

***HOW ARE REFERENDUMS ON EUROPE DIFFERENT FROM
ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?***

PROFESSOR RICHARD ROSE FBA

Robert Schuman Centre, EUI & U. of Strathclyde Glasgow
prof_r_rose@yahoo.co.uk

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PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY: PROBLEMS OF AGGREGATION

- * Electors vote for a package of policies that is better than any alternative but falls short of fully representing them
- * National governments win a minority of popular votes and coalitions aggregate parties
- * Big parties aggregate different views: soft/hard, pro/anti EU
- * To speak of organization is to speak of bias. Schattschneider

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADDS MULTI-NATIONAL AGGREGATION

- * Median national party has 2 MEPS out of 751 MEPs. Most MEPS spend most of their week working on collective action problems in a foreign country and working in foreign language with foreigners
- * Party Groups aggregate up to 40 national parties from 28 countries
- * Party Groups vary greatly in the extent to which the aggregation of their MEPs' national commitments create cohesion or disagreement within each multi-national group
- * Absolute majority requires Black/Red coalition of opposites

See R. Rose & G. Borz, 'Aggregation before Representation in European Parliament Party Groups', *West European Politics*, 2013, 36,3, 474-497.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY vs. LEGAL-RATIONAL LEGITIMACY

- * Referendum majority has direct democracy legitimacy
- * EU Treaties give legal-rational legitimacy (Weber) to EU institutions
- * Multi-national EU institutions can respond in their own interest to national Referendums
- * Prime Ministers face the Goldoni problem of serving two masters: a majority of their national electorate and a consensus in the European Council

(See “Referendum Challenges to the EU’s Policy Legitimacy—and How the EU Responds”. Journal of European Public Policy DOI (10.1080/13501763.2018.1426034)

REFERENDUMS: A DIRECT DEMOCRACY INPUT TO POLICY

About a single policy, not a package of issues in a party programme

Directly decisive without politicians, parties as untrusted intermediaries

Available at national level in 26 member states; not at EU level

Binary choices divisive not consensual

Anti-EU campaigners can invoke simple absolute values

Pro-EU campaigners may invoke instrumental benefits

NATIONAL REFERENDUM OFFERS CLARITY OF CHOICE

- * Vote on a single issue, not a package. E.g. Remain/Leave
- * Dichotomous choice requires an absolute majority
- * Ballot can be politically binding.
- * Endorse a valued goal. BUT implementation unclear
- * Absolute majority requires combining votes from a cohesive protest party with a ceiling on its support and splitting vote of governing parties, e.g. Brexit 2016

SHIFTING SOURCES OF NATIONAL LEGITIMACY

DECLINE IN ABSOLUTE TRADITIONAL VALUES

Elites no longer free to make treaties with permissive consensus

Corporatist elites can't deliver church members, classes, interests

DECLINE IN INSTRUMENTAL TRUST IN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Party leaders not trusted to deliver party policies

Politicians no longer trusted as agents of voter preferences

Outputs don't match promises (cf. David Easton)

