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Research Article

Crafting Emotions: The valence of time in narratives about the future of Europe in the Council of Europe (1949)

Martijn Kool and Trineke Palm

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Abstract

How are emotional narratives used to mobilise support for or opposition against policy ideas about the institutional set-up of European integration? This article systematically examines the first General Debate of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1949, which featured as a laboratory for the rise and demise of various blueprints for European integration. This article makes a threefold contribution. First, it introduces a narrative approach that combines the valence of emotions with their temporal dimension. Second, it demonstrates how these emotionally charged narratives of hope, redemption, fear and sacrifice provide the affective glue of an emerging (transnational) emotional community that cuts through nationality and political colour. Third, taking a historical approach this article points at the need to historicise the role of emotions in European integration.

Keywords

Emotional narrative; European integration; Council of Europe; Valence; Time/history; Emotional community

The narrative turn is relatively new to the field of European studies. Moreover, in studies on European integration it has had a contemporary focus (Garcia 2017; Cloet 2017). For example, Manners and Murray (2016) have distinguished between six distinct narratives of European integration, ranging from the Nobel narrative to the Green Europe narrative. These narratives are critical to the 'sensemaking' and legitimacy of the European Union (EU) and its predecessors (Garcia 2017). Emotions are a distinctive feature to these narratives. As Kaelble (2001: 27) has argued that without a feeling-dimension, building a European identity is an unrealistic proposal. Building on a wide range of literature on the emotional turn in history (Plamper 2010; Frevert, Bailey, Eitler, Gammerl et al. 2014), and specifically research on the emotional and cultural aspects of the origins of the Concert of Europe in the early nineteenth century (De Graaf 2019), we could argue that emotional narratives have been utilised in earlier phases of European cooperation and integration. This historicising context highlights the way the focus on the recent history of European integration has been narrowed down far too much on technocratic, bureaucratic decision making processes, and has forgotten all about these earlier emotive strands.

While it has been argued that the process of European integration has become politicised in domestic politics after the Treaty of Maastricht (Hooghe and Marks 2009), this is not to say that the "permissive consensus" of the preceding decades was uncontested and self-explanatory. From its very start, the process of European integration has been the outcome of a complex interaction between the ideas, interests and emotions of a variety of actors, with different national backgrounds and political color. These ideas, interests and emotions have been integrated in competing narratives about the future of Europe.

As stated, some of these narratives may be traced back to nineteenth century history of the Concert of Europe, to the interwar period, or to the pressure cooking period of the and World War II. During this last period, different economic, political and ecumenical transnational networks (Lipgens 1985a; 1985B; Kaiser 2009; Kaiser and McMahon 2017) developed several blueprints that envisioned a united Europe. Ideas about the institutional set-up of European integration, including its intergovernmental and supranational blueprints, were pushed with a wide variety of emotional vocabulary.

Far from being just a rational, technocratic exercise, these blueprints for Europe were full of emotional vocabulary that provided the affective glue for the European community that was to be constructed. For example, Coudenhove-Karlergi's Pan-Europa (1923) was an emotional pamphlet of reconciliation aimed at expanding the horizon of expectations of his contemporaries and breaking the vicious circle of hate and fear among France and Germany (Palm 2018). Moreover, the relatively unknown resistance movement of the Freiburger Bonhoeffer-Kreis with German theologians and economists developed ideas about a European order, contesting the national-socialist family-metaphor by connecting it with a different emotional vocabulary (Steehouder and Van den Berg, 2019). Yet, with the onset of the Cold War, again a new historical context enveloped the process of European integration and infused it with a particular set of emotions regarding threat, fear of revolution and dictatorial repression, for terror, and for loss of specific 'western' interests.

However, little is known about the way in which emotional narratives featured in the 'era of experimentation' of the 1940s and 1950s (Van Zon 2019: 37). In those years, several initiatives aimed at organising a lasting European peace and the economic and military reconstruction of Western Europe, such as the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (1948) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949). Yet, in contrast to these initiatives the Council of Europe (1949) was not so much the product of governmental initiative and/or the United States' (US) involvement, but the outcome of the Congress of Europe (1948) which was organised by several European movements and brought together over 800 participants from 12 countries to discuss the future of Europe. Moreover, it stood out by its Consultative Assembly. With the Consultative Assembly, an institutionalised forum emerged for a continuing transnational public debate about the cultural, economic and political future of (Western) Europe. While its formal powers were limited, the

Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe was a unique laboratory, a policy subsystem, for the rise and demise of various blueprints for European integration.[1]

The literature has treated the Council of Europe as an 'artificial biotope' of a rigid debate between functionalism, federalism and unionism (see Macmullen 2004). While the Consultative Assembly did not live up to the high expectations of many federalists at the time, its presence nevertheless was 'unprecedented and unparalleled' (Van Zon 2019: 39). Moreover, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe stood out for 'staging events that produced images of European unity' (Krumrey 2018: 114). It set a powerful precedent for political assemblies to follow.

Confronted with rising geopolitical tensions between East and West, combined with the memory of a recent past characterized by the suffering and ravage brought on by six years of war, the first debate of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe symbolises the early post-war political debates on how European cooperation should be organised.

This article examines the way in which emotional narratives featured in the 'battle of ideas' at the first post-war General Debate of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1949. How are emotional narratives used to mobilise support for or opposition against policy ideas about the political structure of European integration? It shows that rather than detailed, technical negotiations about the institutional set-up of European integration, these early debates were characterised by competing political emotional narratives about the past, present and future of Europe.

The article makes a threefold contribution. First, conceptually, it introduces the notion of 'time' in the analysis of narratives. It distinguishes between the valence attached to experiences and expectations that are integrated into a particular narrative. Second, with regards to the academic field of European integration history, it demonstrates how these emotionally charged narratives provide the affective glue of a European emerging transnational emotional community, cutting through nationality and political colour. With this transnational and emotional lens, this article introduces an additional mechanism to better understand the collaborative effort of many of the (lesser) known 'founding fathers' of the European project in its early days. Third, taking a historical approach this article points at the need to historicise the relationship between emotions and ideas, i.e. both ideas and their associated emotional vocabulary are not static, but have to be understood against the backdrop of their particular historical context. In doing so, the article problematises the ahistorical nature of the dominant (neo)functionalist and intergovernmentalist theoretical approaches within the academic field, whilst at the same time emphasising the importance of institutions that preceded the European Coal and Steel Community such as the Council of Europe within the historiography of the EU.

The next section outlines the analytical framework for a narrative analysis that focuses on the interplay of different emotions in a particular narrative. As such, it elaborates upon *how* the emotional quality of narratives matter. In particular, this article presents an analytical framework that connects emotions to political ideas by means of the notion of 'time'. It distinguishes between four types of emotional narratives, based on a different valence attached to either the past or future. This way it demonstrates that it is the particular combination of different emotions integrated in a narrative which defines the emotional quality of political ideas. Subsequently, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe is introduced, followed by the systematic analysis of the emotional narratives of the participants in the debate about the future of Europe in 1949. In the concluding section we reflect upon the central findings of the case study and on their implications for the study of the EU as an emotional community.

EMOTIONAL NARRATIVES: CONNECTING IDEAS, EMOTIONS AND HISTORY

The emotional turn in history has led to an increased attention for the way in which emotions are spoken of throughout history, how the meaning of particular emotions has changed (Frevert, Bailey, Eitler, Gammerl et al. 2014) and how a shared emotional vocabulary and shared norms about appropriate emotional expressions contributed to the emergence of emotional communities and emotional regimes (Plamper 2010; Boddice 2014). Central to the emergence of emotional communities are emotional narratives that provide a coherent explanation of the key emotions that underpin the emotional community. Narratives aim 'to transfer information, shape perceptions, develop targets, build coalitions and affect change' (Weiss 2020: 106). Rather than taking a structural approach, focusing on the coherence of the narratives, this study examines the emotional characteristics of the narratives about Europe. We assume that carefully developed, intentionally and strategically used to mobilise support for or opposition against policy ideas, a convincing emotional narrative may trump institutional and material resources.

As Cox and Beland (2013) have pointed out, the valence of policy ideas (i.e. their positive or negative emotional appeal) is critical to understand why some ideas have become more prominent than others. Moreover, Miller (2019: 248) argues that emotions contribute to the power of a narrative – 'they can add, subtract or alter meaning'. So, to understand how ideas matter, we have to explore the way in which emotions serve to constrain or enable the resonance of particular policy ideas.

In this article, we conceptualise the relationship between emotions and ideas as constitutive, i.e. two sides of the same coin. Emotions are not an addition to ideas but are an essential component for understanding their meaning (Mercer 2010: 7). Emotions without ideas have no object, and ideas without emotions lack the appeal to mobilise. Moreover, as Mercer (2010: 6) has pointed out, emotion and cognition are closely intertwined: 'emotions influence how and what one believes, adding value to facts and capturing a distinctive way of seeing situations'.

Emotions in narratives are by definition social and cultural. They are social in that they transcend the level of the individual and enter the public realm. As such, they have a strong collective dimension. Moreover, they are cultural in that they are constructed, i.e. not static nor given. Hence, emotions should not be confused with 'feelings' (personal experiences) and 'affect' (bodily expressions) (Clement and Sangar 2018: 5). Furthermore, emotions in narratives refer to emotions as expressed in vocabulary. Emotional vocabulary includes not only emotion words such as anger, fear, hope, shame, pride, but also metaphors, ideographs or emotional beliefs such as freedom, democracy and terrorism (Miller 2019; Koschut 2018a).

A classical narrative analysis focuses on the role of different actors, such as hero, villain or victim. These roles as such already constitute strong valence. However, as Ricoeur (2002: 37) has argued: 'time has disappeared from the horizon of the theories of history and of narrative'. Hence, in this narrative analysis, we do not so much focus on actors, but rather on 'time' as the structuring component of emotional narratives. According to Reinhart Koselleck (2005: 259-262), our perception of the past is limited to the 'space of experience', i.e. a selection of the many possibilities to interpret the past into a more or less coherent picture. Moreover, our expectations about the future are determined by the 'horizon of expectation'. Both experience and expectation can be adjusted and mobilised to serve both support and opposition to new ideas. As such, it is critical to understand the valence attached to both. The emotional vocabulary in a narrative that connects a reflection of the past with the expectations of the future binds the individual to the community – it takes emotions beyond the realm of personal experience and morphs into an active form of persuasion. A shared horizon of time constructs a shared 'we' (Holden 2019).

Emotional narratives serve two purposes. First, they serve to mobilise opposition or support of particular policy ideas. Whereas, for example, a shared narrative of anger and fear might

drive politicians and societal actors to expand anti-terrorism legislation in the aftermath of acts of terrorism, a communal sense of civic hope or pride may fuel the flames of egalitarian reform for in segregated communities (Troost, van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013). Within the context of the history of the European integration, one could mention the debate about a European army in the 1950s featured around competing emotional narratives that capitalised on fear of either Germany or the Soviet Union and (dis)trust of the Atlantic alliance (Aron 1957) as example of the mobilising effect of emotional narratives. Second, they contribute to the 'intersubjective patterns of standardized emotional expressions that underpin collective meanings and beliefs' (Koschut 2018b: 328) which emerge as the outcome of a process of social interaction and negotiation. As such, it is possible that a variety of emotional 'constellations' exist, which include or exclude, privilege or downplay particular emotions. In this process of interaction and negotiation, emotional narratives provide the building blocks for an emotional community – they provide an 'affective glue' in forging together constituencies for particular blueprints of European integration.

Table 1 Coding scheme master emotion

		Past	
		Negative Valence	Positive Valence
Future	Negative Valence	Self Other	Self Other
	Positive Valence	Self Other	Self Other

In contrast to research that distinguishes between forward- and backward-looking narratives (Rosoux 2017), this narrative analysis examines the way in which both the past and future feature in each narrative, by analysing the emotional vocabulary that is associated with the narrative. With this narrative analysis we are focused on the emotional structure of each narrative. In other words we aim to identify the master emotion that connects the understanding of both the past and the future. This master emotion can either have a positive or negative valence and be self- or other regarding (Table 1). For example, pride is a positive self-regarding emotion and shame is a negative self-regarding emotion.

For the purpose of this article, each individual speech of a member of the Consultative Assembly during the first General Debate on the political structure of Europe, a total of 45, was analysed. These speeches were analysed with an 'emotional discourse analysis' as introduced by Koschut (2018b). An emotional discourse analysis focusses on the existing system and patterns of emotional beliefs in relation to the use of these emotions in speech acts and the way they resonate within society, therefore focusing on the prevalence of certain emotions rather than their frequencies (Koschut 2018b: 283). We took a three-step approach. First, for each speech we did not only look at the direct expressions of emotion (*anger, fear, hope jealousy, shame, pride*) but also included more indirect emotional clues such as metaphors (*beacon of democracy*, *dark abyss*, *problem from hell*) in relation to their projection of time (Koschut 2018b: 284-285). Second, we coded the emotional discourse of each speech in terms of valence (i.e. positive or negative) and time (i.e. forward or backward looking). Third, based on the results of the coding of individual speeches, which may encompass a wide variety of emotional vocabulary, we distinguished between four master emotions that reflects the understanding of both the past and the future of Europe in that particular narrative. Based on the results, a total of four master emotional narratives could be traced, as shown in Table 1.

In addition to emotional discourse analysis, as described above, we also included the nationality and political affiliation for each actor. This way we are able to examine whether

particular emotional narratives are associated with nationality and/or political colour, or whether these emotional narratives transcended national borders and political ideology. The latter would demonstrate that emotional narratives provide the affective glue for an emerging European emotional community that supersedes nationality and political colour.

To understand the particular setting in which these emotional narratives were constructed, we will first outline how the Consultative Assembly emerged as an emotional community that institutionalized the interaction between a transnational elite of politicians with different ideologies.

THE EMERGENCE OF AN EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY: THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The early post-war political debates about the future of Europe were shaped by the shared horror of the two World Wars and the rising geopolitical tensions between the Soviet Union and the US. The ravage brought about by six years of war provided a 'window of opportunity' to break a vicious circle of nationalism and interstate conflict. In this post-war context, beyond the circles of government, the cause for European integration was enthusiastically pushed forward by various transnational European Movements with, as noteworthy endeavour, the joint organisation of the Congress of Europe in The Hague of May 1948.

With over 800 participants from Western Europe, this Congress had been the starting point of a public debate about the future of Europe. With the Congress of The Hague, a united Europe turned from a projection into a living reality (Van Zon 2019: 38). A sense of urgency was felt. At the Congress of the Hague, some would even speak of the 'Emergency Council of Europe' (Council of Europe 1999). In its concluding political, economic and cultural resolutions, the attending members of the Congress expressed the wish for a transnational political assembly to continue this debate (Guerrieri 2014). The origin of the Consultative Assembly can be traced back to this moment in history.

These efforts of the European Movements institutionalised into the Council of Europe, which was established in 1949, and initially consisted of 12 member states: Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom (UK). In addition to a Council of Ministers, the Council of Europe also created a Consultative Assembly, consisting of members of national parliament of the member states. This was a distinctive feature compared to other European integration initiatives at that time and allowed for a continuing transnational public debate about the future of Europe. While its formal powers were limited, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe was a unique laboratory, a policy subsystem, for the rise and demise of various blueprints for European integration. Strasbourg became the centre of the debate about the future of European unity (Van Zon 2019: 38).

The Consultative Assembly provided a forum for true transnational public debate about the cultural, economic and political future of (Western) Europe. Most members were already part of existing transnational, transatlantic, religious, economic and political networks. This includes, for example, renowned political actors such as André Philip, Constantijn Patijn, and Jean Rey, who all were members of the Ecumenical Commission on European Co-operation of the World Council of Churches (Leustean 2014), or renowned politicians such as Winston Churchill, Duncan Sandys and Paul-Henri Spaak who simultaneously were member of the European Movement.

