possibility to give their vote on the integration process; the negative outcome in the Netherlands is not surprising from this point of view. In Scandinavia and the UK the elites are also less enthusiastic about integration, so the distance from their citizens is also smaller. In most South and East European countries both elites and citizens see no alternative to EU membership. We shall come back to this in section 4 below.

How did this astonishing split come about? Three theses are proposed in this paper: (1) Already the "founding fathers" of the EEC/EU exhibited an elitist stance which is typical for many European politicians to the present day; (2) the elites themselves benefit from the integration process in a significant way; (3) the benefits for the populations at large are much more modest than praised by the elites. In the next section, we shall substantiate these theses.

INTERESTS OF THE ELITES IN THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of integration theories, particularly in political science. However, the explanatory power of these theories remains limited, particularly as far as the main two dominant approaches are concerned. *Functional and neo-functional theories* hold that integration between hitherto separate units emerges because this leads to gains in economic productivity and welfare. Once integration has been initiated in one sector, it spills over to others, and from the economic to the social and political sphere. Thus, integration processes acquire a logic of their own and reinforce themselves with increasing exchange and division of labor between the members of the Union. The newly established supranational agencies play a crucial role in this process. The final stage will be a highly integrated economic and political community (Haas 1958; Schmitter 2004). *Intergovernmental theories* see integration as a strategy pursued by national governments in order to gain security in a changed international situation, and to enable them to come to grips with the forces of globalization. Integration strengthens the position of national governments both within their own state and at the international level (Milward 1992; Moravcsik 1998; for reviews see Burgess 2003; Faber 2005: 86ff.). However, both these theories contain serious flaws.

First, the distinction between the normative and the empirical-analytical perspective is blurred. Functionalist theory which holds that integration begins in the economic sector and then spills over to other sectors, "was imbued from the outset with pro-integration assumptions" (Jensen 2003: 81; see also Cini 2003, Part 2; Wiener and Diez 2004; Faber 2005). This is also true for intergovernmentalism and in particular federalism, where integration is seen as the outcome of deliberate actions of governments, and which expects that its final state will be the United States of Europe. (For critical reviews see Burgess 2003; Dehove 2004). Second, citizens do not play a significant role in both theories. They focus on general, abstract "laws" of integration, but neglect the specific social interests and forces that lie behind them. Third, social and political values, ideas and visions connected with integration are neglected.

Both theories also contain specific flaws. Functional theories do not distinguish adequately between functional and causal explanations. A functional explanation, while useful in itself, is not a causal one. An example is the introduction of the Euro. It has been substantiated with economic gains; however, the causal reasons behind it were specific German and French national interests connected with fundamental political transformations in Europe (breakdown of the Iron Curtain and re-unification of Germany). Intergovernmental theories postulate more or less homogeneous "national interests" which in reality do not exist. Interests often diverge considerably between different groups within a nation state, and also between elites and citizens.

As a consequence, both theories cannot explain the increasing split between elites and citizens about European integration. An explanation of this puzzle is well possible, however, in the sociological approach that shall be presented in the following.

Democratic Elite Theory – A Sociological Approach To European Integration

The basis of the following analysis is democratic elite theory (Etzioni-Halevy 1993). Within this theory two perspectives are distinguished. The empirical-analytical perspective tries to explain the actions of the elites and their consequences. From this point of view elites are seen as those relatively small groups in any society which dispose of disproportionate power; this power originates from the fact that they are occupying specific power-conferring positions or dispose of particularly useful resources (see also Coenen-Huther 2004; Hartmann 2004). Elites are differentiated internally according the societal sector from which their power originates. Three elite groups are most decisive in this regard: political elites who possess political power, economic elites who possess ownership of means of production and economic wealth or who are leaders of influential business and labor organizations, and bureaucratic elites who hold top offices in public administration. It is not assumed here – as in early elite theory (Pareto, Mosca, Michels) – that elites are per se power-driven, egoistic, ruthless or even corrupt. However, elites are not inherently efficient and working in the common interest as they themselves would have it.

In modern societies their power and actions are limited by institutions, such as democratic political systems, market regulations, and legal prescriptions for the behavior of bureaucrats. It is the task of the normative perspective established by Montesquieu to elaborate the conditions for this control. In politics the most important among them are the separation between the legislative, executive and judicial powers, between central, regional and local political and administrative units, the election of incumbents of political offices for limited periods of time, the freedom of organization and press, etc. The basic assumption of normative democratic theory is that the power, the aims and the actions of elites must be monitored and controlled continuously. These include the values and goals of the elites (which often are not declared openly), the functional differentiation and the network structures between the elites, the patterns of elite recruitment and the forms of their recognition and remuneration.

The Role of The Different Elites in the Successive Stages of European Integration

The first thesis proposed in this paper relates to the role of different elites in the process of integration. European integration as a whole is a discontinuous process in which moments of dynamic integration are followed by periods of stagnation and crisis. The political elites are the force of acceleration, but also of slowdown of the integration process; the economic elites and the new European bureaucratic and professional elites are the forces continually furthering integration. As a consequence of the interaction of these different forces the speed and direction of integration is often quite erratic, contradictory and produces problematic results. However, it is also going on continuously, even in periods of political stagnation and "eurosclersosis". In such periods the integration process is furthered particularly by the Eurocracy and the

professional-juridical elites in the *European Court of Justice* (ECJ). By and large, we can say that in the first phase of European integration, from the early 1950s up to the mid-1960s, the political elites were the driving forces. Between the end of the 1960s and of the 1980s, the economic and the new European bureaucratic-professional elites (members of the EU Commission and of the ECJ) took matters into their own hands. During and after the period of the breakdown of the state-socialist systems in Eastern Europe, however, the political elites again became proactive. Let us look here shortly at the decisive post-war period when the process of European integration was initiated.