DEMOCRATIC INPUTS INCREASINGLY VALUED

Opinion polls report what people want

Politicians' rhetoric reflects what people want

SALIENT EU POLICIES CREATE BOTH WINNERS & LOSERS

MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE MICRO IMPACT

Eurozone: Stable prices. Unemployment, especially youth

Single market: + Global market: more competition

Macro-economic net gains produce some micro-losers

MACRO-SOCIETAL CHANGE IMPACTS TRADITIONAL VALUES

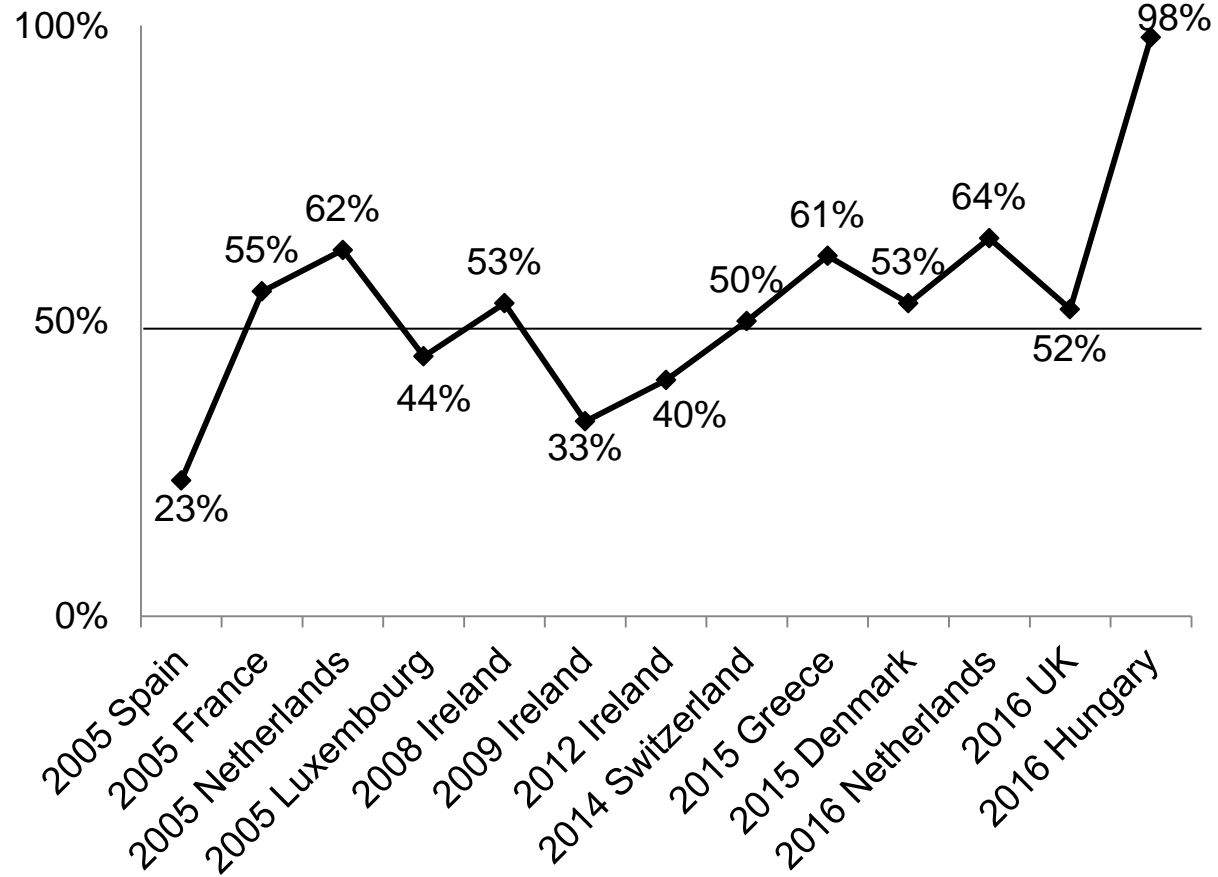
Free movement mixes peoples from 28 national societies

Extra-European migration increases mixtures

National societies become multi-cultural, not European

NATIONAL REFERENDUMS WITH EU CONSEQUENCES SINCE 2004

% anti-EU policy



Mean anti-EU vote without Hungary: 56 per cent

Since 2014 all six votes reject closer EU integration

National democratic legitimacy challenges EU legitimacy

PRIME MINISTER HAS A GOLDONI PROBLEM: SERVES 2 MASTERS

Elected by and accountable for policies to national electorate

Ex officio member of European Council making collective EU policies

Council has legal-rational legitimacy to act

Median PM represents 2 percent of EU population;

Council has 21 small states

Accountable for decisions to 27 other PMs + Treaties

FAMILIES OF THEORIES EXPLAINING

SUPPORT FOR REFERENDUMS

Populist theories

1. Left out of representative democracy
2. More right-wing
3. Left behind by Europeanisation, globalisation

Democratic theories

4. Favour participation in politics (Robert Dahl)
5. A broad cross-section of Europeans

SUPPORT FOR REPRESENTATIVES:

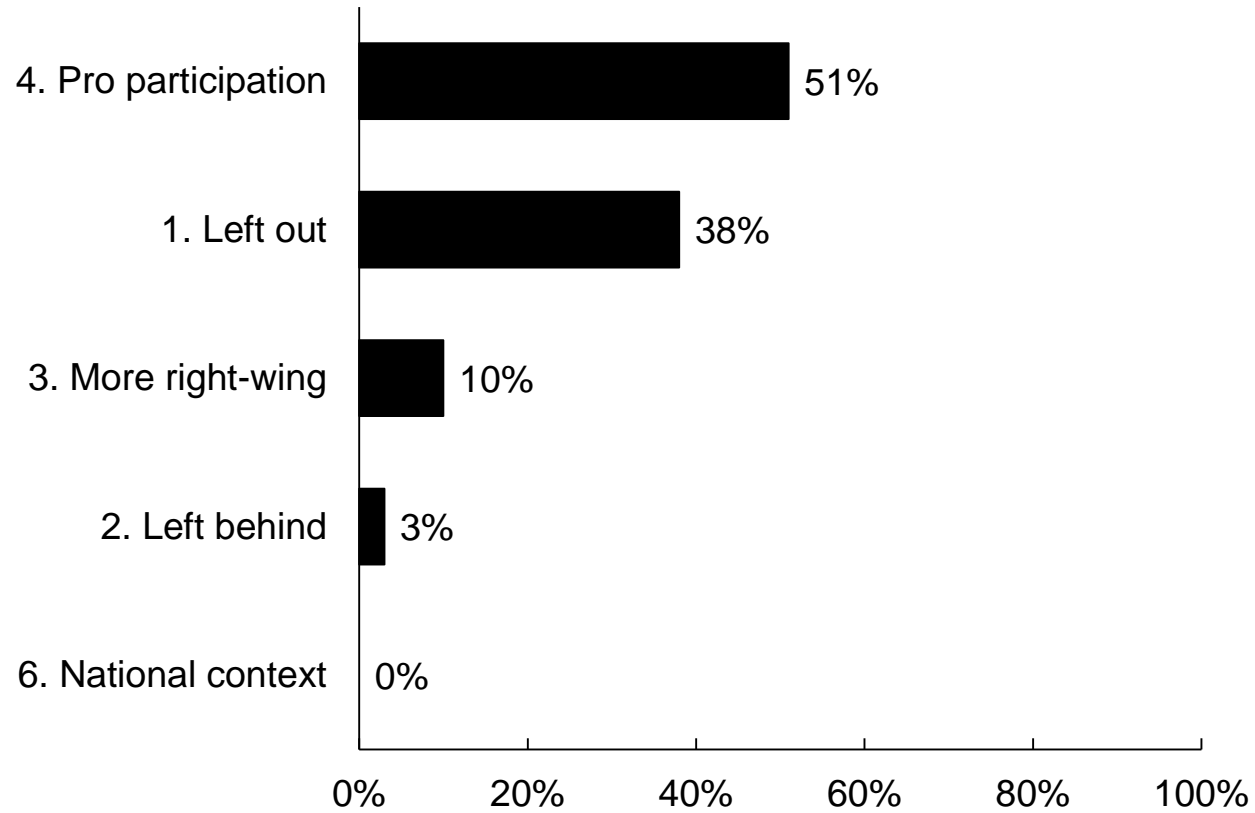
6. Trust MPs, parties to represent people like me
7. Governors, experts know more than I do (Hibbing)

EVERY SITUATION IS UNIQUE, SPECIFIC TO:

8. Issue
9. National context

SUPPORT FOR HYPOTHESES IN MULTI-LEVEL LOGIT ANALYSIS

(Net sum of predicted probabilities of influence on demand for referendums)



Source: Multi-level logit analysis of ISSP 2014 survey in 17 countries; for details see Slide 7.

MULTI-LEVEL LOGIT: SUPPORT FOR REFERENDUMS

	Coefficients	Std error	Predicted probability ¹
Favour participation in politics			
Q30 Want more chances to participate	0.219***	(0.015)	0.308
Q49 Discusses politics	0.118***	(0.021)	0.121
Q21 Follows political news	0.008	(0.012)	Not significant
Q1 Citizens should always vote	0.046***	(0.011)	0.085
Left out by representative democracy			
Q52 No choice between parties	0.149***	(0.018)	0.142
Q38 Government doesn't care what I think	0.087***	(0.017)	0.075
Q46 Politicians only out for themselves	-0.098***	(0.019)	-0.073
Q58 Dissatisfied with democracy	-0.062***	(0.008)	-0.092
Right-wing views			
Q44 Self-placed extreme right (codes 8-10)	0.153**	(0.049)	0.034
Q44 Self-placed extreme left (codes 0-2)	0.048	(0.053)	Not significant
Q10 Ban extreme religious groups	0.098***	(0.019)	0.062
Q29 No regard for minority rights	0.006	(0.015)	Not significant
Q34 Anti-resident not citizens voting	0.009	(0.009)	Not significant
Left behind			
No higher education	0.186***	(0.040)	0.028
Below median income	0.052	(0.040)	Not significant
Older	0.016	(0.011)	Not significant
Woman	-0.009	(0.035)	Not significant
National context			
Number of national referendums	0.090	(0.064)	Not significant
Anti-EU vote 2014	0.039	(0.062)	Not significant
National parties anti-EU	0.000	(0.000)	Not significant
Constant	-2.981***	(0.201)	0.011
Observations	16775		
Pseudo R^2	0.287		
Log likelihood	-10249.664		
LR test (chi2(2))	350.31***		

*** $p < 0.001$ ** < 0.01

¹ The predicted change on the dependent variable when the independent variable goes from lowest to highest value and all other independent variables held at their mean scores.

WHY CALL A REFERENDUM

Principled Euroscepticism

Objection to specific policy of national government & EU

Timing opportunistic, fixed by conditions in national politics.

Timing not restricted to once in five years, like EP