For many the Council of Europe and the Consultative Assembly heralded the beginning of a new phase in the grand debate on the future of the European continent – as a departure of the old, imperial power politics of the Concert of Europe in the nineteenth century, and of the diverging, protectionist and nationalist narrative of the early twentieth century. The public enthusiasm for the endeavour was illustrated by a public gathering of over 30,000

citizens and representative from the various European social movements preceding the opening of the Assembly on 12 August 1949 (Brugmans 1949).

On 13 August the Assembly decided to dedicate its first 'grand debate' to the topic of the political structure of Europe (Council of Europe 1949). So, in its fifth and sixth sitting, the 87 members of the Consultative Assembly were asked to 'consider any necessary changes in the *political structure* of Europe to achieve a greater unity between the Members of the Council of Europe and to make an effective European cooperation' (Consultative Assembly (CA), 1949, 5th sitting, p. 132).[2] Rather than voting on a preconceived policy proposal introduced by the Committee of Ministers, the explicit aim of this debate was to find consensus through plans and amendments on a consultative report to be sent to the Committee of Ministers.

The transnational character of the assembly shaped the parliamentary procedural format. Official national delegations did not exist. Hence, official documents would be sent to individual representatives (CA 1949, 5th sitting, p. 130). Also, the representatives seated themselves alphabetically, disregarding nationality as constitutive element of the Assembly (see Van Zon 2019: 67). The official languages of the Council of Europe (English and French) served as the linguae franca for the transnational debate. However, a representative was allowed to speech in his native language, provided he would bring an interpreter or provide a consecutive interpretation of his speech in either of these official languages (CA, 1950, Rules of Procedure, rules 18 and 19).

CONNECTING PAST AND FUTURE: CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Reflecting the cleavages already visible at the Congress of Europe in 1948 in The Hague, this first debate of the Consultative Assembly revolved around three competing policy ideas of institutionalising European integration: unionism (focus on economic intergovernmental integration), federalism (focus on supranational political integration) and functionalism (focus on supranational economic integration).

Whereas the federalists strongly believed in the necessity of merging state sovereignty into supranational political and economic authorities that could govern Europe as a union, the unionists promoted an intergovernmental blueprint for Europe, based on the principle of state sovereignty. Somewhere in the middle, the functionalists adhered to a non-political economic sectoral approach of integration based on the idea that gradual integration of sectors would be an alternative that could please both federalists and unionists.[3]

These different blueprints of European integration often cut across nationality and political colours. For example, while the Greek Grégoire Cassimatis was a determined federalist, his fellow national Léon Maccas was keen on keeping the unionist Brits on board (Veremis and Constas 1985). Similarly, the Dutch and French socialists were divided with Hendrik Brugmans and André Philip being in favour of a federalist approach and Guy Mollet and Marinus Van der Goes van Naters in favour of functionalism (see Lipgens 1985b: 12; Heinen 1985: 357).

While the labels of 'unionism', 'federalism' and 'functionalism' were omnipresent to differentiate allies from opponents, the way in which they are used indicates quite some confusion about the precise meaning of those terms and their importance is questioned. Georg Bohy, a Belgian Socialist argued that 'whether it is unionist or federal does not matter, so long as it functions efficiently'.[4] With reference to the man in the street, these labels are referred to as 'questions of pure theory'[5] and 'arguments of a more or less convincing theoretical character'.[6] Rather than having to do with a rigid ideology, at this stage the different labels seem to be associated with a particular emotional vocabulary about the past and future of European integration. So, it is not about precisely defined policy positions, but the emotional vocabulary that forms the fabric of these narratives.

Table 2 Emotional narratives

		Past	
		Negative Valence	Positive Valence
Future	Negative Valence	Self: Sacrifice	Other: Fear
	Positive Valence	Self: Redemption	Self: Pride

The narratives that emerge from this debate give a vivid account of an emerging emotional community that had to develop a shared emotional vocabulary from partly overlapping and competing emotions (see Table 2). They evolve around four master emotions that are distinctive in terms of the valence attached to Europe's past and future: pride, redemption, fear and sacrifice. The interaction between these emotional narratives would inform and shape subsequent steps in the process of European integration.

Pride

The narrative of *Pride* projected positive emotional vocabulary associated with a glorious past to the future of the European continent and its role in the world. It emphasises the superiority and uniqueness of Europe, both as a continent and as a culture. 'Europe cannot create itself except by reverting to the tradition which has made it great, a tradition of giving itself to the world and becoming its school-teacher', French Socialist Jean Le Bail stated.[7] Similarly, the British Labour representative Seymour Cocks argued that 'Europe saved herself by her energies and the world by her example'.[8]

References to the past served to underline Europe's 'greatness' and highlight its significant contributions to the development of culture, economics and politics all over the world. This emotional narrative of Pride pointed at the shared heritage of the European people, a common social and cultural fabric that evolved ever since the dawn of Greek and Roman civilizations.[9] The narrative tells a historical deterministic story of a unique continent that witnessed an unparalleled development. This sense of pride is captured in the contribution made by the Greek Conservative Constantin Callias who reminded his colleagues that 'all states can be proud of an old and illustrious history'.[10] As such this Pride-narrative points at the way in which the use of emotional vocabulary served to define the nexus between European integration and the pervasive sense of western superiority, heavily imbued with 'shadows of empire' and colonialism (Puri 2020; Hansen 2002; Hansen and Jonsson 2016).

This historical legacy is then used to legitimise Europe's role in the world. By expanding the space of experience to the ancient history of Europe, including a strong cultural emphasis on the transnational interaction within this history, such as those of Christianity, the Enlightenment, or great European intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the World Wars were depicted as anomalies on the way to a new age of European cooperation. Although this emotional narrative recognised that both World Wars severely damaged this European endeavour, it emphasised the cohesive nature of the European peoples and the role they yet have to play on the world stage.[11]

As such, national diversity was not a threat to European unity but strengthened it.[12] The diversity was subordinate to the forces for unity which are deeply rooted in a tradition of 2,500 years of European civilization.[13] European cooperation would become the infrastructure to enable the (cultural) cross-border interaction of the European peoples, just as in its illustrious past. Therefore, the potential transfer of sovereignty from the member states to a supranational political body was seen in positive terms: it was a rebirth.[14] There was no doubt about popular support for this endeavour: 'every citizen must … pledge its faith'.[15] Jean Le Bail refered to the European Motherland which does appeal emotionally to a common European citizenship, in addition to the national Fatherland.[16]

This Pride-narrative therefore positioned itself explicitly against the Fear-narrative. In the words of Jean Le Bail: 'I do not like the expression: to save Europe. It seems to savour of hesitation, I dare not say of fear, but also of defeatism'.[17]

In short, this emotional narrative assumed a certain historical linearity and determinism. With European unity, Europe will restore its place in the world. Europe's rich history (past), materialised in a sense of cultural belonging that still exists today (present), is the unique DNA of a continent that will restore itself to greatness (future).

Redemption

The emotional narrative of *Redemption* has a more negative outlook of Europe's past. It emphasises the violent history of the European continent, especially those of the recent two World Wars. William Norton, a socialist from Ireland, uses a cynical style to paint a painful picture of Europe:

> In our time we have been treated to the wasteful pleasure of two devastating wars. … Nobody can deny that the investment in war by Europe has yielded generous and indeed abundant dividends in the form of destruction and the impoverishment of the people of Europe … The cemeteries of Europe today are the resting place of men and women who had talents and a passion to use those talents for the betterment of Europe.[18]

In this emotional narrative the negative evaluation of the past is internal to Europe itself. Rather than "greatness" it emphasises the "weakness" of Europe and the need to subdue "national feelings."[19]

This emotional narrative calls for the destruction of the 'archaic conception of the absolute sovereignty of States'[20] and emphasises the need to break with the 'old political system that is outdated'[21] and stresses that the need for 'a new spirit'.[22] This new approach should be based on 'frankness, on honesty of purpose, on truth'.[23] It means a clear break with the past: 'burning our boats and never going back to a policy of autarchy and isolation'.[24] The task is to build a 'third Europe' after the first Europe that ended with the Reformation and Renaissance and the second Europe that 'crashed around our ears … with the two world wars'.[25]

Compared with the Pride-narrative its take of the future is more careful. It highlights the fragile state of Europe and, hence, the necessity for gradual steps: 'Europe can and must become a continuous creation, a living, moving coherent and flexible organism'.[26] Also, in contrast to the Pride-narrative it is humbler in its relationship with others. As Lodovico Benvenuti, an Italian Christian Democrat, put it: 'We must live with our feet on the ground – but we must use them to walk, not trample on others'.[27]

In short, this emotional narrative emphasises a clear break with the past and appeals to the future with cautious positive valence. References to the 'dark age of nationalism' fit with a broader current among post-war intellectuals back then (Greiner 2018). It acknowledges the 'long-term spiritual development and transformation of ideas' that still has to take place.[28] Therefore, the process of European integration that follows from this emotional narrative is gradual.

Fear

In contrast to the emotional narratives of Pride and Redemption, the third and fourth emotional narratives evolved around a much less positive assessment of the future. The horizon of expectation of the third emotional narrative is characterised by fear, emphasising the necessity of European integration with reference to external dangers, most notably the dangers presented by the new Cold War related threats of communism, revolution, fifth columns and atomic warfare.

Like the Pride-narrative it aimed at a rebirth of Europe's role on the world stage. As André Philip, a French Socialist and a vocal proponent of federalism, put it:

A Europe united, politically and economically, conscious of her destiny and determined to strive to unity, will play a great role in world affairs and bring peoples everywhere a message they still may need.[29]

Similarly, another Frenchmen, the Christian Democrat Georges Bidault felt it as the Council's responsibility to ensure that 'the old Europe should become the new Europe'.[30]

Yet, in contrast to the Pride-narrative, the narrative of Fear had a negative valence: Europe's survival was at stake. The urgency is underlined by strong dichotomies: it was a matter of 'life and death'[31], 'unite or perish'[32], or 'swim together or sink together'.[33] In this emotional narrative Europe was powerful prior to the war, but had been severely weakened – it was an 'easy prey for totalitarian attack'.[34] André Philip points at the 'gravest disasters and crisis' that will overwhelm Europe if it did not unite.[35]

The fear of losing out did not so much concern Europe as a geographic or economic unity as such, but rather concerned the terms of this unification. Fearful of the Communist threat, the French Gaullist Gabriel Bolifraud pointed out: 'if unity between the free peoples is not realised, unity will be imposed sooner or later by the masters of those who are no longer free' – a clear reference to the history of national-socialist terror and the present danger of communist totalitarianism.[36] Similarly, Grégoire Cassimatis feared that '[Europe] will unite in a different way from what we desire, with ideals which we do not accept, and for ends other than those which our peoples today aspire'.[37]

In addition to fear of Soviet aggression and absolute dependency on the US, a third fear refered to the point of gravity moving away from Europe, as expressed by the Turkish representative Feridun Fikri Düsünsel: 'the annihilation, or even the weakening of Europe, would mean the shattering of the whole world'.[38]

It painted a dark picture of death, exhaustion, weakness and annihilation to argue for the importance of European integration. The year 1952 played a pivotal role in this emotional narrative. In this year, the Marshall Plan would come to an end, seriously threatening the post-war economic growth witnessed by the various member states. The Marshall Plan 'saved Europe', but, at the same time, also created a false sense of stability and unhealthy economic competition between European states.[39] If the European states would not agree upon serious economic integration prior to the 'deadline' of 1952, the economic stability of the continent could not be guaranteed. A fearful reality in which, in the words of André Philip, 'we shall find ourselves again confronted with the necessity of restricting importation of essential raw materials, which means … a lowering of the standard of living of the peoples'.[40]

In this call for saving Europe, proponents of this emotional narrative appealed to the 'courage' of Europeans: 'we must dare'.[41] The Dutch Social Democrat Marinus Van der Goes van Naters appealed to a 'bond of sympathy' to face 'dangers which may arise'.[42] And Winston Churchill, opposition leader in the UK at the time, referred to 'the united sentiment of Europeanism' that should revive 'the greatest of continents which has fallen into the worst of misery'.[43] Due to the feeling of imminent doom, the narrative of Fear is built around a call to action, boldness over caution and action over doubt.

Sacrifice

The fourth narrative is characterised by *Sacrifice,* emphasising the costs of European integration, the losses and burdens that are involved. As the Danish social democrat Frode Jakobsen put it: 'A United Europe may not mean only pleasant things'.[44] This shared emotional vocabulary of sacrifice was, however, built on different experiences. This explains why this emotional vocabulary translates into two different policy positions.

First, there were those who questioned the willingness of the public to bear the costs of European integration. In particular, the Irish vocabulary of sacrifice in relation to European integration was coloured by their fight against British oppression. The Irish Conservative Eamon de Valera questioned the willingness of the Irish people to give up their national identity and sovereignty:

For seven and three-quarter centuries we have fought to preserve our own national being and to prevent it from being destroyed, submerged or absorbed by a larger political entity. It must be obvious that it would be extremely difficult now to induce our people to reverse suddenly the whole current of their thought and history, and voluntarily to give up or seriously endanger their identity, towards the preservation of which such glorious devotion has been shown and such sacrifice endured.[45]

Beyond the particular Irish context, other representatives wondered as well whether public opinion was prepared for the transfer of sovereignty to supranational authority.[46] Moreover, a British Labour-representative, Maurice Edelman objected to the 'hypocrisy' of fellow representatives who pay 'lip-service to the cause of European unity at Strasbourg' and 'make economic nationalism and imperial exclusiveness the keystone of an election manifesto at home'.[47]

Yet, for most representatives, the sacrifices European integration entailed were really worth it: it is a 'price to be paid' and a 'good investment for the future'.[48] This is not to say that the sacrifices were taken lightly. Serrarens, a Catholic representative from the Netherlands, connected the sacrifices needed for European integration to those of the war:

My country … has realized that liberty is clothed in the blood of its martyrs and heroes. Let us note that the present moment is no less fraught with danger, and that the sacrifices required, though perhaps less bloody, are not less onerous.[49]

Also, the sacrifices were not just understood in national terms. As the Norwegian Labour representative Terje Wold pointed out, sacrifices are required 'for some countries to the benefit of others', curtailing sovereignty and freedom 'especially in the economic field'.[50]

The Sacrifice-narrative objects to the Fear-narrative of war, of economic chaos and fear of aggression.[51] These external conditions are not sufficient to unite. As the Conservative Norwegian Hermann Smitt-Ingebretsen acknowledged the 'important obstacles of an historical, racial, religious and economic nature provide fertile ground for scepticism'.[52] Highly critical of those who pursued swift and decisive change or those who forgot to include the potential doubt and unwillingness of the peoples of Europe to unity, the Sacrifice-narrative called for a gradual approach: 'We are turning the balance of history, and that must take time … We must build stone by stone'.[53]

In sum, the narrative of sacrifice positions itself as being a 'realistic' approach to the political questions at hand. It refrains from positive emotional vocabulary, but emphasises the obstacles of integration and stresses the importance of careful long-term planning and (popular and political) consensus. Rushing the process of integration based on fear would be counterproductive and harmful to the process in the long run.

DISCUSSION: EMOTIONAL CONTESTATION OR AFFECTIVE GLUE?

The different emotional narratives of hope, redemption, fear and sacrifice reflect a different understanding of the past, present and future of Europe – and evaluation of its position in the world. None of the narratives, nor the particular dimensions, dominate the debate, reflecting an emotional community in the making.

The different emotional narratives do not only reflect a different temporal assessment of Europe (i.e. its past and future), but also reflect a different spatial scope. Whereas the

Pride and Fear narratives emphasise the necessity of European integration with reference to the global context (either with a positive or negative valence), the Redemption and Sacrifice narratives refer to the internal state of affairs.