Three facts must be considered in order to understand the successful take-off the process of integration after the Second World War, and the form which it adopted later. The first is the transformed international or global situation, the second the internal weakness of the countries which mainly proposed integration, the third is the decisive actors and the particular form which it took from the beginning.

The new international situation is of crucial importance in this regard. Federations between nation states from ancient Greece up to post-war Europe have been initiated in situations of foreign threat; the aim was to gain security by uniting against a strong external, often despotic power (Fix 1992/93). Such a situation existed also in post-war Europe. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as new world powers from the Second World War, and all former large European states were relegated to second-order political and military powers on the world scene (Deutsch et al. 1957; Elias 1985; Loth 1996). The upgraded USSR whose troops had occupied large parts of Central and Eastern Europe appeared as a serious threat to Western Europe.

Second, France and Germany, the two main proponents of integration, found themselves in a situation of profound internal weakness. Germany was devastated economically, divided into two parts, and morally compromised due to its connection with National Socialism and the Holocaust, and its responsibility for World War II. Participating actively in European integration was seen – and is seen up to today – as an undisputed strategy of its political elites to regain political autonomy and international respect. However, also France found itself in a weak situation; it was a defeated nation, with a poor economy and a damaged moral reputation due to the collaboration of many leaders with the Vichy regime (Wolton 2004).

Third, also the values, strategies and actions of the decisive political actors and their political strategies who initiated integration in the post-war period made a crucial and long-lasting imprint on this process. The decisive political actors were the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman (1886–1963), the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) and the Italian Prime Minister Alcide Degasperi (1881–1954). They shared four characteristics. First, they all were born in the 1880s, and thus were in their best adult age when fascism came to power in Italy and Germany. Their resistance to fascism awarded them a high personal charisma after World War II. The lack of such a charisma is one among the characteristics of political personalities at the end of the 20th century which contributed to the decreasing trust in politics in general and the European Union in particular. Second, they all were devout Catholics. After World War II Catholic conservatism rose to the leading position in continental Western Europe because it was able to fill the ideological vacuum that emerged after the fall of fascism and the proscription of communism in many Western countries. Catholicism was important for

European integration because of two reasons. Due to its universalistic orientation, Catholicism was sympathetic to European integration (also Pope Pius XII supported it); it is usually not as closely associated with the single nation states as orthodox and protestant Christianity. But Catholicism is also characterized by a focus on tradition and dogma, hierarchy and authority. In Catholic doctrine and church organization this reflects itself in the claim for absolute truth (infallibility of the Pope), a distinguished position of the clergy, elaborated dogmas, and a rigid church hierarchy (Maier 1983). A third common characteristic of Adenauer and Degasperi was their elitist and autocratic attitude and behavior. Adenauer was frequently criticized because of his autocratic style of governing (Jaspers 1966). Both Adenauer and Degasperi shared a related, fourth characteristic, a fervent anti-communism. Adenauer continued the traditional German anti-communism, and achieved it that the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), re-established in the four occupied zones, was banned by the German constitutional court in 1956. The consequences were over 150,000 judicial procedures against communists, but also against persons who had only very peripheral or no relations to the KPD. In- and outside Germany this process was criticized strongly by many as having violated democratic principles. Also Degasperi was a pronounced enemy of communism. He was able to achieve a large share of the votes in the 1948 national elections not the least because of a rather aggressive and spiteful election campaign in which the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was slandered as paving the way for a Soviet-style communist regime (Procacci 1983: 386ff.). But also liberal reform forces were excluded from power by Degasperi. Thereby the foundation was laid for a political dominance of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) for decades which was ended, however, abruptly in 1992, when its deep involvement in clientelism and corruption was uncovered.

This elitist stance was a very decisive characteristic also of the most important "spin doctor" of European integration, Jean Monnet (1888–1979). Already during World War I Monnet developed the idea of co-operation between France and England; throughout his career he continued to develop plans for national economic recovery and for international co-operation; he always proposed these plans to leading politicians but never to the public. His most successful idea was the 1950 "Schuman plan", the integration of the French and German coal and steel industries in the *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC); this plan constituted the take-off for European integration. Jean Monnet and his plan exhibited several characteristics which are typical for the European Union to this day: New ideas and plans were realized "from above" with no involvement of the populations and national parliaments; the strategy of persuasion, that is the continuous replication and propagation of some simple and seemingly true ideas in the public; a high degree of flexibility and inventiveness in developing continuously new plans for co-operation and integration; the focus on the restricted and seemingly politically "neutral" area of economic integration; the creation of an independent, bureaucratic agency – the *High Commission* of the ECSC – whose competences were superimposed upon national governments and which was expected to promote integration out of its own continuously and with force.

Let us now look at the specific interests of the different groups of elites in the process of European integration.

The Political Elites

At first sight it seems difficult to comprehend why the governing political elites in Western Europe were and still are ready to give up a considerable part of their autonomy and power to the new EU institutions. From the viewpoint of established theories of integration this seems easy to explain when they assume that integration was and is in the interest of the Member States and that governments act mainly on behalf of their states. This may certainly be true to a considerable degree. Alan Milward (1992) has argued that European integration was a means to preserve or restore national autonomy and independence in times of new rising superpowers and globalization. Membership in the EU provides also the possibility to pursue national political goals at the world level whose implementation would be impossible even for the larger Member States alone in the present-day world. This aspect is particularly important for the largest and most influential Member States, such as France and Germany. In addition, membership in the EU provides the possibility to accomplish political goals which national politicians would have been unable to or unwilling to pursue in their home countries, using decisions of the EU (in which they have participated) as a pretense.[4]