This analysis sheds light on the relationship between shared experiences and the emergence of an emotional community. While the 'great' history of European cooperation and achievements in the distant past, and the horrors of the World Wars in the nearby past, features prominently in all emotional narratives, this shared experience does not necessarily translate into a shared emotional vocabulary. Whereas it is just an anomaly for the Pride-narrative, it is the end of an era for the Redemption-narrative.

Table 3 Emotional Narratives

Sacrifice	Fear
A war-torn past and an endangered future Martyrs & heroes Hermann Smitt-Ingebretsen (Nor), Eamon de Valera (Ire), Giuseppe Cappi (It), Frode Jakobsen (Den), Terje Wold (Nor), Maurice Edelman (UK), Petrus Serrarens (NL), Georges Bohy (Bel), Marc Scherer (Fr), Frederik Lee (UK)	Powerful past, but future endangered Death, weakness, annihilation André Philip (Fr), Gabriel Bolifraud (Fr), Aidan Crawley (UK), Marinus van der Goes van Naters (NL), Georges Bidault (Fr), Guy Mollet (Fr), Winston Churchill (UK), Harold Macmillan (UK), Kasim Gülek (Turk), Grégoire Cassimatis (Gr), Robert Boothby (UK), Feridun Fikri Düsünsel (Turk), Herbert Morrison (UK), Walter Thomas Layton (UK)
Redemption	**Pride**
Nationalist past, fragile present Stability, evolution Thorkil Kristensen (Den), Ludovico Benvenuti (It) Arthur Sundt (Nor), Hermond Lannung (Den), William Norton (Ire), Paudelis Rozakis (Gr), James I.A. Dickson (Sweden), Paul Bastid (Fr), R.W.G. Mackay (UK), Tahsin Bekir Balta (Turk), Léon Maccas (Gr), Ludovico Montini (It)	Glorious past & Future Hesitation, fear, defeatism Constantin Callias (Gr), Ugo La Malfa (It), Seymour Cocks (UK), Sunt Kemal Yetkin (Turk), Jean le Bail (Fr), Georges Drossos (Gr)

The coalitions that evolve around a shared emotional narrative cut across nationality and political colour (see Table 3).[54] Representatives of the same nationality and political colour are spread quite evenly across the different emotional narratives. Similarly, the emotional narratives cannot easily be aligned with a particular blueprint for the institutional set-up of European integration, whether unionist, federalist or intergovernmentalist. For example, the French socialists André Philip and Guy Mollet, well-known for their opposite views on European integration, share an emotional vocabulary of fear. Yet, in a more indirect way the different emotional narratives do mobilise support for particular blueprints, rather than others. The emotional narratives of Pride and Fear call for bold action and would fit well with a federalist approach. In contrast the Sacrifice-narrative, emphasising the costs involved with European integration, leans more towards a unionist blueprint for European integration. Moreover, the Redemption-narrative which highlights the need to break with a nationalist past could be tied with both a federalist and functionalist blueprint.

CONCLUSION

The early post-war years provided a critical juncture for the public debate about European integration. Both internal and external challenges pushed the issue on the agenda of all European governments, parliaments and transnational movements. It was a time of both puzzling and powering. In this context it was not just a matter of material power and institutional positions. In the uncertainty over facts and figures, there was ample room for the construction of emotional narratives to lay the groundwork for subsequent negotiations about the institutionalization of European integration.

Analysing the first debate of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, this article has presented a vivid account of the distinctive lens that emotional narratives provide for the study of the policy process. It shows how emotional narratives serve as an affective glue that transcend existing national and political cleavages.

With the analytical framework that was developed, which highlights the valence attached to experiences of the past and expectations of the future, this article has aimed at expanding the toolkit for studying narratives in European Integration. Moreover, with this framework it has emphasised the need to study the interaction between different emotions in a particular narrative. Further research, taking a longitudinal approach, needs to shed light on the temporal dynamics of emotional narratives, reflecting on their change and institutionalisation. Moreover, as Forchtner and Kolvraa (2012) have shown, a self-critical narrative about a bitter past may turn into a narrative of superiority.

At the time when European cooperation and integration, both in the Council of Europe and the EU, is far from taken for granted, this article points at the importance of investigating the long and deep history of emotional narratives as 'the lifeblood of politics' (McBeth 2007: 88). With the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe, organised by the European Commission, a new opportunity arises for creating and contesting emotional narratives that provide a blueprint for redesigning Europe (European Commission 2020).

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ENDNOTES

[1] Initially the Council of Europe consisted of 12 Member States: Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. The members were selected by national parliaments, only the British members were

appointed by the government (Krumrey 2018: 113). For a historical overview of the negotiations of the Council of Europe, see Wassenberg and Bitsch (2013).

[2] The first four sittings of the Consultative Assembly dealt with the ceremonial opening of the Assembly and the process of setting the rules of procedure and the agenda.

[3] The federalist movement was united in the *Union europeenne des Federalistes* (UEF), founded in 1946 by Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, with 100.000 members from eleven countries. The most prominent unionist movements were the British United Europe Movement, founded by Winston Churchill and his son-in-law Duncan Sandys, the *Ligue Europeenne de Cooperation Economique* (LECE/ELEC) of the Belgian former prime-minister Paul van Zeeland, and the *Conseil Francais pour l'Europe Unie*.

[4] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 278. Other participants also played down the differences between federalists and unionists, for example British Conservative Robert Boothby (CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 172) and French Socialist Jean Le Bail (CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 222).

[5] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 310-312 (Lodovico Benvenuti, Christian Democrat, Italy).

[6] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 214-216 (Terje Wold, Labour, Norway).

[7] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 220 (Jean Le Bail, Socialist, France).

[8] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 252 (Seymour Cocks, Labour, United Kingdom).

[9] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 250 (Seymour Cocks, Labour, United Kingdom).

[10] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 218 (Constantin Callias, Conservative, Greece).

[11] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 224-226 (Montini Ludovico, Christian Democrat, Italy)

[12] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 320-322 (Sunt Kemal Yetkin, Turkey)

[13] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 252 (Seymour Cocks, Labour, United Kingdom)

[14] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 218-220 (Constantin Callias, Conservative, Greece)

[15] Ibidem

[16] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 222 (Jean Le Bail, Socialist, France). On the emotional connotation of motherland and fatherland in the context of interwar initiatives for European integration, see also Palm (2018).

[17] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 220 (Jean Le Bail, Socialist, France).

[18] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 184 (William Norton, Socialist, Ireland).

[19] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p.144 (Thorkil Kristensen, Conservative, Denmark); see also Hermod Lannung (Social Liberal, Denmark), pp. 274-268; 6th sitting, pp. 244-246 (Paudelis Rozakis, Liberal, Greece)

[20] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 256 (Bastid, Socialist, France). See also, CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 172 (Robert Boothby, Conservative, United Kingdom) and CA 1949: 6th sitting, p 288 (Arthur Sundt, Liberal, Norway).

[21] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 262 (Ronald Mackay, Labour, United Kingdom).

[22] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 260 (James Dickson, Conservative, Sweden).

[23] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 186 (William Norton, Labour, Ireland) .

[24] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p 312 (Lodovico Benevenuti, Christian Democrat, Italy).

[25] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 262 (Ronald Mackay, Labour, United Kingdom).

[26] CA 1949: 5th sitting, pp. 156-160 (Léon Maccas, Social Democrat, Greece).

[27] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 312 (Lodovico Benvenuti, Christian Democrat, Italy).

[28] CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 212-214 (Tahsin Bekir Balta, Turkey).

[29] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 144 (André Philip, Socialist, France).

[30] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 296 (Georges Bidault, Christian Democrat, France).

[31] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 198 (Aidan Crawley, British Labour); CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 242. (Kasim Gülek, Turkish Socialist).

[32] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 316 (Grégoire Cassimatis, Greek Liberal)

[33] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 238 (Harold Macmillan, British Conservative)

[34] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 306 (Guy Mollet, French Socialist).

[35] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 138 (André Philip, Socialist, France).

[36] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 322 (Gabriel Bolifraud, Gaulist, France).

[37] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 316 (Grégoire Cassimatis, Liberal, Greece).

[38] CA 1949 6th sitting, p. 272 (Feridun Fikri Dünsünsel, Turkey). See also, CA 1949: 6th sitting, pp. 242 & 244 (Kasim Gülek, Social Democrat, Turkey)

[39] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 320 (Grégoire Cassimatis, Liberal, Greece).

[40] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 140 (André Philip, Socialist, France).

[41] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 320 (Grégoire Cassimatis, Liberal, Greece).

[42] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p. 170 (Marinus van der Goes van Naters, Social Democrat, The Netherlands).

[43] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 286 (Winston Churchill, Conservative, United Kingdom).

[44] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p 208 (Frode Jakobsen, Social Democrat, Denmark).

[45] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 270 (Eamon de Valera, Conservative, Ireland).

[46] CA 1949: 5th sitting, pp. 194 & 196 (Marc Scherer, Christian Democrat, France).

[47] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p 180 (Maurice Edelman, Labour, United Kingdom).

[48] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p 208 (Frode Jakobsen, Social Democrat, Denmark); CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 280 (Georges Bohy, Socialist, Belgium); CA 1949: 5th sitting, p 148 (Giuseppe Cappi, Social Democrat, Italy).

[49] CA 1949: 5th sitting, p 192 (Serrarens, Christian Democrat, the Netherlands).

[50] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 216 (Terje Wold, Labour, Norway).

[51] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 240 (Hermann Smitt-Ingebretsen, Conservative, Norway).

[52] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 240 (Hermann Smitt-Ingebretsen, Conservative, Norway).

[53] CA 1949: 6th sitting, p. 242 (Hermann Smitt-Ingebretsen, Conservative, Norway).

[54] Table 3 provides an overview of the classification of the emotional narratives of all participants in the Grand Debate. An overview of key quotes per representative has been included as supplemental material.

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Research Article

‘We Thought We Were Friends!’: Franco-British Bilateral Diplomacy and the Shock of Brexit

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Abstract

The British vote to leave the European Union in 2016 shook the Franco-British bilateral relationship (FBBR) to its core and led to unexpected tensions, considering the depth of cooperation between the two countries in many fields, and their geography. In this article we analyse the impact of Brexit on the FBBR to date, including the likely aftershocks. We focus on the 2017-2020 Brexit negotiations themselves, and on the matters that escaped those negotiations but which are core to the FBBR namely: security and defence; borders and migration. We draw on a number of high-level interviews with French and British officials and on literatures of contemporary diplomacy to ask how the new environment for the FBBR challenges traditional ways of conducting bilateral diplomacy outside of the multilateral framework provided by the European Union.

Keywords

Diplomacy; Brexit; France; United Kingdom; Bilateralism

The EU-UK negotiations that followed the British vote to 'leave' the European Union (EU) in 2016 shook the Franco-British bilateral relationship (FBBR) to its core and led to unexpected tensions, prompting one British official to exclaim in 2019: 'but we thought we were friends!' (Interview 1). We understand such a shock as 'a dramatic change in the international system or its subsystems that fundamentally alters the processes, relationships, and expectations that drive nation-state interactions' (Goertz and Diehl 1995). Shocks bring change, then, at systemic level, and substitute complexity for relative certainty. That certainty may itself well be dysfunctional: for Puri (2000: 18), for example, 'all global shocks … unfold against the backdrop of historically rooted suspicions, rivalries and grievances, and tend to intensify them'. Thus defined, Brexit certainly counts as a shock to the EU as a system of inter-state governance and within that, to the Franco-British bilateral relationship.

The FBBR is defined here as a dynamic set of systems and subsystems comprising the myriad connections and interactions that link the two countries at many levels. Indeed, in its depth and breadth, the FBBR is unsurpassed in the UK's panoply of existing bilateral ties (Interviews 1, 3 & 8). In its defence and security dimensions, moreover, it is the most institutionalized of the UK's bilateral relationships (Glencross 2019). In addition, the Franco-British relationship is marked by the geographical fact of proximity, symbolised since 1994 by the fixed link of the Channel Tunnel, and by the historical depth and breadth of its cultural and stereotypical dimensions (Tombs and Tombs 2007).

In this article we seek to further our knowledge and understanding of the impact of Brexit on the FBBR to date, including the likely aftershocks. We look chronologically at the period 2017-2020, during which the UK and EU negotiated new terms of engagement. We show that, in spite of the claims by both governments to have successfully separated the (difficult) negotiations from the (smooth) flow of bilateral relations, the Brexit referendum and its aftermath have actually had a negative impact on the FBBR, at least in the short term, and that revitalising it will require effort on both sides. By classifying and evaluating the developments we find, we more broadly aim to contribute to thinking about contemporary forms of diplomacy, especially in its bilateral, 'networked' and 'minilateral' forms (Slaughter 2009; Patrick 2015; Manulak 2019). By taking a broad perspective of diplomatic activity we can reflect, notably, on its potential to repair not only the formal aspects of the FBBR, but also those dimensions that directly affect people, their lives and their livelihoods. Making diplomacy itself sustainable, and understanding diplomacy as a tool of a sustainable bilateral relationship, comprises our wider research agenda.

We proceed as follows. First, and in order to establish a baseline for our before-and-after Brexit comparison, we review the core components of the Franco-British relationship at the time of the UK's 2016 referendum. We ask how functional or dysfunctional these cross-Channel relations were: what were their 'historically rooted suspicions, rivalries and grievances' (Puri 2020)? We enrich our analysis here by comparing this (in)famous *entente cordiale* to other bilateral relationships of significance to each of France and the UK, specifically the Franco-German and UK-US relationships respectively.

Second, we evaluate the impact on the FBBR of the UK-EU Brexit negotiations themselves in both their key phases: leading to the December 2019 Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration; and then to the December 2020 Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). We see that this impact in certain ways diminished over time as the wheels of formal diplomacy continued to turn and learn, even at the times of highest political tension, albeit at a slowed pace, and diminished in substance; and that the process was in itself instructive for the architects of the post-Brexit FBBR.

Third, we turn to two specific aspects of the FBBR of great significance for the relationship, barely covered in the TCA, and which will thus loom large in the post-Brexit FBBR. The first is Franco-British cooperation in defence and security, arguably the 'bedrock' (Interview 5) of the FBBR, by virtue of its institutionalisation and formalisation in the 2010 Lancaster

House Treaties amongst other formal commitments. The second is the web of governance surrounding the two countries' borders (fixed and maritime), and the migration and mobility that the borders both produce and constrain. For each of these dimensions of the FBBR, we identify and appraise the impact of Brexit to date, and look ahead to likely developments. We end by reflecting on the significance of our findings for the operation of the FBBR; for our understanding of that relationship; and for lessons in diplomacy conducted, moreover, in a digital, pandemic-ridden world.

We supplement existing primary and secondary sources with original data generated from nine elite-level interviews with individuals working in FBBR diplomacy on both sides of the Channel (see Appendix One). These discussions took place remotely by video link, in keeping with the impact of Covid-19 on research and fieldwork. Our interlocutors, both active and retired, included officials who were at the time of interview working in the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) *viz,* the *Quai d'Orsay* and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); and in the French Embassy in London and the UK Embassy in Paris. We have anonymised all interviewees bar one to preserve the confidentiality of their insights and information.

WHAT'S IN A BILATERAL? THE STATE OF THE FRANCO-BRITISH RELATIONSHIP AT THE TIME OF BREXIT

Bilateral relations have been at the core of diplomatic relations, constituting the first and most traditional element of international diplomacy since the seventeenth century (Pannier 2018). Over time, the number of bilateral relations increased dramatically, especially after 1945 when international networks became more and more extensive. There are several possible levels of depth and intensity to these bilaterals, from limited *ad hoc* relations to fully-fledged, so-called 'special relationships' covering political, military, economic and cultural dimensions. Moreover, they are always dynamic: typically varying over time, especially when the two countries share a long history and are close geographical neighbours, as is the case with Britain and France. Indeed, we note that in comparison to other bilateral relations in Europe, France and Britain have been said to be each other's 'Other', or *super-étranger*, in Crouzet's (1975) term for several centuries: in many ways, the two neighbours built their national identities in opposition the other (Colley 1992). The relationship between the two countries has more often been one of rivalry and competition than friendship and collaboration, at least until the beginning of the twentieth century (Tombs and Tombs 2007), and this aspect comes into clear view in the case of Brexit, as we see below.

France Versus UK in the EU and the International System

France and the UK made (at least partly) different choices to mitigate the adverse effects of their relative decline after 1945. The UK chose a strategic partnership with the USA, while the governments of the French Fourth and Fifth Republics embarked on a process of European integration which they effectively led for several decades. De Gaulle's two vetoes of the British application to join the EC in 1963 and 1967 confirmed this pattern, while Britain's transactional approach to membership after it finally joined in 1973 continued to clash with France's aspirations to construct an economic and (rhetorically at least) political union (George 1998). Specifically on defence and security issues, furthermore, London's priority remained NATO and the Atlantic alliance whereas Paris pushed for an autonomous European defence capability, first within the Western European Union (WEU), then as part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). From 2017, French President Macron argued vocally for Europe's 'strategic autonomy', and not only in matters of hard power (Drake and Meunier 2020).

Despite these differences, the bilateral relationship flourished after the end of the cold war into a quasi 'special relationship'. Cooperation in the diplomatic and military field, based

on shared interests, gave France and the UK a stronger voice on the international scene, whether at the United Nations (UN) Security Council or in the Libyan desert in 2011. On the ground, military cooperation started in Bosnia in 1995 under UK Prime Minister John Major and French President Jacques Chirac, and was enshrined in law fifteen years later in 2010 by the Lancaster House agreements, which cover both conventional and nuclear cooperation (Harrois 2016). These agreements were based on a shared perception that, in spite of their differences over European integration, the two countries needed to increase military capabilities in the context of the 2008-2009 economic downturn and reduced defence budgets (Gomis 2011: 4). Both partners share a self-belief that they are global players, illustrated by their permanent seats at the UN Security Council, their nuclear arsenal and their commitment to military activism abroad.

Entente vs 'Special' Relationships

How did this renewed FBBR compare in depth and feeling to the relationships that pertained between the UK and the US, or to the Franco-German bilateral relationship? In the case of the UK and the US, the closeness was forged during WWII and comprised close economic, military (both conventional and nuclear) and intelligence collaboration. The relationship remained a priority for British diplomacy after the end of the cold war, whichever administration was in place in Washington and whatever the disagreements on specific issues. Of note here is the UK government's insistence on the value of a post-Brexit bilateral free trade agreement with the US as an appealing alternative to membership of the EU single market, to the extent that it sought to run both the UK-EU and UK-US Brexit trade talks in parallel. In addition to these largely hard power dimensions, the UK-US relationship is encased in the rhetoric of the Anglosphere, based on a discourse about linguistic, cultural and historical ties (Wallace 1991; Gamble 2003).

In contrast, the Franco-German relation has been described as 'regularized intergovernmentalism' (Krotz 2010), and its lifeblood flows from the two partners' membership of the EU. Germany is France's first trading partner by far, both for exports and imports, while France is Germany's fourth. Multiple bilateral links have been established over the decades across numerous sectors since the 1963 *Elysée* Treaty, including the *Office Franco-Allemand de la Jeunesse*. In 2003, on the 40th anniversary of the treaty, the two governments set up a biannual Franco-German ministerial council which replaced bilateral annual summits and allowed all levels of government to cooperate directly. More generally, the two countries have generated routines, especially within the institutions of the EU, which have contributed to binding and socialising its key actors: the relationship is routinised at all echelons of government and across policies (Krotz 2010: 151-152). This does not mean that the relation has always been smooth or without problems and differences – institutionalised military cooperation has not brought the two partners together over actual military intervention, for example – but there is an expectation and shared commitment that disputes can be resolved, lending a long-term stability to the bilateral which largely insulates it from domestic or international changes and from crises. Thus, the risk of divergence or conflict is mitigated. Not dissimilar to the UK's 'special relationship' with the US, the Franco-German relationship also comprises a normative dimension in the political culture of both countries, where it is a given that is rarely questioned. This is not quite the case for the FBBR, as we shall see below.

Back to the Channel: Facts, Symbols and Stereotypes

For Pannier (2018: 35), bilateral relations are potentially 'symmetrical or asymmetrical, dependent or interdependent, institutionalized or not, consensual or contested, new or old, based on shared interests and/or values'. In the Franco-British case, the relationship has arguably been both symmetrical and interdependent. First, both France and the UK are roughly equal in terms of economic and political weight and trade extensively with each other. Britain was France's fifth customer with over 30 billion euros worth of exports in 2016 and France is Britain's seventh with 23 billion euros. Second, the FBBR is partly

institutionalised as we have seen, and again, far more so than the transatlantic relationship, with annual bilateral summits and agreements such as Lancaster House or Le Touquet on the managing of the border in Calais (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2003); but arguably less so than the Franco-German tandem. Third, relations between France and the UK are not specifically contested by political forces or public opinion in either country (although they are prone to stereotype, particularly in the UK, as we see below). But they are also relatively shallow, unlike either of the two other bilaterals explored above, where relations are both consensual and run deeper. Thus a French official told us that the Franco-German relationship was "more natural, more obvious" than the FBBR (Interview 7). Fourth, the relationship contains both very old and relatively new elements, similar to the US-UK and the Franco-German relationships respectively. Fifth and finally, the FBBR is based on certain shared interests and values; these commonalities are both more explicit than those binding the US and the UK, and far less so than for the Franco-German bond, particularly with regards to its EU dimension.

Extending beyond this typology of bilateral relations, it is notable that perceptions and stereotypes, positive and negative, continue to play a specific part in shaping the Franco-British relationship, present in the FBBR in a way that distinguishes it from its counterparts above. From the *entente cordiale* and *perfide Albion* to the *frogs* and *rosbifs*, from tabloid headlines and 'arrogant' French, to the 'stiff upper lip' and 'pragmatic' English (*les Anglais* being routine shorthand for the British, even at the highest levels of political and public discourse), imaginaries and prejudice have formed the background to the relationship, modified or reinforced by the political ups and downs in the relations between different governments (Tachin 2006; Crouzet 1975). Pictures of the past (especially the memory of WWII) and clichés bear on contemporary policymakers and commentators on both sides of the Channel, and routinely find their way into political and media discourse. This 'othering' characterises the FBBR just as much as its institutional frameworks, and feeds a propensity for the relationship to fall into dysfunctional habits when under specific stress.

DIPLOMACY DISRUPTED? THE FBBR AND THE BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS, 2017-2020

The British vote to leave the EU on 23 June 2016 came as an electoral shock not just to the British government and political elites but to their counterparts across Europe. On the continent, few commentators had expected such an outcome in spite of the warning shots of the previous referendums which, in Ireland in 2001, and then France and the Netherlands in 2005, had rejected the Nice and Constitutional Treaties respectively. For the first time (setting aside the very different cases of 'Algexit', 'Grøxit' and Saint Barthélémy (Patel, 2017)), the EU was facing a domestic electorate now wishing to leave, thereby significantly shrinking the EU and raising the prospect of European *dis*integration after so many decades of integration and enlargement (Webber 2018; Vollaard 2018; Rosamond 2016; Jones 2018).

Handle with Care: FBBR and Brexit on parallel diplomatic tracks

The Brexit referendum results came as a shock to France in the same way as it did to other member states. On 24 June 2016, President Hollande issued a statement saying how much he regretted the 'painful choice' made by the British electorate (Hollande 2016). His immediate reaction was to protect the EU, rather than the FBBR, and to turn to Germany to push for more cooperation on defence issues within the EU (Barker, Wagstyl and Chassany 2016). Hollande insisted that there should be 'a price' to pay to leave the EU; otherwise, he argued, the whole European project would be undermined. From May 2017, Emmanuel Macron maintained the same line about there being an essential distinction between being a member state and a third country (even where this third country was a bilateral partner, and ex-EU member state). This led to what one interviewee (Interview

4) described as a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the tough political signal that was sent from Paris to the British side; and on the other, a predisposition at the more technical level of relations to maintain as good a working relationship as possible between the two countries.

In contrast, Theresa May's UK government was hoping to use its bilateral relations within the EU in general as leverage to get a favourable deal once the negotiations got underway in 2017 (Figueira and Martill 2020). Yet as early as February 2017 the European Council adopted guidelines for the negotiations which stressed the need to maintain EU27 unity in the face of UK demands. It stated in particular that 'the Union's overall objective in these negotiations will be to preserve its interests, those of its citizens, its businesses and its Member States' and that 'throughout these negotiations the Union will maintain its unity and act as one with the aim of reaching a result that is fair and equitable for all Member States and in the interest of its citizens' (European Council 2017). Protecting the integrity of the single market was a priority shared by the EU27, a stance that subsequent developments showed was seriously underestimated by the UK government. Indeed, this unity was maintained throughout the negotiations and no member state agreed to deal unilaterally with the UK.

In France, individual government departments were officially banned from discussing Brexit issues with their counterparts in the British Embassy; and officials all report how they handled the FBBR with care, running it along a parallel track to the Brexit negotiations for fear of tainting the negotiations or, just as significant, being perceived as doing so[1]. Moreover, France was depicted as a particularly tough negotiator in the British media, where Emmanuel Macron was dubbed 'bad cop' in contrast to the supposedly German 'good cop' Merkel (Mallet and Barker 2019). In his account of May's years as Prime Minister, Anthony Seldon writes of Macron as 'a constant thorn agitating the EU to stand up to Britain over Brexit' (2019: 631). This was true especially at two key moments in the negotiation with Theresa May's government: the Salzburg EU summit in September 2018, which rejected the so-called Chequers plan (Boffey and Sabbagh 2018); and the April 2019 European Council which followed Theresa May's failure to get parliamentary ratification of the deal, and took place in the run-up to the European elections (Vaillant 2019).

At the same time, French officials were eager to see Brexit happen, not because they thought it was a good idea but because in their view, the vote of the British public should be respected, and it was better to have Brexit out of the way as fast as possible and focus on further developments within the EU (Montchalin 2019; Loiseau 2018). This was a strategic, unsentimental perspective in line with the norms and thrust of French diplomacy, as one senior UK diplomat put it (Interview 8). A French official in post at the time told us that Theresa May's resignation and the arrival of Boris Johnson as Prime Minister in July 2019 were a relief for the French government, in spite of Johnson's harder Brexit stand. There was at least a prospect that he would 'get Brexit done' (in reality, get the Withdrawal Agreement done); and after previously suggesting otherwise, Macron agreed to a Brexit extension to 31 January 2020 (rather than 31 December 2019) to accommodate Johnson's call for a UK general election in order to secure ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement (Boffey 2019).

Learning new tricks

From March 2020 onwards when negotiations resumed, this time in the 'Transition' phase and on the future UK/EU relationship, there was a disappointment on the French side that the new British team was not seeking institutionalised links on security and defence during these talks (Rankin 2020; Interview 9). Furthermore, the limited progress of the Brexit talks over the spring, summer and early autumn of 2020, in a context dominated by the Covid-19 crisis, was frustrating for the French side. Indeed, the Paris government appeared again at some points as a more intransigent partner than others in the EU, for example on the issue of fisheries, which affected many coastal constituencies and was politically

sensitive (see Henley 2020; Boffey 2020a). A senior British diplomat commented precisely on how 'single-minded', 'unsentimental' and 'strategic' the French negotiating position was with regards to treating the UK as a third country like any other (Interview 8). The Internal Market Bill introduced by the British government in the autumn of 2020, which if not eventually removed, would have breached the agreement signed in December 2019 on border controls between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, also strained UK-EU27 relations and affected the level of trust towards London (Boffey 2020b).

Yet officials on both sides of the Channel also pointed, somewhat paradoxically, to a better atmosphere between the two governments under the Johnson government. They mentioned the good personal relationship between Macron and Johnson which they deemed as particularly important for the future of the FBBR (Interview 9; see also Forsyth 2020); and both sides acknowledged the lessons learnt during the previous round of negotiations (2017-19). For instance, British officials accepted that there would be no direct negotiations with individual member states, including its bilateral partner, France, and did not even try to have technical talks with ministerial departments in Paris (Interview 4). In the end an agreement was found on fisheries which provided for a 25 per cent reduction in EU boats' access to British waters for five and a half years followed by annual quota negotiations, and which unlocked the signing of the EU/UK TCA on 24 December 2020.

It would appear therefore that the formal diplomatic channels between France and the UK adjusted over time to the emerging realities of the Brexit negotiations. After initial turbulence, dialogue resumed between the two sides, albeit with necessary adjustments to previous standard operating procedures to accommodate the facts of a somewhat artificially-split reality: the FBBR could continue, with the exception of the matter of Brexit. In practice, several interviewees reported that it was sometimes difficult to separate the two, and indicated that the tensions in the negotiations took their toll on the bilateral relationship (Interviews 5, 7 and 8). It was evident that business was not as usual, which led to unease and uncertainty.

'C'EST COMPLIQUÉ': DIPLOMATIC OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE FBBR

The negotiation of Brexit did not, it appears, in itself constitute a disruption, if we define disruption as a wholesale jettisoning of an old business model or operating system (Drake 2018). But that phase alone did deliver an immediate shock to the FBBR: a slow and on occasions painful process of the adjustment of existing routines and tools; and an impact on Franco-British bilateral diplomacy that was likely to be unprecedented in both depth and breadth. Indeed, once the dust had settled on the TCA, two key areas of cross-Channel collaboration and cooperation – security and defence; borders, migration and mobility – which had by and large been excluded from the negotiations mandate, would now fall to the two parties in the FBBR for negotiation and resolution. Would the old operating system suffice?

Security and Defence

All interviewees mentioned defence and security as the areas where progress in the FBBR had hitherto been most far-reaching, and therefore where the shock of Brexit was now most strongly felt. Lord Peter Ricketts (and Interviewees 8 and 9) mentioned the 2003 Iraq war as a previous rift, but one which had been quickly 'patched up', whereas Brexit was expected to be 'deeper and more-lasting'. Several officials on both sides confirmed that behind the rhetoric of official communiqués, the FBBR in that area had indeed been badly affected and would require rebuilding in the future.

Indeed, the 2010 Lancaster House agreements were signed outside of the EU framework; in theory therefore, they would not be directly affected by Brexit, something that both

countries were keen to stress from the start (Pannier 2016: 485). Officially, military cooperation was expected to 'simply' continue (Guitton 2020). The communiqué following the Franco-British summit of January 2018 in Sandhurst reiterated, rhetorically at least, 'the continuing importance of the defence relationship between our two countries as a foundation of our national and of European security' (UK Government 2018). It listed the achievements of the FBBR in this field since 2010, including maritime cooperation in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and China seas; British support for French troops in Mali; French participation in the NATO-enhanced Forward Presence operation alongside the UK in Estonia; and the operations against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. It also set up a ministerial defence council which would meet three times a year. Operation Hamilton against Syrian chemical weapons facilities, which was conducted jointly with the US shortly after, in April, seemingly illustrated the resilience of this cooperation. In this context, the anniversary of the 10th Lancaster House agreements in 2020 was to have been celebrated with much fanfare. The Covid crisis made the celebration much more subdued, but both governments published a number of statements celebrating the FBBR in the defence field: the two Defence Secretaries, Florence Parly and Ben Wallace took stock of further developments in defence projects; while the two ambassadors gave a lengthy joint interview celebrating the FBBR (Parly and Wallace 2020; Llewellyn and Colonna 2020).