However, it is evident that political elites all the time are pursuing also their own individual interests as the economic theory of democracy has argued convincingly (Schumpeter 1962 [1950]; Downs 1967). From this point of view the first interest which politicians have – as any other professional group – is to improve their job and income opportunities. European integration supports this interest strongly (Vaubel 1995). First, the EU has created a myriad of new political jobs and careers in the institutions of the European Parliament (EP), the European Commission and the European Court of Justice (ECJ), to mention only the most important. At present the EP has 785 members (MEPs); Germany has 96 deputies, England, France and Italy 78 each, Poland and Spain 54 deputies. These are quite large numbers. MEPs get significantly higher salaries than members of national parliaments (von Arnim 2006). The basic part of the salary corresponds to that of a member in the respective national parliament which means that they vary extremely between older and new member countries (a Hungarian MEP gets about 850 Euro, an Italian 12,000 Euro[5]). However, an additional, larger part contains generous allowances for special personal expenses (travel costs, subsidies for double housekeeping, special subsidies for language courses, tax reliefs, etc.) and a considerable sum (up to 15,000 Euros per month) for a secretariat and assistants. In addition to the MEPs about 4000 persons are employed by the European Parliament, among them 1400 accredited personal assistants to MEPs. [6] Another new career avenue is the European Commission where every Member State has its political representative; this is particularly attractive for national politicians who have held top-positions in their home country. All these new political jobs open

4 In Austria in 1994, for instance, access to the EU was justified by the political and economic elites with the argument that the incrusted structures of this country could be broken up only by entering the EU.

5 *http://www.europa-digital.de/aktuell/dossier/mepgeld/kritik.shtml*

6 See *http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/focus_page/008-2987-050-02-08-901-20070209FCS02971-19-02-2007-2007/default_de.htm*

up the possibility for national politicians to prolong their political career after having been relegated from their political offices at home or after having been defeated in national elections. In this way also their chances of getting generous pensions later on are increased significantly. The Commission and the other EU institutions with their staff of around 40,000 persons also offer a myriad of high and top level bureaucratic and professional jobs. The selection of candidates for all these jobs provides leading national politicians and party leaders with an additional source of power and influence.

A second area where European integration has created individual gains for national politicians is the possibility to participate in collective decisions at the level of the EU. This provides all heads and members of national governments with an additional source of prestige. The taking over of high offices (such as president of the European Council), the carrying through of the related organizational activities on behalf of the EU (hundreds of high-level meetings take place in every country during its half-a-year Council presidency), and the participation in the many festive summits provide immediate gratification, particularly for the politicians from small member countries. Participation in such rituals confers publicity and prestige at home and abroad (Collins 2005). This is particularly the case if a proposal of the presiding country is accepted by all other members. This is also one of the mechanisms which keep the process of integration running; every country and government which takes over the half-year presidency of the Council is eager to develop an ambitious programme of further integration.

The Economic Elites

The economy was a central element of European integration from the beginning. Integration started as a coordinated administration of a few basic industries, extended into a free trade area, and still today – even if called a "Union" – is characterized in the first instance as a huge common market. This market is dominated increasingly by large, multinational "European corporations". About 40% of the 100 largest corporations of the world belong to the EU.[7] But also other economic interests, such as those of agriculture, have played an important role in the process of integration. Two assertions are made and investigated here: (1) The economic elites have played highly significant roles in all stages of the European integration process; in different stages of this process different subgroups of elites have been particularly influential. (2) The exertion of this influence mostly occurred unrecognized in public and by scientific observers. The development of the EU-institutions and the consequences of integration, however, have led to a rising public scepticism and distrust against large corporations and against the economic-political system of the EU among the general public.

Economic elites have several interests. Besides attaining an adequate income and profit, they also strive for security and for power and prestige. In this regard the interests of large European enterprises coincide with those of large Member States. A

7 See Forbes, *World's Business Leaders 2000, http://www.forbes.com*

widely established thesis says that neo-liberalistic economic theories were dominant in the process of integration. The thesis proposed here is, however, that the dominant integration ideology has never been that of unconditional (neo-) liberalism, aiming toward a fully free market. Rather, from the beginning both the leaders of the industrial corporations and the political elites were aiming toward establishing the EU and its large enterprises as "big players" on the world scene. This motive was present already in the foundation of the *European Coal and Steel Community* in 1952. It is a well established story that the ECSC was an ingenious idea of Jean Monnet with the main intent to end war between France and Germany once and for all. However, this "*Monnet-myth*" does not withstand closer examination. The formal co-operation between the French and German steel and coal industry, initiated by the ECSC, was not new at all and it was consistent with post-war efforts of many other French politicians of the time. Their intent was to re-integrate Germany into Europe under French conditions and to subsume the Ruhr industry to an "organic control" (Gillingham 1986, 2004). The idea of a close co-operation between French and German basic industries dates back to the *International Steel Cartel* of 1926, which involved comprehensive agreements between producers and governments, controlled 90% of world steel exports, and served as a vehicle for diplomatic co-operation and economic integration. The Nazi period and Second World War did not destroy this kind of co-operation. Throughout this period the big German coal and steel producers preserved the close and friendly ties with the French, Belgian and other enterprises they had socialized before; in this way, the German type of "organized capitalism" was expanded to the occupied territories.

Business interests were also highly influential in later stages of the integration process. The post-war boom in Western Europe was associated with a strong process of industrial concentration. With the expansion of financial markets a separation of ownership and management took place, ownership itself was transposed into a commodity. The process of European integration has contributed significantly to the emergence of this shareholder capitalism in Europe (van Apeldoorn 2002; Coen 1997). The basics for this process were laid by the internal market programme, activated to a large degree by the *European Round Table of Industrialists* (ERT) in the 1980s (Bornschier 2000). In this process leading industrialists, such as the Swedish Pehr Gyllenhammar and the Dutch Wisse Dekker, played a significant role. They were able to establish the ERT as an informal, yet well organized and highly influential group of leading European businessmen. From 1983 to 1985 this group developed a comprehensive plan ("*Europe 1990*") whose aim was to create the fully integrated market and to concentrate efforts to strengthen strategic sectors of industry and research in Europe. The ideas of the ERT found strongest support among French politicians and were taken over by Jaques Delors and formally established as an aim of the EC/EU in the *Single European Act* and the *Maastricht Treaty*. This aim led to a "strategic industry and trade policy" which is used by the EU to support "European champions", even if this runs counter to the preservation of competition (Berthold and Hilpert 1996: 81ff.)