More generally, maintaining bilateral defence links became all the more important as the UK strategy changed with the new Johnson government; military cooperation, it would seem, was to be insulated from political change. Whereas the October 2019 Political Declaration on the future UK-EU relationship supposedly established the parameters of a future cooperation including 'law enforcement and criminal justice, foreign policy, security and defence and wider areas of cooperation' (UK Government 2019), the Johnson government actually shifted away from any agreement with the EU regarding the institutionalisation of foreign and defence policy cooperation in 2020, preferring instead ad hoc, bilateral or minilateral arrangements in Europe and 'Global Britain', with the Atlantic alliance as bedrock and the Indo-Pacific as a 'new' horizon (Whitman 2020; Pannier 2015; Johnson 2021). The E3 format (France, the UK and Germany) deployed since 2003 in the negotiations with Iran on their nuclear programme was potentially to provide a template for the future in that perspective (Brattberg 2020; Billon-Galland. Raines and Whitman 2020; Interviews 2, 8 and 9). Similarly, the European Intervention Initiative proposed by President Macron in his Sorbonne speech and launched in June 2018 with seven EU countries was welcomed by the UK which signed the Letter of Interest (Melvin and Chalmers 2020: 19; Macron 2017). Abecassis and Howorth (2020) argue that the post-Brexit context in fact coincided with a remarkable alignment of the regional and global ambitions of France and the UK, but did not imply automatic cooperation, given the many factors in play in both the relationship itself, and at large.

The arrival of the Biden-Harris administration in Washington in 2021, with its emphasis on multilateralism and the renewal of transatlantic ties, could also be expected to help reshape the FBBR by encouraging cooperation between the EU and its traditional allies, whereas President Trump was happy to drive a wedge between Brexit Britain and the EU. In diplomatic terms, this would mean France and the UK continuing to work together in the UN Security Council and coordinate on issues such as relations with Russia or China as well as developing coordination in the Asia-Pacific region which the Johnson government identified as a key arena for "Global Britain in a Competitive Age", provided British and French ambitions are not too curtailed by the economic consequences of the Covid pandemic (UK Government, 2021; Glencross 2019, Heritage and Lee 2021). The UK's 144-page Integrated Review published in March 2021 devoted only a few lines and a specific paragraph to the FBBR, promising to build on the Lancaster House treaties but without elaborating (UK Government 2021). Peter Ricketts for his part, emphasised the need to find new momentum (*élan*) and new projects for the FBBR in this field, as in others, to sustain the relationship.

Yet there are already limits to existing bilateral defence cooperation. The non-permanent Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) is operational but was never deployed. Britain only contributed three Chinook helicopters to operation Barkhane in Mali, no more than other European partners like Germany and definitely fewer than the US. Looking ahead, medium to long-term challenges to the defence relationship concern the difficulty for France, strategically-speaking, to prioritise a bilateral special relationship with the UK whilst simultaneously pursuing its goal of beefing up the CSDP with Germany. There is also a question mark over French post-Brexit commitments to NATO, following Macron's provocative assessment of the Atlantic organisation as 'brain-dead' in 2019 (*The Economist* 2019; Interview 9). More generally, the UK's ambitions for a 'Global Britain' do not align with France's focus on Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa[2].

Similarly, there are limitations to the extent to which post-Brexit diplomatic arrangements can mitigate for the losses incurred by the FBBR due to Brexit. Ad hoc or *à la carte* cooperation brings advantages such as flexibility and adaptability but, when only semi-institutionalised, also risks becoming hostage to short-term political tensions or divergent interests (Patrick 2015). Indeed, several officials expressed doubts that these losses could be fully mitigated by the informal, minilateral arrangements of the E3, Intervention Initiative type alone. The future FBBR cannot therefore be isolated from a formal UK relationship with the EU around matters of security and defence, and at the time of writing, this remained a significant sticking point for Franco-British bilateral relations.

Borders, Mobility and Migration

Moreover, Brexit puts the UK beyond the EU's shared regimes for border control, migration and mobility which are equally, if differently, central to the fabric and sustainability of the FBBR. We include here not only EU citizens – those previously free to cross the Channel with few legal constraints – but also those often undocumented individuals who attempt to cross the Channel from France to the UK at the cost of their lives and who have already, at the time of writing, found themselves pawns of a highly-politicised conversation between French and UK authorities about how to stem and regulate these flows after Brexit (*Financial Times* 2020).

The FBBR has indeed for centuries incorporated the *chassé-croisé* of both its citizens and denizens, these categories being variably defined according to the norms of the time (Drake and Schnapper 2018). While both countries were EU member states, their citizens could reciprocally exercise EU citizenship rights, particularly the right to the freedom of movement (including residency) within the EU. This freedom of movement proved popular with French and UK citizens alike. The French Embassy in London estimated in 2020 that there were over 600,000 French expatriates and 3,000 French businesses in the UK, and about 400,000 British people living in France, although it is highly likely that these figures underestimated the phenomenon by some serious degree, since registration with the respective consulates had for a long time effectively been voluntary (Lequesne 2020; Geddes, Hadj-Abdou and Brumat 2020; Drake and Collard 2008).

'We're ending free movement to open up Britain to the world' (Patel, 2020)

Whilst the 2019 Withdrawal Agreement addressed and secured the mobility and residency rights of those French and UK citizens already resident in each other's country by the cut-off date of 31 December 2020 (albeit with varying degrees of administrative transparency, cost and ease), arrangements for cross-Channel movement after that date became, post-Brexit, a test for the FBBR, particular with regards to the everyday realities of people's lives: (how) would France and the UK honour the commitments made on the part of their citizens to the other's country, be it in the form of property acquisition, contribution to culture, economy and society, professional and educational investments and other, less tangible but no less important, personal connections? What, if any contingency plans would be put in place to smooth over the abrupt change in status of French and UK citizens

moving across the Channel post-Brexit? Would Brexit, in matter of fact, signal one of the most significant ruptures in cross-Channel flows in the history of the FBBR?

At the time of writing (March 2021), 'concrete problems' (Interview 5; see also Reland 2021) posed by the abrupt ending of the freedom of movement had inevitably emerged for individuals and businesses alike. In the words of one interviewee (Interview 5), the ending of intra-EU migration was an 'enormous shock' to the FBBR, and adjustment was likely to take decades, not years. In the nature of shocks as defined above, the certainties of free movement had, at a stroke, been replaced with the complexities of new arrangements yet to be diplomatically enshrined or operationally absorbed. Early signs were that this was one key area of the FBBR over which bilateral diplomacy held little traction. For the UK, France was now a third country like any other, the movement of its citizens into the UK subject to the provisions of the 2020 Immigration Act which explicitly targeted and heralded the 'end of free movement' (UK Government 2020a); and which was politically celebrated as such, *viz* UK Home Secretary Priti Patel's Tweet of May 2020 (Patel 2020). Similarly, UK citizens' entry to France would henceforth be conditioned by the EU27 framework for third country nationals, with no exceptions made for its cross-Channel neighbour.

While the true extent of the repercussions of the ending of free movement were yet to make themselves fully felt, it was evident that they would spill into numerous and diverse sectors of customary cross-Channel activity including academic staff and student exchanges, and a wide range of cultural cooperation. Insofar as the formal FBBR has for its lifetime been sustained by the fabric of ties between its two populations (as well as its trading and commercial links), the shock of Brexit in this domain has already pointed diplomats on both sides of the Channel to stake stock of the multiplicity of stakeholders of the FBBR when rebuilding its post-Brexit bilateral futures.

'Taking back control' of the maritime border?

With regards to the situation of undocumented or otherwise irregular migrants seeking to make the perilous crossing from the north of France to the south of England, Franco-British cooperation within the EU framework constituted a regime for controlling and patrolling the EU's external borders with regards to third-country nationals seeking entry into the EU's member states by both regular and irregular means, and included EU-wide rules for handling asylum-seekers. These arrangements were supplemented by strictly bilateral agreements, notably the 2003 le Touquet treaty for 'juxtaposed' border controls, and the 2018 Sandhurst Treaty which articulated legal provisions for the ongoing securitisation of the so-called 'short straits' of the English Channel. In 2019, 2020 and again in 2021, these waters saw a rise in the number of crossings and attempted crossings in 'small boats' from France to the south coast of England, incurring tragic deaths (*le Monde* 2021). In response, France and the UK increased their bilateral efforts to securitize the Channel (UK Government 2020b) in accordance with what had become a de facto diplomatic formula whereby the UK increased its financial and material assistance to their French counterparts (such as the UK's Clandestine Channel Threat commander role) in exchange for commitments by French authorities to deter irregular movement across the Channel, and enforce the rules (Tyerman and Van Isacker 2020).

Early evidence would suggest that these post-Brexit arrangements lack full buy-in on the French side of the Channel where, as with regular migration, the priority – the default diplomatic setting - remained the EU27 legal framework (Interview 8). France also has other entry points for irregular migrants (the Franco-Italian border) that absorb official energy. The UK's exit from the EU's 'Dublin III' arrangements for returns and 'removals' (especially of minors), in particular created a gap to be addressed by new arrangements yet to be articulated or negotiated, and where diplomatic relations between France and the UK have entered an unprecedently uncertain phase. 'Taking back control' of this particular border has unsurprisingly proven far trickier, more costly and deadlier than Brexit

supporters were given to believe (see Akkad 2021). The late summer of 2021 was marked by particularly fractious exchanges between UK and French officials, with the UK Home Office threatening to withhold funds from their French counterparts, deemed to be failing to uphold their side of the bargain, a perspective inevitably not shared by France. The UK's Nationality and Borders bill, making its way through UK Parliament at this time, would criminalise the very act of crossing the Channel by irregular means. This, and UK ideas of 'turning back' the boats at sea, towards France, would inevitably further complicate Franco-British cooperation on this matter at a time when toughness on immigration featured in the promises of numerous would-be candidates in the 2022 French presidential elections.

CONCLUSIONS: 'WHO CARES?' CHALLENGES FOR TRADITIONAL DIPLOMACY IN SUSTAINING THE FBBR

Brexit was a shock that threatened to disrupt not just the EU but also the FBBR, in many ways embedded in the EU framework. Tensions between the two countries were higher than expected, considering the depth of cooperation in many fields during the two rounds of negotiations, but also unsurprising, given the emotion involved (Interviews 1 and 9).

The FBBR has suffered as a result, and rebuilding it post-Brexit will require a learning process on both sides to adjust to the basic tenets of the relationship in a radically new environment. Brexit has also challenged the traditional ways of conducting diplomacy in the FBBR, and forces the two countries to almost start from a 'blank sheet' (Interview 9). It provides an opportunity to take stock of the FBBR and to decide how important this historic relationship is to both countries and the effort that should be devoted to repair its fabric. Given that the EU now functions as a very different reference point for the two partners – a default diplomatic framework for France, and a past to forget for the UK – alignment of the two mindsets presents a significant challenge for the relationship.

It is of note that the fact of reaching an agreement (rather than a 'no deal') in December 2020 on the future UK/EU relationship, however unsatisfactory and limited in scope, did ensure that the new FBBR restarted without immediate bitterness and recrimination. However, it also signaled an ongoing, drawn-out process of negotiation on specific aspects such as border controls, security cooperation, citizens' rights, fish and so on which will test the relationship, its illusions and inevitable disillusions (Menon and Portes 2021).

In this context, and because of the loss of the multilateral framework provided by the EU, we can expect bilateral and mini-lateral diplomacy to experience a revival, or at the very least to become more important. However, such ad hoc diplomatic arrangements are likely to still leave a void in the FBBR where the socialising routines of shared EU membership once occurred. Due to Brexit, both parties have lost the opportunities for socialisation at the elite level that came with shared EU membership. Furthermore, each country's image has taken a hit in the other's country, with opportunities for public diplomacy first constrained both by the rigours of the parallel tracks discussed above (FBBR on one, Brexit negotiations on the other); and later, by Covid-19 restrictions. In these respects, the shock of Brexit has indeed created the 'complexity' associated with 'dramatic change in the international system or its subsystems' (Puri 2020), in the face of which both countries will find themselves leaning heavily on their political leaders and the ephemeral relations between them to conduct affairs via 'summit diplomacy' with all its limitations in today's hyper-securitised environments, and vulnerability to disruption of the kind wreaked by Covid-19 (see Manulak 2019).

More generally, the evolution of the FBBR post-Brexit has shed some interesting light on bilateral relations and the future of diplomacy. Although symmetrical and interdependent, the FBBR has proved, at least in this first post-Brexit phase, to be less robust than other long-lasting bilateral relationships, such as the UK-US 'special relationship' or the Franco-German one. Both are much more embedded in the political culture of the respective

countries involved, and therefore more shock-proof, in theory, than the FBBR. Perhaps these latter relationships have yet to be similarly tested: the fall-out from the US withdrawal from Afghanistan on the UK-US relationship, and the impact of Chancellor Merkel's departure from the German chancellorship on the Franco-German tandem within the EU, despite both occurring in very testing circumstances, will most likely spare those relationships the 'dramatic change' that we have associated with the shock of Brexit.

The evidence points to Brexit both having made the FBBR harder work – certainly in the early days and months with tensions over the Northern Ireland protocol and the vaccine rollout flaring across the Channel – and to a shared commitment to undertake that effort. Brexit may well prove to be disruptive to the point of questioning the existing 'operating system' of the FBBR, creating a need for creative diplomacy which does not lack for tools or precedent. Indeed, in 2021 French diplomats had begun to undertake a structured rethink of the FBBR, marking time while the UK's review of its external relations turned its eyes firmly to the east, and its back to the continent. On the part of the UK, London sent its first ever female ambassador (Menna Rawlings, after 36 men in that post) to Paris in August 2021, raising expectations of change and renewal.

But the limitations of mini-lateral relations when the two countries espouse a different discourse on their place in the global order, even when sharing broad values and interests, are likely to appear all too clearly. A rhetorically 'global' but actually inward-looking UK will struggle to accommodate France and the EU's equally rhetorical 'strategic autonomy', especially if the UK government continues to pander to nationalism and France insists on treating the UK like any other third party country.

We have also seen that traditional, state-to-state diplomacy is unlikely to sustain the future FBBR, a matter that officials on both sides of the Channel stated most emphatically. While the FBBR has been built in part on 'historically rooted suspicions, rivalries and grievances' (Puri 2020), it has also taken shape from the bottom up, built from connections at the level of business, civil society and the general population to create levels of interdependence and contacts across the borders between the two countries that uniquely characterises this bilateral relationship, as seen above. As a result, the sub-state and non-state 'tissue of bilateral relations is more important than ever' (Interview 8): there is a 'job of work' to be done (Interview 8) to build a new phase in the relationship. Such change brings not only cost but also opportunity, especially given that we are in the age of digital diplomacy and social media (Interview 8), or 'webcraft' (Manulak 2019); and where some positive new routines may emerge from the experience of pandemic-era diplomacy to constitute a more networked set of diplomatic connections between France and the UK. As one senior UK diplomatic official put it: the FBBR 'needs a spectrum of people who care' including academics, but also those with the potential in many cultural fields (from food to football) to rebuild the relationship. This would support Manulak's observation (2019: 175) that: '[o]n a bilateral basis, actors wishing to deepen connections can draw upon historical, cultural, diasporic or other types of social linkages to strengthen connection across borders'.

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ENDNOTES

1 One exception to this pattern regarded rail security (including interoperability) in the Channel Tunnel, where the EU empowered the French government to negotiate bilaterally with the UK (Interview 3; and see Bonnaud, (2021) and European Parliament (2020).

2 We acknowledge that further research would beneficially extend to the broader question of post-Brexit, Franco-British cooperation on foreign policy.

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APPENDIX ONE:

List of interviews (All but one have been anonymised at the request of the interviewee)

1. British Embassy, Paris, two senior officials (22 May 2019).

2. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), London, UK official (8 October 2020).

3.Quai d'Orsay, Paris: French official (22 September 2020).