In the second half of the 1990s this project was furthered by a number of initiatives to create also a single financial market. Following the Cardiff Council the EU Commission

issued a *Financial Services Action Plan*. The 2003 action plan for "Modernising Company Law and Enhancing Corporate Governance" further extends this policy. The earlier establishment of the *European Monetary Union* (EMU) and the EURO was a milestone. Since then the EU Commission attributes great importance to cross-border mergers. In spite of its official policy of strict control over such mergers there were only a very low number of cases in which the Commission was involved. 1991–2004 about 152,000 mergers happened in the EU, but only 1.7% were notified to the Commission; of these, only about 5% raised serious competition issues that could not be resolved in the first phase of the procedure. This means that all in all only the tiniest proportion of all M&A activities were seen as problematic by the Commission (Ilzkovitz and Meiklejohn 2006: 11, 22ff.). An important issue in this regard concerns the relation between business interest groups and the political and bureaucratic elites. Brussels has attracted thousands of lobby and interest groups that are in continuous close contact with the EU offices and representatives responsible for the enactment of new laws and regulations. These lobbies and their activities are considered as quite positive not only by the representatives of business but also by the EU officials. Quite different are the perceptions of the public throughout Europe: They consider these activities with high suspicion and believe that large enterprises, farmers, etc. have much more influence than workers, employees and "normal" citizens (Haller and Ressler 2006).

Agriculture is another area where business interest played a central role. The *Common Agricultural Policy* (CAP), one of the basic pillars of European integration, is also an area where the preponderance of sectional interests, the collusion between the interests of economic, political and bureaucratic elites at the expense of those of consumers and taxpapers, but also the ideological appeal to ideals and values, masking particular interests, can be shown very clearly. The majority of experts consider this policy, in spite of partial successes, as a failure (El Agraa 2004: 371ff.). In fact "the CAP is an excellent example of what happens when there is no real link between the EU institutions and the EU's citizens." (Fouilleux 2003: 251) In spite of its self-proclaimed aim of "Investment in growth and better jobs … building a foundation for the future", the bulk (54.8%) of the EU budget of 121 billion Euros still goes to the agricultural sector (2006). At the same time, the importance of this sector for employment has declined to less than 5% in most Member States, and it contributes only about 1 to 3% to the gross national product. Also in the farm sector the EU policy of market interventions only continued the policy of the inter-war period; such a policy was supported ideologically by the myth of the independent farmer family, by rising powerful and militant organizations of farmers, and by the conservative Christian democratic governments in power. This policy has been extended into a highly refined system of import and export regulations and tariffs, and domestic market regimes; a staff of 5000 Eurocrats in Brussels administrates the highly complex procedures in this regard.

A third period and process where economic interests played a central role for integration was the transition of the former state-socialist countries to market economies and their accession to the EU. The following theses are proposed in this regard: (a) The "shock therapy" prescribing a fast and painful process of transition was a rather problematic strategy; (b) West European transnational corporations and capital had a massive interest in such a process of transition; (c) the accession to the EU

of the post-communist countries must to some degree be seen as a peaceful "annexation" (Roesler 1999), even if no direct pressure was exerted upon them; for the general population, and the political systems of these countries, however, this elite-driven transformation process has also had some serious negative consequences.

Following neo-liberal American economists in many post-communist East European countries (most notably in Poland) a rigorous privatization programme was carried out, the state sector constricted in its activities, the unions disempowered, and a restrictive monetary policy established. The consequence was hyper-inflation, an expropriation of savers, a drastic reduction in industrial output, an explosion of unemployment, massive losses in real income of workers and employees, and a deterioration of the living standards of the whole population, expressed in a strong reduction of life expectancy and decline of quality of life. Today, even leading western economists (e.g. J. Stiglitz) admit that this form of transition was a failure (Ingham 2004: 243). One further consequence of this enforced process of transition was a political destabilization of post-communist Eastern Europe; since 1989, in most of these countries, governments have been deselected already after the first period of election; accession to the EU was seen as the only way out of the depressing situation (Hofbauer 2003). The EU supported the accession of these countries by specific financial programmes, and even by public relations campaigns before referenda about accession were carried out. Western capital, however, was extremely interested in the possibilities for investment in this region. Already since the early 1990s, a real "buyout fight" for enterprises was setting in. The expected (and later on realized) high profitability of investments in these countries was increased by the fact that these countries provided formidable tax oases for Western capital. While in Germany, for instance, the tax burden for an enterprise is over 30%, in many post-communist countries it is only between 10 and 15%; in addition, the new EU Member States provide specific incentives and benefits for foreign companies. Today a considerable share (up to one third) of the large private enterprises in Eastern Europe is owned by Western capital, especially in the strategic banking sector; income from these investments is significantly higher than from comparable investments in West Europe. Also the exports into this region increased massively.

The New Eurocratic Elites

There is a third group of elites which is one of the most important driving motors of integration, whose personal interests, strategies and actions, however, are much less visible and discussed in public than those of the political and economic elites. This is the new EU bureaucracy in Brussels and in the Member States. In this regard the ingenious idea of Jean Monnet has realized itself to a high degree which was that the establishment of an authority independent of the nation states and working only in the "European interest" would be a strong motor of integration.

At first sight it may seem surprising to consider the EU administration in Brussels as a representative of a new and powerful bureaucracy. Two arguments are frequently brought forward in this regard: First, the size of this bureaucracy is rather small,

compared with those of the Member States. With about 40,000 employees the EU certainly employs much less people than the governments of large Member States, even of small Member States or large provinces or cities. Second, it seems that this bureaucracy works in a much less "bureaucratic" and more efficient way than national bureaucracies: It portrays itself and is seen by many analysts as being less hierarchically structured, less bent on documenting every decision on paper, and more flexible and cosmopolitan-oriented not the least because of its multi-national and multi-cultural composition (Bach 1999). However, all of these assertions are highly questionable (Shore 2000). Four arguments and facts are relevant in this regard.

First, as any bureaucracy (Weber 1978 [1922]; Downs 1967; Peters 1995), also the EU Commission and its bureaucratic apparatus are instruments of power and domination. This is true even more than for national bureaucracies. The EU Commission has a right which no national bureaucracy possesses, namely, to initiate legislation. The European Council and Parliament can only confirm or modify proposals made by the Commission. The use of this extraordinary right is supported by the fact that the EU Commission in Brussels is far away from the national capitals and, thereby, much less under the scrutiny of a critical public than national bureaucracies. The effectiveness of this law-producing capacity of the Commission is enhanced by its impersonal and collective nature: The members of the Commission are appointed, but not elected to their offices; and it is responsible only as a whole for its decisions. Even if a Commission contains many mediocre personalities, there are always enough energetic members who continually propose far-reaching steps of integration which usually are accepted by the Commission as a whole and transformed into proposals for new regulations. Besides the Commissioners, whose role is more political, also the top EU bureaucrats, the *Directors General*, are very powerful (some of them even more than the Commissioners). (Middlemas 1995: 242ff.; Egeberg 2003) Appointed for lifetime, they are highly educated and often experienced politically. Their role includes developing a global mission and strategy for their Directorate, organizing the work of their staff and establishing relations with the outside world. They have been compared to "medieval barons".[8]

The European Commission is not less bureaucratized than national bureaucracies are. Quite similar to these, its formal structure is articulated closely along the hierarchy of educational degrees; Eurocrats enjoy also a high level of job security (lifetime tenure); the Eurocracy enacts continuously new laws and regulations. In the decade of 1970–1980 the EU enacted about 9000 legislative and regulative acts, in 1991–2000 nearly 24,000 (Alesina et al. 2001). These activities are seen more and more as being detrimental to entrepreneurial activity and economic growth in Europe, even by high-level EU representatives (Verheugen 2005) and by national political leaders (such as the German Chancellors Helmut Kohl and Angela Merkel). For some years it has become a main political goal of the EU to reduce the number of these regulations; their success, however, has been modest.

8 A very informative survey of 33 Directors General has been carried out by the German *Identity Foundation*; see *Identity Foundation* (2003) Quelten europäischen Identität Die Generaldirektoren der Europäischen Kommission, Düsseldorf (Summary also availabe at *http://www.euro.de/europa/studie_eur_kommission/studie.htm*)

Third, the thesis that the new Eurocracy is a comparatively slim apparatus is highly misleading in three regards. First, it overlooks the fact that this bureaucracy is mainly concerned with the enactment of laws and regulations; this corresponds to the fact that the bulk of the EU officials is highly educated (about half of them are academics), polyglot and efficient. Second, the EU is a young institution, and so is its bureaucracy, compared with the bureaucracies of established nation states in Western Europe. If one looks at the dynamics of development of this bureaucracy, a wholly different picture emerges (see *Figure 1*): Since 1968 the number of EU employees has been growing in a continuous manner; in 2006 their number was fourfold of that in 1968. No deceleration of this trend is in sight.

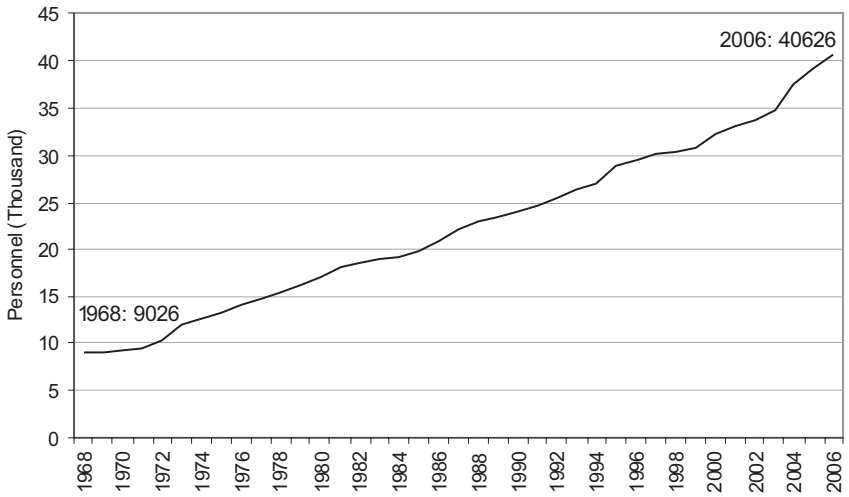

Figure 1. The Development of the EC/EU Employees*, 1968–2006 (absolute numbers)

* In all institutions, incl. decentralized units and officials with fixed-term contracts.

Source: Data received from Eurostat/European Statistical Data Support (ESDS)

There exists an additional fact in this regard: Since the EU is mainly a legislative body, in each Member State an "*EU substitute bureaucracy*" exists which is concerned with the enactment of EU regulations, the administration of subsidies and so forth. An extrapolation of the size of this EU substitute bureaucracy from pilot studies in four Member States resulted in a figure which is comparable to the number of employed officials in Brussels (Haller 2008, ch.5).