4. British Embassy, Paris, UK official (4 November 2020).

5. Quai d'Orsay, Paris: French official (7 November 2020).

6. Lord Peter Ricketts (29 January 2021).

7. French Embassy, London, French diplomatic source close to the dossier (11 February 2021).

8. British Embassy, Dublin, UK official (16 February 2021).

9. British Embassy, Paris, senior British diplomat (8 March 2021).

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Research Article

Fostering the Political Participation of EU Non-national Citizens: The Case of Brussels

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Abstract

Political participation is considered an essential feature of democracy. The European Union (EU) aimed to foster political participation with the introduction of European citizenship, which gives the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections in whichever EU country the citizen resides. However, from the few figures available, registration and turnout rates among mobile EU citizens seem very low. In this article, we investigate the effectiveness of a proactive campaign in order to promote the participation of European non-national residents in municipal elections by focusing on a specific initiative: the VoteBrussels Campaign. Focusing on Brussels, and in the general on the Belgian case, offers us the opportunity to carry out a quasi-experimental design. Our findings suggest that a mobilisation campaign has a positive regionwide effect on the participation of mobile EU citizens.

Keywords

Political participation; Non-national residents; European Parliament elections

With the adoption of the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht, EU (European Union) citizenship gave every EU citizen the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections in whichever EU country the citizen resides. EU citizens that live (temporarily or permanently) in another EU member state are given the choice of voting either as citizens of their country of origin (subject to the home-country regulations), or as citizens of their country of residence (subject to different registration and voting procedures). Granting voting rights to foreign residents might seem like a challenge to the traditional notion of national citizenship. Indeed, even the right for national citizens to cast a vote from abroad is relatively recent, as up until the 1960s, only resident citizens had the right to vote (Hutcheson and Arrighi 2015). However, the contemporary 'age of migrations' (Castles and Miller 2003) has deeply affected the processes by which states allocate political citizenship and shape the opportunities for political participation (Isin and Turner 2002; Bird, Saalfeld and Wüst 2010). In recent decades, immigration has seen a sharp increase in nearly every country across the developed world (Castles and Miller 2009), and these trends are unlikely to reverse in the future (Putman 2007).

This increase in non-national residents has increased the importance of debates around their participation in the political and civic life of destination countries (Morales and Giugni 2011). The political participation of migrants is now considered as one measure of the quality and level of development of a democracy (Fennema and Tille 1999). Political participation is a broad umbrella under which many activities fall, for example petitioning, demonstrating, volunteering for a political campaign, joining an association and so on. The most accessible (at least for national citizens) and widespread of these activities is voting. Voting rights and voter participation among foreign residents is therefore a key indicator of the quality of democracy. This is especially true in the EU. In 2004, as a direct consequence of the Directive 200438/EC in the framework of the Schengen Treaty, EU citizens are free to move and reside in all EU member states. Fifteen years after Schengen, the treaty had a large impact on the geographical composition of the EU population, when looking at the rates of intra-EU mobility. The number of 'mobile EU citizens' increased from 7.1 million at the eve of Schengen (Recchi 2008) to 39 million as of 2019 (Eurostat[1]). Mobile EU citizens of voting age have the right of vote in European and municipal elections, but the requirements and procedures to exercise this right vary significantly across EU member states (Hutcheson and Ostling 2019). Most notably, the majority of member states (25) requires specific active voter registration for mobile EU citizens, with significant variations in these procedures (for example automatic versus active, documentation, deadlines, information). The extent to which voter registration procedures create obstacles for mobile EU citizens is difficult to evaluate, as only a few countries collect and publish the registration rates for mobile EU citizens.[2] The available data suggests that only a very small portion of eligible non-nationals registers to vote. Given the importance of voting for democracy and for European citizenship, more attention is needed to the obstacles and effective measures for boosting voter registration and turnout among mobile EU citizens. Action on voter registration can occur at two levels: the policy level and the campaign level. Whilst the former is largely in the hands of the legislative level responsible for enfranchisement, the former can be pursued by local authorities, political parties and civil society. In this article we focus on this second level by looking at one very relevant case: the VoteBrussels campaign, which took place in Brussels, the Capital of Europe, to increase voter registration among non-Belgian citizens in the municipal elections of October 2018.

Belgium is particularly interesting case to investigate for several reasons. Firstly, Belgium offers the opportunity of a quasi-experimental design, with its three regions exposed to two different party systems. Flanders and Wallonia have different party systems, while Brussels residents can choose to vote in either system (Russo, Deschouwer and Verthé 2019; Deschouwer 2012). At the same time, the registration rules are supposed to be the same across the whole country. Second, the level of aggregation is municipal, which gives us the opportunity for a granular picture comparing differences in composition and actions across Belgium's 581 municipalities. Lastly, Belgium's system of compulsory voting (both for Belgian citizens and for registered non-Belgian voters) means that voter registration statistics can be used as a basic proxy for actual turnout for non-Belgian citizens. This proxy can only apply for municipal elections, as European elections involve the possibility for mobile EU citizens to vote for lists in their country of residence

or country of citizenship, meaning that fragmented voter registration rates from different countries make comparable statistics impossible.

This article considers the Belgian case and offers a multivariate analysis testing the hypothesis that the *VoteBrussels* campaign had a significant impact on the EU citizen voter registration rate in the Brussels region. We test this hypothesis via t-test by comparing the 2018 registration rates in the Brussels region across space (comparison with the other regions) and time (comparison with the registration rate in the municipal elections of 2012). We also investigate the impact of the campaign by using a fixed-effect linear regression.

THE CASE OF BELGIUM

In Belgium, a country with roughly 11.5 million citizens, EU and non-EU citizens would amount to almost 11 per cent of the potential electorate, as shown by Table 1:

Table 1: 2018 composition of eligible voter population in Belgium

Region/ Community	Belgians		European		Non-European	
	count	percentage	count	percentage	count	percentage
Flanders	4,831.922	54.18	290,674	3.26	85,162	0.95
Brussels	585,922	6.57	222,242	2.49	63,171	0.71
Wallonia*	2,557,814	28.68	235,351	2.64	46,260	0.52
Total	7,975,658	89.43	748,267	8.39	194,593	2.18

*includes German speaking-community (61,794 voters)

Non-Belgian citizens' potential impact on the elections varies significantly between Belgium's three regions. Table 2 shows the composition of voter population focusing on the regional level.

Table 2: 2018 composition of eligible voter population by region

Region/ Community	Flanders		Brussels		Wallonia *	
	count	percentage	count	percentage	count	percentage
Belgians	4,831.922	92.78	585,922	67.24	2,557,814	90.08
European	290,674	5.58	222,242	25.51	235,351	8.29
Non-European	85,162	1.64	63,171	7.25	46,260	1.63
Total	5,207,758	100	871,335	100	2,839,425	100

*includes German speaking-community (61,794 voters)

Table 2 shows that the composition in the two major regions is very similar. Although Flanders has almost twice the number of total voters than Wallonia, the internal composition of the electorate is quite similar. In contrast, the Brussels region has a very different composition as the international gateway for Belgium and as the capital of the EU, with significantly higher percentages of European and non-European citizens. When comparing Table 1 (percentages) and Table 2 (counts), European citizens seem relatively evenly distributed across the three regions. Considering that the Brussels region is much smaller in terms of size and inhabitants, the concentration of EU and non-EU citizens is much higher.

These demographic differences have direct electoral implications. The higher concentration of EU and non-EU potential voters in the Brussels region could have substantial effects on election outcomes. Combined together, the share of EU and non-EU potential voters reaches 32.86 per cent. However, the voice of one third of the Brussels population can be significantly influenced by voter registration information and procedures. In Belgium, Belgian citizens are automatically registered to vote and voting is compulsory. For non-Belgian citizens, voting is only compulsory so long as they are registered on the electoral rolls. To register, they must provide a simple one-page form and a copy of their identity card to their municipality 90 days before an election. This 90-day registration deadline for mobile EU citizens is one of the earliest in the EU, before the electoral campaign and candidates are fully announced.

Belgium still suffers from one of the lowest registration rates for EU citizens in the EU because of its combination of obligatory voting, one of the earliest registration deadlines and local information and procedures that vary across its 589 communes. EU citizens must register before the electoral campaign actually begins and they are not properly informed about their right and obligation to vote. However, voter registration has not been part of Belgium's democratic culture for 125 years. Obligatory voting was introduced in 1893 to abolish any obstacle to universal suffrage, such as working on election day, intimidation or voter registration. Because obligatory voting leads to high voter participation rates, Belgian political parties and authorities do not realise that the rate of voter registration and turnout is largely a function of the amount of resources and time that they put in to inform and engage potential voters. Obligatory voting translates not only into less effort by Belgian authorities, but also greater confusion among potential voters. The principal reason why most do not register, according to available research (Nikolic 2017), is a lack of correct information about obligatory voting. Ironically, Belgium, like most countries with obligatory voting, does not enforce it for ordinary voters since no ordinary voter has been fined by the Federal Justice Minister since 2003. Few non-Belgians know that they can vote by proxy and de-register after without risks or fines.

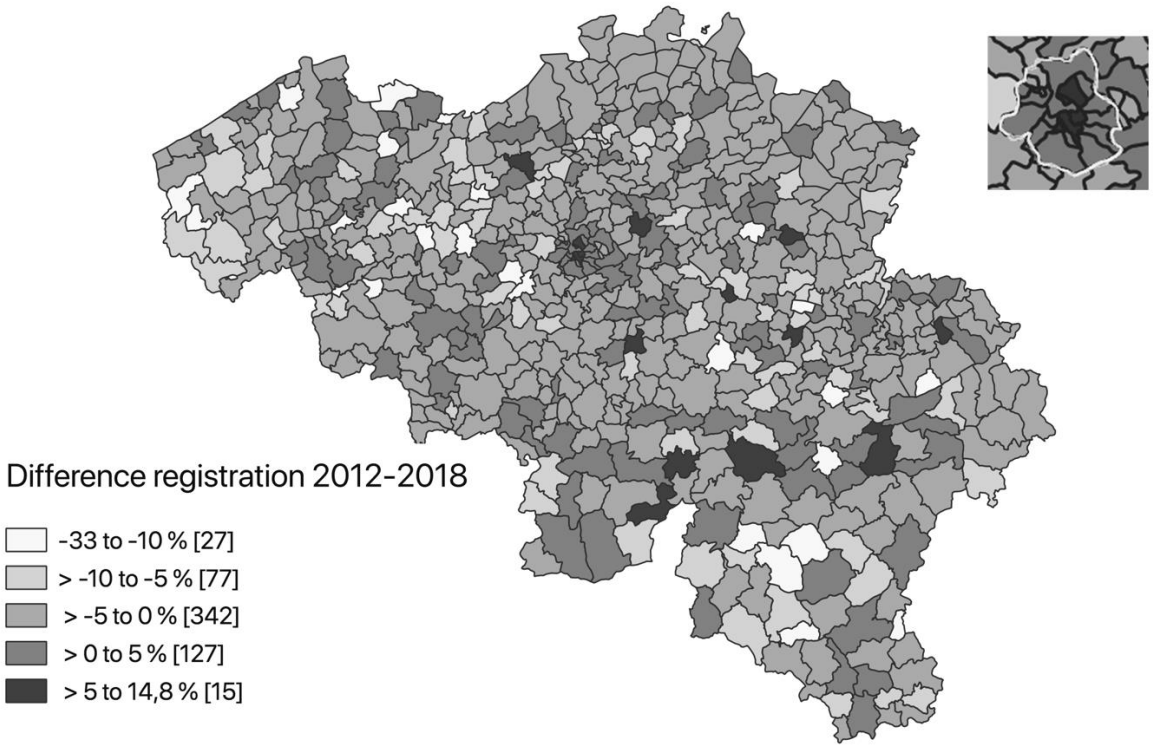
How many eligible EU citizens registered to vote in the last municipal elections?

Table 3: 2018 composition of registered voter population in Belgium

Region	European citizens								
	Registred			Elegible			Percentage		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Flanders	17,964	15,699	33,663	153,629	137,045	290,674	11.69%	11.46%	11.58%
Brussels	17,832	19,400	37,232	108,986	113,256	222,242	16.36%	17.13%	16.75%
Wallonia	30,842	28,822	59,664	120,492	114,859	235,351	41.58%	40.14%	40.85%
Total	66,638	63,921	130,559	383,107	365,160	748,267	17.39%	17.50%	17.45%

When comparing the 2012 and 2018 registration rates in Figure 1, the change (mostly a decrease) in registration rates is not uniform in direction or intensity across municipalities in Flanders and Wallonia. By contrast, the Brussels region (highlighted in Figure 1's side box) shows a relatively consistent increase in registration rates across most of its 19 municipalities.

Figure 1: Difference in 2012 and 2018 registration rate per municipality



VOTEBRUSSELS AND THE BRUSSELS REGIONAL CAMPAIGNS

The Brussels Capital-Region is the most cosmopolitan city in the world after Dubai. Its 285,000 eligible non-Belgian voters could amount to nearly one-third of its electorate (see Table 1 and 2). Most significantly, their potential share in the electorate rises to nearly half of all voters in three of its 19 communes (Etterbeek, Ixelles and Saint-Gilles) and in 13 of its 145 neighborhoods. However, 92 per cent were not yet registered to vote as of March 2018. Among these non-registered voters, nearly 90 per cent were EU citizens (for example French, Romanian, Italian, Polish, Spanish). Belgium suffers from one of the lowest voter registration rates for EU citizens in the EU (see European Commission 2018).

The 2018 municipal elections saw few improvements compared to 2012 in terms of actions taken by the 19 Brussels municipalities. An overview of communal and regional actions in 2018 is provided in Table 4. As before, most of the 19 communes published articles for the communal magazine and website, although the text was sometimes hard to understand and not very convincing. A minority also sent at least one local letter. However, all these actions are not very effective according to the extensive international research (see Green and Gerber 2017). A minority of communes undertook more effective actions with local events, NGO partners and active EU citizen candidates. Few worked with local associations or neighborhood committees. Nor was Brussels democracy aided by the Flemish Community, which restricted the voter registration activities in Brussels of its funded associations, or by Federal Interior Minister Jan Jambon (Flemish nationalist party NVA), who sent a secret circular three months before the deadline, which created confusion about applications received by associations or candidates.

Table 4: Overview of Brussels communal and regional voter registration actions in 2018

Communal actions	
Email applications accepted	15 communes
Early websites	8
Clear and comprehensive websites as evaluated by VoteBrussels	11
Partnership with local NGOs	6
Big local events	8
Local letters from mayor	7
Local letters: number of voters reached	100,251 voters
Regional actions	
Letter from Brussels region	285,595
Brussels regional websites as reported to VoteBrussels	7,150
Voters reached at events (VoteBrussels and partners)	5,376
Voters regularly reached by VoteBrussels social media	110,000
EU citizen candidates	300 candidates

So, what was the big difference between 2012 and 2018? For the first time, the region, the European Commission and the Brussels Commissioner for Europe ("Think European, Vote Local") got involved and worked with the most effective methods for reaching new voters:

1) Multilingual websites (www.elections2018.brussels) and letters by the Brussels region for all eligible non-Belgian voters and all staff of the European Institutions (see European Commission 2018).
2) Email applications accepted in 15 of the 19 communes, thanks to guidance from the region.
3) Networks of volunteers like Objectif and VoteBrussels, funded by the region and European Commission, to answer questions through face-to-face discussions and social media.[3]
4) The visibility of these actions also encouraged more EU citizens than ever (300) to run as candidates with partisan campaigns by nearly all Brussels parties.[4]

Funded by the European Commission as part of the FAIREU project, the VoteBrussels[5] initiative by the Migration Policy Group coordinated the actions and campaigns of the Brussels region, the European institutions and dozens of mobile EU citizen volunteers. Focus groups among mobile EU citizens concluded that the main reason for the low registration rate is the fact that non-Belgians do not receive all the correct information in time about their right, obligation and options to vote. Based on these findings, the campaign's main messages were that local authorities are more powerful in Belgium than anywhere else in the EU, but are only elected with a few hundred votes, because the one-third of non-Belgians in Brussels do not know that it's so easy to email

or mail their one-page voter form by 31 July, vote by proxy on election day if they need to and de-register after if they want, all without any risks or fines.