The members of the EU bureaucracy are also highly privileged in terms of security of employment, income levels and fringe benefits. A porter or janitor in the EU offices earns between 2325 and 4252 Euros a month; this corresponds to the salary of a young academic in the Member States; the salary of a secretary goes up to 5444 Euros; those

of academics up to 10,000 Euros; Director Generals have monthly salaries between 14,822 and 16,094. In addition to these basic salaries EU officials get generous family and child allowances, subsidies for the education costs of children, an installation and resettlement allowance when moving to or from Brussels, a permanent expatriate allowance, travel expenses once a year, etc. Thus their total incomes are much higher than those of national public employees. A special invention is the status of a supernumerary or "non-active" official: If the EU needs new jobs, for instance, when a new country joins the Union and asks for its share of officials, the officials in office are asked if they are willing to retire from work with a generous financial compensation. All in all, "EU officials are reputedly among the most privileged public officials in the world" (Shore 2000: 193), a position in the EU civil service has been called "a bureaucrat's paradise" (Page and Wouters 1995: 188f.; see also Dinan 1999: 221; Vaubel 1995: 37).

ACHIEVEMENTS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THEIR PERCEPTION BY THE CITIZENS

The foregoing section has shown that the political, economic and new European bureaucratic elites have massive interests in furthering integration. Their enthusiasm for the process of integration is hardly surprising from this point of view. This fact per se, however, is no argument against integration. If this process works in the interests of the citizens and peoples involved, a generous remuneration of the elites which have initiated and further this process may well be accepted. After all these remunerations constitute in fact only a very tiny burden for the individual 500 million taxpayers in the Union. We must investigate, therefore, also what the achievements of European integration have been objectively and how they are perceived by the citizens. Here we will get an additional convincing explanation for the much more sober and even sceptical view of integration among the general public.

How did the Member States of the EU perform economically in the last decades? Two questions arise in this regard: Is it true that European integration has been so successful? How do the citizens throughout Europe perceive the achievements of the EU? It is well known that many citizens are quite critical in this regard. Political elites and some social scientists (Moussis 2006: 189f.) argue that the population does not recognize the true achievements of integration. In order to get a comprehensive view about this situation, we have to look both at objective developments and their subjective perception by the populations.

Looking at objective developments in some important socioeconomic indicators in the last decade – 1994–2005 – and comparing the EU–15 as a whole with its three main "rivals", the USA and Japan, the following situation emerges: In terms of economic growth the EU and Japan were far behind the USA; in terms of unemployment development in the EU was a failure showing the worst figures in all ten years; only in terms of inflation the EU did quite well, but not as well as Japan. Within the EU the countries of *Euroland* performed significantly worse than those outside of it (Denmark, Sweden, UK). There were big differences within the EU, however, in terms

of success: The "old" and large Member States, France, Germany, Italy, were much less successful than the younger South European members, Luxembourg, Ireland and Finland. In these countries, EU membership may have contributed to economic growth, although in a moderate way (Bornschier et al. 2004).

Let us no look at the perception and evaluation of these trends among the citizens. Asked about the role and success of the EU in several areas of politics, it turns out that negative evaluations overbalance the positive ones in five important indicators: 43% say that "the EU plays a negative role" in the area of unemployment (24% see a positive role), 51% in inflation (23% a positive), and 29% in social standards (22% a positive).[9] Only in two areas the positive evaluations are somewhat more frequent than the negative ones. (Economic growth and wealth: 41% positive, 35% negative; fight against crime 44% positive, 20% negative). People in countries with objective positive developments see them more positive, those in countries with negative developments more critically and negatively.[10]

Thus, in the perceptions of citizens the achievements of the EU are not very noteworthy. In addition, quite high proportions – between 40% and 80% – have concrete "fears about the building of Europe" (see *Table 2*). Among the six achievements mentioned the majority sees a positive effect in only one area, namely the perceived influence of one's own country in the EU. In two regards the negative evaluations far outweigh the positive ones: One is the over-proportional influence of the big countries, the other is the personal influence in the EU. 76% of the respondents in the 15–EU Member States feel that "the biggest countries have the most power in the EU"; but only 32% feel that "my own voice counts in the European Union." An even more negative picture is obtained if we look at the fears which the respondents associate with the EU. In only one among the nine items asked – the loss of national identity and culture – no majority of respondents exists who are not afraid of it. In four dimensions – job transfer to other member countries, drug trafficking, national payments to the EU, and difficulties for farmers – large majorities (between 62% and 74%) have fears in connection with European integration.

9 Results from Eurobarometer 61.0, Spring 2004d; N about 16.000.

10 The fact that the subjective evaluations of the EU politics among the general public are closely related to objective developments is also confirmed by multilevel regression analysis. Here, it turns out that positive developments in a country are clearly connected with positive evaluations, negative developments with negative evaluations in several areas. If, for instance, jobs and the employment situation developed positively, people recognize this in their evaluation of this sector.

Table 2. Perceived Achievements of the EU and Fears about the Building of Europe (2004)

	Tend to agree, %	Tend to disagree[1)], %
Perceived achievements		
I feel I am safer because (our country) is a member of the European Union	43.0	46.6
I feel we are more stable economically …	43.7	45.7
I feel we are more stable politically …	40.0	47.7
My voice counts in the EU	31.8	55.0
(Our country's) voice counts in the EU	62.8	26.9
The biggest countries have the most power in the EU	76.0	14.3
Fears about integration		
A loss of power for smaller Member States	49.4	42.0
An increase in drug trafficking and international organized crime	68.2	27.2
Our language being used less and less	39.7	55.7
Our country paying more and more to the EU	64.4	26.5
The loss of social benefits	53.6	38.5
The loss of national identity and culture	42.2	52.3
An economic crisis	47.7	42.5
The transfer of jobs to other member countries which have lower production costs	74.1	19.9
More difficulties for (nationality) farmers	62.2	26.2

1) Percentages missing up to 100% are "don't know"

Source: Eurobarometer 61 (Spring 2004). Questions 12 and 15; N=16216.

THE SEVEN FACES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. VARIATIONS IN THE DIVISION BETWEEN ELITES AND CITIZENS IN DIFFERENT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

European integration is seen quite differently in the different regions of Europe and among the different EU Member States. These differences can be summarized in a sociological typology which distinguishes between seven types. A short look at these types gives us additional insights into the reasons for the division between elites and citizens about integration. The seven types can be summarized as follows.

(1) *The EU as an undemocratic and bureaucratic Leviathan*: This view is predominant among citizens in Switzerland and Norway who rejected membership in the EU or a close economic union with it several times. The case of Switzerland is

particularly informative in this regard. Because of its highly differentiated internal social and political structure Switzerland can be considered as a "little EU" in itself; it is also a country very open to economic exchanges and immigration (about a fourth of its population are immigrants and foreigners). The Swiss political and economic elites strongly supported the access to the *European Economic Area* in 1992. Citizens, however, rejected. The main reasons were political: Switzerland would have lost its political neutrality; the quality of its democracy would have been undermined significantly, both in regard to its system of direct democracy and its strong federal structure; also in economic terms access to the EU was associated more with negative expectations. This was also the case in Norway; here, in addition, strong fears existed that the well-developed welfare state would be undermined by EU membership.

(2) *European integration as a necessary evil.* Under this heading we can subsume the United Kingdom (and, to a lesser degree, Sweden). There are four reasons for the sceptic attitude of Britons – in this case among both elites and citizens – about European integration: (a) Historically, Britain was the centre of the huge *British Commonwealth* empire, and it still maintains close ties with the successor organization, the *Commonwealth of Nations*. This is not a powerful, but nevertheless a rather vivid organization. (b) Britain also maintains close ties with the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, based on a common cultural heritage and intensive economic, social, cultural-scientific and political relations. (c) Britain has a strong tradition of economic and political liberalism, as well as an old and well-established democratic system; both make the Britons – like the Swiss – suspicious of a centralized political system and an all-encompassing welfare state. (d) As a consequence of these peculiarities, but also of the fact that Britain was the only country in Europe which was defeated neither in the First nor in the Second World War, national identity and pride are rather high. In this regard, Britain is an opposite case to Germany (see below).

(3) *The EU as a prop or crutch*. Several countries hope that through participation in European integration internal domestic problems can be solved which they have been unable to solve by themselves in their post-war history. The first of these areas is the economy: Countries characterized by persistent socio-economic problems, such as unemployment, high public deficits and rates of inflation, expect that the process of economic integration will provide a spur to accelerated economic growth helping to solve economic crisis phenomena. Second, in political terms: Countries lagging behind in terms of "democratic maturity" expect that membership in the European Union will help them establish firmly the democratic system and/or to improve the quality and efficiency of politics. The paradigmatic case here is Italy, a country characterized by a high degree of political instability, clientelism and corruption. Italians have a rather low pride in national democracy, but a rather positive view of integration; its political elites seem to expect that European integration will solve all problems of the country. A similar stance has been prevalent in the other three South European countries which had dictatorial governments far into the post-war period, Portugal, Spain and Greece.

(4) *The EU as a substitute for national identity*. There is only one, but the largest member country which fits into this type, namely Germany. Germans have a very

mixed and even problematic attitude toward integration. On the one side, this was economically one of the strongest countries in Western Europe (exemplified in the *Deutsche Mark*, one of the hardest currencies in the world) and, from this point of view it did not "need" integration. On the other hand Germans' responsibility for the Second World War and the Holocaust has left a deep imprint on collective memory, leading to a rather low level of national pride and a continuous feeling of shame (Noelle-Neumann and Köcher 1987; Westle 1999; Haller 1996). The attitudes of Germans toward European integration are deeply influenced by this shame (Diez Medrano 2003). This situation had a far-reaching consequence for German politics. Its population never got the chance to express their own view about the integration process. Surprisingly the same fact can be observed in most of the other Member States which had experienced periods of fascism during the twentieth century (Portugal, Italy, and Greece). The German political elites not only considered it as superfluous to ask the citizens about their consent to integration, but they found that this would even have been "dangerous" – a highly misleading argument.[11] The low level of national pride and the fear of a re-awakening of old demons have had definite consequences for the behavior of the German political elites in the process of integration. When the chance to re-unify the country opened up after the breakdown of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Chancellor Kohl saw a historically unique chance. In order to allow for the severe reservations of France and Britain concerning German reunification, he agreed to the introduction of a common EU currency, in which the French saw the most efficient way to counterbalance the economic preponderance of Germany and its *Bundesbank*. (Reimon and Weixler 2006: 83ff.; Dinan 1999: 130f.) He ignored that many German economic advisers as well as the majority of the population were against the substitution of the *Deutsche Mark* by the *Euro* (see also Shore 2000: 223). Given these facts, it is not surprising that data on public attitudes show a particularly pronounced split between elites and citizens in Germany concerning European integration.

(5) *European integration as an end in itself*. In post-communist Eastern Europe in many regards a situation arose that was similar to the one after the breakdown of authoritarian regimes in South Europe. They had to solve two problems at once: Transition to market economies, and the establishment of democratic institutions. By accession to the EU they hoped to accomplish both aims faster and more efficiently. However, among large segments of the populations there were also serious concerns about EU accession. First, the old *Nomenclatura* and their clienteles rightly feared a loss of power; in fact these groups are significantly less happy today than the middle strata of the post-communist societies (Haller and Hadler 2006). Second, people employed in the public service and in state-owned industries had to worry about their jobs since all these sectors were overstaffed and quite unproductive, compared to their western competitors. Finally, large segments of poorer people – working in blue-collar and service jobs, pensioners, people dependent on welfare, etc. – had to fear a

11 The argument is based on the fact that over 40% of Germans voted for Hitler in the early 1930s; however, among voters Hitler never got a majority. This was true, however, for the voting in the German Reichstag where the deputies voted with 82% of the votes in favour of Hitler's *Ermächtigungsgesetz* which enabled him to cross over the parliament in his next decisions.

reduction of many kinds of public support and a significant increase of prices for basic goods. We have already seen that many of these fears turned out as having been well-founded.