This wording was directly used to improve the websites and materials of the Brussels Commissioner for Europe, the Brussels region and other communes. The materials used by the VoteBrussels volunteers were the Commissioner's simple trilingual leaflet, the one-page application form in French/Dutch as well as the VoteBrussels-branded one-page leaflet in English/French (used as oral script and email template), regionally-funded English/French postcards and our list of communal email/mail addresses. With these materials, volunteers could directly assist registering voters and collect their completed forms for local submission and follow-up by the VoteBrussels coordinator.

Using these materials, volunteer trainings were offered face-to-face, online and at the EU Affairs Consultative Committees of two communes with the highest share of non-Belgian potential voters (Etterbeek and Ixelles). The nearly 100 volunteers were nearly all mobile EU citizens working in the European institutions or EU-level NGOs, including several EU citizen candidates for the municipal elections from a wide spectrum of parties. These volunteer 'mobilisers' were trained and asked to use their existing networks and contacts to secure invitations to present and distribute materials at existing events and organisations attracting large numbers of EU citizens. Most successful were events in Brussels' 'European Quarter', where EU citizens, who live all across and even outside Brussels, mostly work and attend events that take place during lunch, after-work/evenings or weekends. These events included work meetings, professional, social and nationality-based events, language courses, markets and festivals. According to the VoteBrussels evaluation report, the VoteBrussels coordinator and volunteers directly informed an estimated 3,000 EU citizens through 350 hours of conversation at 80 events. Of these citizens, 1,000 were reached through full group presentations and nearly 2,000 more reached through one-on-one conversation and dissemination at public events (see Huddleston 2018: 7-8).

Alongside these face-to-face interactions, the VoteBrussels volunteers and coordinators secured significant attention through media and social media content. VoteBrussels became the main contact point for the Belgian press. The under-appreciated 'expat media' was also highly effective as they are actually well-read by EU citizens, relatively easy-to-reach, motivated for the topic, eager for content and good at translation and messaging. More significantly, volunteers regularly posted on expat social media groups and supported the coordinator on VoteBrussels' Facebook and Twitter channels. These channels provided communal/election news in English, spontaneous video testimonials, infographics and visuals for the election calendar and specific nationalities/languages. Most successful were content related to the six VoteBrussels online quizzes (www.vote.brussels), which were taken nearly 4,000 times, shared extensively by participants among their Facebook friends and then seen by hundreds of thousands of unique users in Brussels. Regionally-funded Facebook advertisements targeted Brussels-based users born in other EU countries and therefore assured the significant campaign visibility among EU citizens in and around Brussels. As a result, the VoteBrussels Facebook and Twitter channels regularly generated viral social media content reaching 50,000 Brussels users every week.[6]

HYPOTHESES

This paper explores two hypotheses about the potential impact of the Brussels regional campaigns on voter registration rate, which can also be taken as a rough proxy for voter turnout. Specifically, we expect that:

- $H1_a$: The registration rate of mobile EU citizens significantly increased in the Brussels Region in 2018 (in comparison with 2012).
- $H1_b$: The registration rate of mobile EU citizens significantly increased in the Brussels Region in comparison with the other two Belgian regions in 2018.

These two hypotheses were tested by performing two t-tests: a paired one for $H1_a$ (which assumes that the profile of registered EU voters changed little in the six years between the two elections), and an independent one for $H1_b$. Finally, a fixed effect linear regression was used to test the following hypothesis:

- H2: The Brussels regional campaigns had a significant and positive in the increase of the EU citizens' registration.

DATA AND METHODS

The topic implies the use of ecological data as the available turnout and registration rates are inherently aggregate information. Survey data on registration are neither available nor suitable, given that the low number of certain EU and non-EU nationalities (see Table 1a in the Appendix) would be problematic for a sampling design. The advantage of using ecological data lies in the ability to analyse the total population of interest rather than a limited sample. Ecological data also permits consideration of possible geographical (in this case, regional) patterns, an angle hardly ever investigated in survey analysis given the often prohibitive costs of sampling at subnational level.

We use the finest possible level at which registration data is collected, that is mobile EU citizen voter registration rates at municipal level for the 2012 and the 2018 municipal elections. The voter data employed cover all 589 Belgian municipalities and were released on demand by the authors from the Belgian Ministry of the Interior. Although this N does not match the typical individual-level dataset numerosity, it is sufficiently large enough to deliver reliable results,[7] especially when considering that we do not include multiplicative terms in our regression model and that we are not using sample data but the whole population (with no case missing). Ideally, employing a lower level of aggregation (for example polling station) would have led to even more reliable estimates (Russo and Beauguitte 2014), but, as mentioned, in the case of Belgium municipality is the lowest available level. However, these being aggregate data, the results need to be interpreted keeping the nature of the data and their implications (see Russo 2017 for an overview).

This paper employs two strategies to assess its core question on the effectiveness of the Brussels regional campaign. First, to test hypotheses $H1_a$ and $H1_b$, we assess whether there is a significant difference in the registration rate of the EU-citizens in 1) 2018 across regions, and 2) in 2012 and 2018 in the Brussels region. This strategy is pursued with a t-test and the variables involved are the registration rates expressed in percentages, as Table 5 shows. This t-test assesses whether the difference in registration rates is significant.

Table 5: 2012 and 2018 registration

		Total		
Region	N	2012	2018	Diff
Flanders	307	14	11.3	-2.75
Brussels	19	14.6	16.9	2.25
Wallonia	262	31.5	29.3	-2.20

Going further, a regression model is created to assess the potential impact of the Brussels regional campaign on voter registration rates. Due to the nature of the data and the hypothesis (H2), we opt for a fixed effect model by region with robust standard errors, in order to address possible homoscedasticity problems. Because of the organisation of the Belgian elections, with

party offer and campaign being relevant at the regional level (which is inherently linked to the hypothesis we want to test), it is pivotal to use a model in which the group means are not random, but indeed fixed at the regional level. A fixed effect model will enable us to measure the impact of the VoteBrussels campaign in the registration rates.

The dependent variable of the regression analysis is not the registration rate per se, but the *change* in registration rate, that is the difference (expressed in percentage) between 2012 and 2018.

The main independent variable is the presence of the Brussels regional campaigns, coded as a dummy of 0 in Flanders and Wallonia (no campaign) and 1 in the 19 municipalities of the Brussels region. The use of aggregate data makes it impossible to further investigate the concentration of campaign actions on more specific target groups.

The first set of control variables concerns the origin country of potential EU citizen voters. According to socialisation theory, political attitudes and behaviour show striking stability throughout people's lives. With age, people are likely to become less flexible in their political opinions and behaviour (Jaros 1973: 74). For example, Franklin's seminal 2004 study demonstrated the extent to which voting is a civic habit adopted in early adulthood. Other studies find evidence of the habit-forming effect of voting, using panel data (Plutzer 2002) and experimental data (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003). Therefore, one could expect that mobile EU citizens coming from high versus low turnout countries would take that habit and socialisation with them to their new country of residence. For this reason, four control variables are constructed to measure the situation in EU citizens' country of origin. Firstly, we control for the change in the composition of mobile EU citizen nationalities between 2012 and 2018 (as a percentage) in order to match our dependent variable. We would expect that an increase in mobile EU citizens from high and medium-high turnout countries would have a positive effect on the change in the registration rate, while an increase of mobile EU citizens from low turnout countries would have the opposite effect. High versus low turnout countries of origin are categorised according to the turnout rate at the most recent parliamentary elections in each country of origin. Tables 6 and 7 describes this variable in detail:

Table 6: EU origin countries in each category for voter turnout in latest parliamentary election:

Category Turnout	Countries
High turnout (> 80%)	Denmark, Luxemburg, Malta, Sweden, Netherlands
Medium-high turnout (>70-80%)	Germany, Austria, Finland, Italy
Medium-low turnout (>61-70%)	Cyprus, Bulgaria, Spain, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Estonia, Czechia
Low turnout (<60%)	France, Romania, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia

Note: Countries listed in each category in order of turnout level (highest to lowest)

Table 7: Difference in the composition of the EU citizen population eligible to vote by region.

Region	Year	High turnout	Medium-high turnout	Medium-low turnout	Low turnout	Total
Flanders	2012	100647	32357	34286	64683	231973
	2018	111180	33473	45205	100816	290674
	Diff. %	10.47	3.45	31.85	55.86	25.31
Brussels	2012	10204	35961	37766	108741	192672
	2018	10419	39790	42840	129193	222242
	Diff. %	2.11	10.65	13.44	18.81	15.35
Wallonia	2012	10112	116015	18671	84515	229313
	2018	9628	107545	19504	98674	235351
	Diff. %	-4.79	-7.30	4.46	16.75	2.63
Total	2012	120963	184333	90723	257939	653958
	2018	131227	180808	107549	328683	748267
	Diff. %	8.49	-1.91	18.55	27.43	14.42

Table 7 shows that the eligible mobile EU citizen population increased from 2012 to 2018 by 14.42 per cent (94,309 citizens). However, this increase is subject to sizeable regional differences. The region with the highest overall increase is Flanders (+25.31 per cent), followed by Brussels (+15.35 per cent) and Wallonia (only +2.63 per cent). Wallonia is also the only region that experienced a decrease in the share of the mobile EU citizen population coming from high and medium-high turnout countries.

The analysis controls for a set of composition of key demographic variables, namely gender, the overall population size (as proxy for size of a municipality), population size of non-EU citizens, and the number of **EU residents working in the European institutions**. **Gender** is taken into account with the percentage of women in the whole population. We expect that a higher share of women in the population would have a positive impact on our dependent variable, as recent literature suggests that women are voting at increasingly high, if not higher, rates as men (Desposato and Norrander 2009 and Córdova and Rangel 2017). The **size of the municipality** is captured based on the total population on a 0-1 scale for easy interpretation. Previous research has shown that less urbanised communities have higher turnout levels than urban areas (Dejaeghere and Vanhoutte 2016 Lewis 2011; Oliver 2000). Additionally, we control for the share of local residents working in the European institutions as we expect a positive coefficient given the European institutions' financial, organizational and volunteer support for the Brussels regional campaigns and the high education of this group (see Desiere, Struyve and Cuyvers 2018). We also control for the size of the non-EU citizen and expect a negative effect, given the restrictive eligibility criteria for non-EU citizens (five years of residence) and the generally lower levels of voter turnout in their origin countries.

Finally, a proxy for socio-economic status is included to measure poverty levels in the form of the share of the population with a zero-income tax declaration. Socio-economic status has been found to be one of the most stable predictors of any form of political participation, including voting (Dalton 2008; Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995). The expectation is that the lower the

socio-economic status, the lower the political and electoral participation. The data is somewhat older (2016 data from STATBEL) than the other data used in the analysis.[8]

Table 8 provides an overview of the summary statistics for the variables employed in the regression model.

Table 8: Summary statistics for the variables in the regression model[9]

	Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
DV	Diff. registration 2012-2018 (%)	589	-2.35	4.25	-33.33	14.81
Main IV	Vote Brussels Camp.	589	0.03	0.18	0,00	1.00
Turnout	Diff. pop high turnout countries	589	-3.00	4.63	-24.21	8.22
	Diff. pop medium-high turnout countries	589	-3.00	4.63	-24.21	8.22
	Diff. pop medium-low turnout countries	589	-2.21	3.10	-13.80	8.49
	Diff. pop low turnout countries	589	-0.15	3.42	-15.40	15.67
Gender	Diff. Women	589	5	6	-22	32
Overall Population	Population 2018 (scale)	589	0.04	0.06	0	1
	Population non-EU	589	7639304	3066.67	0	53308
	Local residents working in European institution	589	4112881	24.62	8.24	100.00
Income	Zero income declarations (%)	589	6.83	3.72	2.51	30.31

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis begins with two t-tests to address our hypotheses H1a and $H1_b$. A paired t-test is used for our $H1_a$ as the observations are not independent of one another: *The registration rate of mobile EU citizens significantly increased in the Brussels region in 2018 (in comparison with 2012)*. Figure 2 shows the registration rates in Brussels region in 2012 and 2018.

Figure 2: 2012 and 2018 mobile EU citizen registration rates (%) in Brussels (mean)

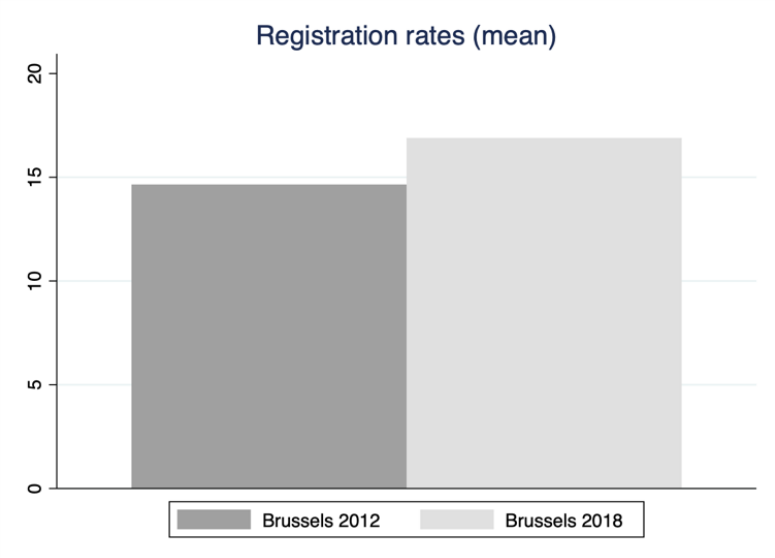
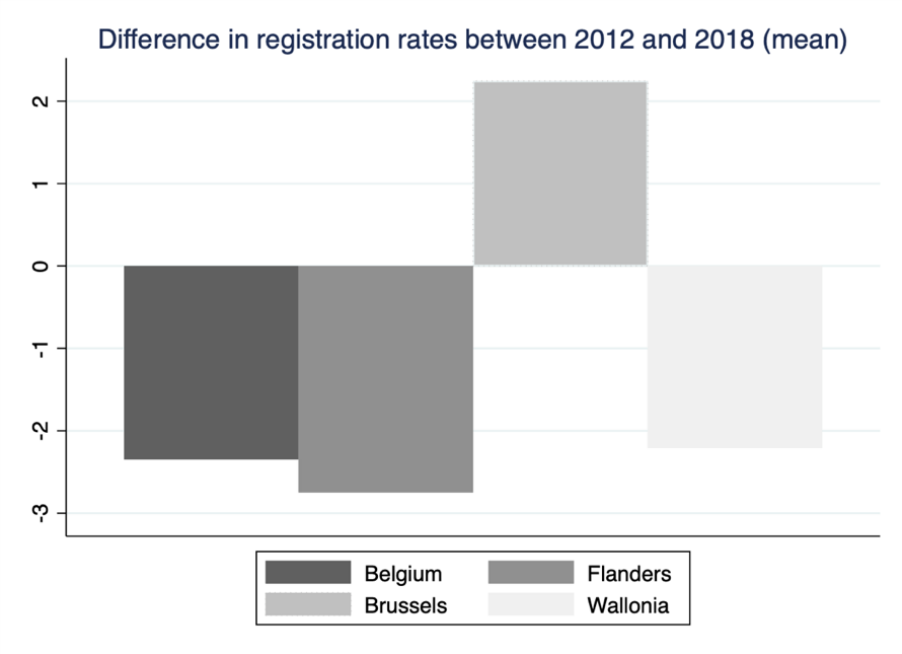


Figure 2 concludes that the mobile EU citizen voter registration rate was indeed higher in 2018 than in 2012. A paired t-test was conducted to compare the registration rates (expressed in percentages) in the 19 municipalities of the Brussels region in 2018 and 2012. A significant difference emerges between the voter registration rates in 2012 (M=14.65, SD=3.83) and 2018 (M=16.89, SD=4.32); t (18)=-3.91, p<0.01. These results show that the increase in mobile EU citizens' voter registration rates was significant in the Brussels region from 2012 to 2018.