(6) *The EU as a means to (re-) gain global influence*. France is the country for which European integration constitutes a means to advance positive political interests. First, several of the most decisive political personalities in the European integration process – such as Jean Monnet, Robert Schumann, Jacques Delors, F. Mitterrand, G. d'Estaing – were French. But also Charles de Gaulle was decisive in this regard (Dinan 1999: 37). In spite of his blocking of British entry to the EEC and the curtailing of the powers of the Commission, it was de Gaulle who consolidated reconciliation between France and Germany. Furthermore, he proposed the *Common Agrarian Policy* (CAP), a central pillar of integration and he achieved the revaluation of the Council of government heads as the decisive political body in the EU. Second, the French political elites were highly successful in shaping the process of European integration according to their visions. They are the best educated and most determined in terms of their political aims. The centralization of the French state and the power of its bureaucracy have been crucial in this regard. The high officers in the Eurocracy are composed to a large proportion by French persons. Thus, "the French political class was able to construct in Brussels a European edifice which reflected the French vision of Europe, French habits and French interests" (Siedentop 2001: 136).

(7) *The European Union as a feeding dish*. A few small countries – Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland – are set apart from all others in terms of the relation of their elites and citizens toward European integration. The Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg is often quoted as being a paradigmatic example for the beneficial effects of integration. It is in fact one of the richest countries in the world and a considerable part of its wealth is directly connected with European integration. It has produced an outstanding number of influential political personalities concerned with European integration, and the country as a whole is very open in economic and cultural terms. Luxembourg, however, profits in a way from integration which is unique and cannot be obtained by other members. First, it hosts several EU institutions which employ about 6000 people; second, it is – in spite of its own wealth – the largest receiver of EU funds per head of the population; third, also the private sector takes advantages from EU membership (e.g., by enjoying tax reliefs); finally, because of its small size, Luxembourg has a privileged position in the political system of the EU which grants over-proportional weight to small countries; one MEP in Luxembourg represents only 70,000 voters, compared to Germany, where he or she represents 800,000 voters. Two other countries which might be subsumed at least partly under this category are Belgium and Ireland. The Belgian capital Brussels has become the capital of Europe; at least 50,000 persons are employed here in EU and other offices related to the EU; in addition building industry, tourism and many other service sectors profit from EU related activities. In 1991 the EU was worth 10% of GDP to Belgium (Shore 2000: 159). The third country in this category is Ireland. EU membership allowed this island to get rid of its exclusive integration with Britain and to develop close economic relations with other EU member countries; it profits strongly from diverse EU funds; its low corporate income taxes attracted foreign investors which established their administrative headquarters in

Ireland, eased by the fact that the dominant language is English. Most of these factors were absent in the poorer South European countries (Greece and Portugal) which, therefore, were by far less successful in economic terms.

Thus, in addition to the split between elites and citizens, we can observe that also quite different interests, aims and expectations are connected with European integration among the different member countries within the EU. For some of them, European integration is a means to achieve a new powerful role in the world, for others, it is a means to overcome economic backwardness and political instability. For some, the EU should remain (or become again) a big free market; others want that it develops further into a welfare state writ large. This fact is hardly conducive to the development of a clear and effective vision about the further process of integration.

CONCLUSION

Since the adoption of the *Treaty about the European Union* in Maastricht in 1991 an increasing division is emerging between elites and citizens about European integration. While the political, economic and new European bureaucratic elites are zealous about this process and use all means to further it, citizens throughout Europe are accepting it just as a matter of fact, and large groups in many countries are critical about it. In this paper, it has been shown that there are clear interests of the elites in integration which well explain their enthusiasm. However, there are also structural reasons for the increasing split between the elites and the citizens. On the one side, citizens throughout Europe are becoming more educated and critical; on the other side, the EU has taken over more and more competences from the nation states. The latter trend clashes sharply with the fact that the European Union exhibits a serious democratic deficit. Citizens can only very indirectly co-determine politics at the level of the EU; the directly elected European Parliament still does not have the crucial competences of a democratic parliament, that is, the autonomous proposal of laws and the election and de-selection of a government. This situation is all the more problematic because also the thesis that the EU can refer to a high level of output legitimacy did not come true. Contrary to the assertions of politicians and some social scientists (Scharpf 1999), the record of the EU in central matters of socioeconomic policy – economic growth, employment, inflation, internal security – is rather modest, compared to other large and advanced nation states such as the USA and Japan. Citizens are well aware of these deficits.

In this situation it appears quite problematic that the EU at the moment (March 2008) is pressing the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty which to 95% takes over the *Constitution for Europe* which was rejected by clear majorities of the French and Dutch citizens. This Treaty improves the democratic accountability and effectiveness of its institutions. The measures foreseen (for instance, strengthening the role of the European and the national parliaments, and the introduction of the right to initiative by EU citizens), however, are far from really resolving the problem of democratic deficit. Three issues stand out as most pressing at present, and they are a task of critical social science and politics alike: (a) The discussion and definition of the fundamental values,

goals and visions of the Union; (b) the definition of the competencies of the Union vis-à-vis the nation states; a clarification of this task would also be the first step toward a solution of the democratic deficit; (c) the solution of the dilemma between market liberalization and the preservation of the positive elements of the European welfare states.

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