Building on this finding, our analysis proceeds to hypothesis H1b: The registration rate of mobile EU citizens significantly increased in the Brussels region in comparison with the other two Belgian regions in 2018. Figure 3 shows the registration rates in Brussels region in 2012 and 2018.

Figure 3: Difference in registration rates (%) between 2012 and 2018 in Belgium and the three regions (mean)



As Figure 3 clearly shows, on average, voter registration rates decreased from 2012 to 2018 in Belgium, both in Flanders and in Wallonia, with the sole exception of the Brussels region. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the *change* in registration rates between 2012 and 2018 (expressed in percentages) in pairs of regions. Our analysis finds a significant difference in the registration rates between the Brussels region (M=2.24, SD=2.49) and Flanders (M=-2.75, SD=4.40); t (325)=4.89, p<0.001, as well as between the Brussels region (M=2.24, SD=2.49) and Wallonia (M=-2.21, SD=3.96); t (279)=4.82, p<0.001.

The role of the Brussels regional campaigns in boosting its registration rate is investigated with a linear regression including fixed effects (and robust standard errors) by region. Table 9 provides the results of the regression.

Table 9 indicates that the Brussels regional campaign did have a significant impact on the increased registration rates in the Brussels Region. As for all our control variables, they mostly behave as expected with regard to the direction of the effect, but not all of them are significant.

Table 9: Fixed effect linear regression with robust standard errors.

VARIABLES	Coeffients	
Brussels regional campaign (regions)	1.45	(0.66)**
Diff. pop high turnout countries	0.04	(0.02)*
Diff. pop medium-high turnout countries	0.15	(0.03)***
Diff. pop medium-low turnout countries	0.13	(0.3)
Diff. pop low turnout countries	omitted	omitted
Diff. Women	1.35	(0.04)***
Population 2018 (scale)	10.04	(4.41)**
Population non-EU	-0.001	(0.00)*
Non-Belgian working in EU institution	0.003	(0.00)
Zero income declarations (%)	0.03	(0.00)
R2		
within	0.69	
between	0.99	
overall	0.70	
Observations	589	
Number of groups	3	
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

For example, an increase of mobile EU citizens from high turnout countries is significant only at $p<0.10$, but it does have a positive coefficient as expected. Coming from a medium-to-high turnout country is also highly significant. The other two variables of this group are, as expected, not significant. The effect of working in the European institutions is positive, as we expected, but largely not significant.

As expected, a higher share of women in the population has a positive effect on changes in the voter registration rate, as does the size of the municipality. Also in line with our expectations, the greater the number of non-EU citizens in the municipality, the smaller was the increase in the voter registration rate (variable significant only at $p<0.10$). Finally, the percentage of zero-income declaration is not significant. STATBEL provides a wide variety of alternative measures for the level of wealth/poverty in a municipality (among which: prosperity index, average income per declaration and per inhabitant, asymmetry index). We tried all the variables available and none resulted in a significant coefficient.

The very high values of the R-squared are likely due to the use of aggregate level data, which tends to lead to higher R-squared values than with individual level data. Besides the specific values, it is important to notice the magnitude of the R-squared *overall*, *within* and *between* regions. In fact, we notice that the variance explained *within* each region is only slightly lower with respect to the one for the whole country (*overall*). More interestingly, the variance explained *between* regions is much higher, suggesting once again the pivotal role of our main independent variable (the Brussels regional campaigns).

CONCLUSIONS

Thirty years since the introduction of European citizenship with the Maastricht Treaty, mobile EU citizens' electoral rights and participation have not yet reached their full potential. The few statistics clearly indicate that only a very small portion of eligible voters participate in municipal and European elections (Hutcheson and Russo 2019a; 2019b). Fostering political and electoral participation of non-national is important for the quality of democracy (Fennema and Tille 1999). This article investigated whether an active campaign by and for mobile EU citizens can succeed in boosting their participation in municipal elections. The case of Belgium and the Brussels regional campaigns, most notably the *VoteBrussels* campaign, provide a rare opportunity to implement a quasi-experimental design on data disaggregated at both nationality and municipal level.

Our findings suggest that regional campaigns like *VoteBrussels* can make a significant difference, as the registration/turnout increased – both when compared to the previous municipal elections in 2012 and when compared to the two other regions (Flanders and Wallonia).

These findings bridge a gap in the literature, as to our best knowledge no previous empirical studies consider the role played by mobilisation campaigns targeting mobile EU citizens. Researchers in this field are regularly confronted with a lack of data and targeted information. The novel and encouraging findings that we present do entail certain limitations for more in-depth analysis. The use of very detailed aggregate data would offer reliable estimates from a technical point of view (Russo and Beauguitte 2014), and we included as many relevant independent variables as possible and use the lowest possible level of aggregation. Still, the granularity that our research design implies is not optimal. A dummy variable had to be used to approximate the reach of the Brussels regional campaigns as no other way existed to operationalise our main independent variable (the Brussels regional campaigns) in a more detailed way, we opted for a straightforward strategy, and we simply created a dummy variable that reflects being or being not expose to a proactive mobilisation voting campaign at the regional level. This straightforward dummy is an approximation, as there are surely other factors that can influence the decision to vote. Furthermore, data for other potentially relevant control variables were not available, for example, as regards duration of residence, education level, political interest, and so on.

Despite these limitations, the Brussels and, more in general, the Belgian case, are extremely interesting and revealing about the potential to mobilise European citizenship. Our findings have both policy and scientific implications. At the policy level more proactive information campaigns are clearly needed to inform and inspire mobile EU citizens, as it seems necessary to embody one of the pillars of EU citizenship. From a scientific perspective, more research is needed to properly investigate this phenomenon. However, the lack of research on this topic seems to me mostly due to a severe lack of data. A systematic data collection needs to be implemented, especially when considering the growing figures of mobile EU citizens across the EU.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Data retrieved on 12 July 2019 at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digpub/eumove/bloc-1a.html?lang=en

[2] Namely: Belgium (indirectly, as registration and turnout can be considered to be the same), Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Romania, and Sweden (Hutcheson and Russo 2019b).

[3] This paper focuses on the VoteBrussels rather than Objectif or Brussels Commissioner's campaigns because VoteBrussels was the new, larger-scale campaign in the 2018 local elections, working with more diverse community-based groups. The Brussels Commissioner's work was largely limited to the production of election materials, while Objectif's smaller-scale campaign (50 presentations with 20 associations) was a continuation of their earlier campaigns in 2012. For more on Objectif's campaign, see Meftah (2018)=

[4] For example, see the #IVoteWhereILive campaign by non-Belgian supporters and candidates of the socialist and leftwing parties: https://www.facebook.com/IvoteWhereILive/

[5] For the evaluation of the VoteBrussels campaign, see Huddleston (2018), Huddleston and Nikolic (2018) and Weicht (2018).

[6] For an overview of this content, see www.facebook.com/VoteBrussels

[7] Tabachnick, Fidell and Ullman (2007) advise that a minimum of N>104 + number of predictors (in our case 11) is the requirement to obtain a reliable estimate. Whilst Austin and Steyerberg (2014) run a series of simulations which lead to the conclusion that in the contexts of an OLS a minimum of only two observation per variable is sufficient for adequate estimation of regression coefficients.

[8] Available at: https://statbel.fgov.be/nl/themas/huishoudens/fiscale-inkomens#figures

[9] In the Appendix the same table is replicated for each of the regions (Tables 2a, 3a, and 4a)

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Book Review

Framing TTIP in the European Public Spheres: Towards an Empowering Dissensus for EU Integration

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Abstract

Oleart offers a theoretically innovative contribution to the Europeanization and politicization literatures by introducing the 'empowering dissensus': an agonistic type of public conflict that legitimizes the EU as a playing field, connects politics with policy, and charts a path towards increasing the accountability and legitimacy of the EU. By applying this concept to the public debate on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), Oleart shows that concerted civil society action can radically transform the nature of public conflict on European issues.

Key Words

Europeanization; Public spheres; Politicization; EU Trade Policy; TTIP; Framing analysis; Agonism; Social movements.

Since the Maastricht Treaty and the associated growing concerns about the democratic deficit of the European Union, there has been an ongoing debate about the desirability of the politicization of European integration. Some authors have argued that the EU would not benefit from visible political conflict (Moravcsik, 2002), while others advocated sweeping institutional reforms so that traditional government-opposition dynamics take place as soon as possible (Follesdal and Hix, 2006) Yet in the past 10 years, growing evidence on the concrete manifestations of politicization has caused many academics to reevaluate and seriously doubt the positive effects of politicization for integration. This is not because they think politicization unnecessary, but because of the dominant form political conflict over the EU ostensibly takes. In line with Hooghe & Marks' seminal piece on a post-functional theory for European integration (2009), empirical analyses of highly controversial public debates confirm their initial hypothesis that political conflict over European integration is structured primarily along an integration–demarcation cleavage that pits cosmopolitan Europeans against nationalist anti-Europeans (Hutter, Grande and Kriesi, 2016). Bundled together with issues such as immigration and driven by populist radical right parties, Hooghe and Marks claim that executive elites now have incentives to slow integration. Meaning, in other words, politicization acts as a 'constraining dissensus'.

In *'Framing TTIP in the European Public Spheres: Towards an Empowering Dissensus for EU Integration*', Alvaro Oleart builds a powerful counterweight to this argument by claiming that politicization can be considered 'empowering' rather than 'constraining' for European integration. To show how this is possible, Oleart skillfully bridges the literature on EU politicization, the Europeanization of public spheres, and democratic theory. In Chapter 2 Oleart offers an impressive theoretical review that begins by outlining the traditional argument that beyond-national authorities need an accompanying public sphere to act as a communicative counterweight to administrative power. However, building on the democratic theory of Chantal Mouffe, Oleart criticizes this mainstream view for being too focused on rational deliberation geared towards consensus à la Jürgen Habermas. In line with Mouffe, Oleart stresses that politics is emotional and conflictual, a fight between irreconcilable world views. Our democratic institutions should hence be constructed to let 'agonistic conflict' flourish. From here on, Oleart uses a complementary view, fusing the Habermasian deliberative democratic view and Mouffe's agonistic politics to argue that the public sphere is a place in which conflict takes place and where different counter-hegemonic projects confront each other.

Oleart reviews literature on the Europeanization of public spheres and concludes that two types of Europeanization have been identified. One 'depoliticized' form, which implies some attention for the EU, but which is biased towards executive actors who are free to communicate their own (often technocratic) frames. The other is an 'antagonistically' politicized Europeanization, in line with the 'constraining dissensus' thesis, where the conflict revolves around pro and anti-EU views, it disputes the existence of the EU itself. In reaction to these, Oleart normatively advocates an 'agonistically politicized Europeanization', meaning, a public debate where EU policies (rather than the EU polity) are discussed between groups that recognize each other as equal parts of the same political community, and where the dominant hegemony is being confronted by counter-hegemonic projects focused on alternative values and ideas.

Oleart methodologically innovates by linking this highly theoretical debate to a very concrete framing analysis in Chapter 3. This link rests on a chain of equivalence he puts forward between (i) the type of conflict (ii) polity or policy contestation, and (iii) the type of frame introduced. Hence, antagonistic conflict is equalized with polity contestation, whereby the EU is pitted against nation states, and with a 'sovereignty' frame. On the other hand, agonism is identified where policies of the EU are discursively contested through frames that indicate a counter-hegemonic project. The empirical aim then becomes to evaluate the type of conflict that dominates – antagonistic, agonistic, or depoliticized/technocratic – during a particular conflict by studying dominant media frames.

To demonstrate, Oleart turns an analytical lens to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a derailed trade agreement between the EU and the US that was being negotiated between 2013-16 and which would have been the largest trade deal at the time. From the start of the process, the TTIP negotiations were met with unprecedented (and unexpected) attention, triggered by a wide range of civil society organizations working transnationally and in several Member States. Given the wide array of political and societal actors present during these TTIP debates, applying Oleart's framework, the question becomes whether the dominant framing was antagonistically anti-EU or, counter-hegemonically, addressed TTIP as a policy issue.

In this context, the empirical Chapters 4-6 set out to evaluate the dominant type of conflict and framing in domestic (mediatized) public spheres. The scope of empirical data is impressive, it incorporates media framing analysis of three newspapers in three countries with very different relationships to European integration: Spain, France, and the UK. Collecting over 1000 media articles and using a qualitative content analysis to code the types of frames in titles, images and the body of text, these chapters diligently describe the politicized TTIP debate in detail.

Notwithstanding differences between the three sampled countries, the main finding of Oleart's analysis is that the politicization of TTIP led to similar media landscapes. Not only in relation to the ebb and flow of issue salience, but also in terms of the interpretive frames of reference. The same dynamic was evident in all three public spheres: a depoliticized Europeanization in the first 1.5 years of negotiations, followed by a complete shift towards agonistic politicization. In framing terms, the debate shifted from predominantly executive actors framing TTIP as an economic opportunity (in hegemonic neoliberal terms), towards a pluralistic debate where 'corporations vs democracy' was the master frame and point of reference. Interestingly, the debate was always 'nationalized' so that overarching concerns were translated to domestic contexts (e.g., in the UK the master frame was translated to an attack on the NHS), but the broad agonistic frames of reference were similar across borders. In contrast, and equally remarkably, the EU itself was hardly ever questioned, so it was mostly the TTIP project as a policy issue that was under debate.

Chapter 7 reflects on the research findings. Oleart explains the occurrence of the transnational Europeanized TTIP debate mostly in terms of agency and entrepreneurship. A network of 'alter-globalization' activists and organizations worked as a transnational advocacy network which was crucial for the coordination of campaigns that went beyond the 'Brussels bubble' and translated 'EU-speak' into domestic concerns. Oleart also underlines the importance of the relationship between media-savvy activists and journalists by drawing on interviews with journalists responsible for covering TTIP in their newspapers. Politicization, Oleart thus argues, relies to a large degree on the (discursive) actions of political and societal entrepreneurs.

One side note to Oleart's findings relates to his focus on quality newspapers. Public debate in quality newspapers from different countries are arguably much more similar than the difference we can find between quality and tabloid newspapers *within* the same country (Trenz, 2008). Given the existence of an increasingly fractured and layered public sphere, this raises a question as to whether the finding of similarity in these debates is indeed so surprising. It could be the case that the British tabloid press used TTIP as another example of Brussels stripping away British sovereignty, leading to a much more antagonistic conflict in the UK, thereby qualifying our attachment of normatively beneficial consequences to the TTIP debate. That said, this choice to focus on quality newspapers by no means downgrades the added value of Oleart's contribution; on the contrary, it sparks interest in and opens further avenues of possible inquiry about how the EU debate is mediated and presented to mass audiences.

Oleart's book is not only theoretically rich and empirically thorough, it also presents a genuinely hopeful message. Much in line with his object of study – the Alter-Globalization

movement – his argument shows that, indeed, 'Another Europe is possible'. The dominant ways in which European conflict is made and re-made in the public sphere and is contingent on political and societal entrepreneurs stepping up and making claims. The current dominance of pro-EU vs anti-EU conflicts may be strong, but it is not set in stone. An expansion of EU competence has enlarged the possibilities for contestation of EU policies and politicization of debates on what type of Europe we want. It is these types of agonistic debates, Oleart argues, that legitimize the EU as a playing field, connects politics with policy, empowers actors previously excluded from debates, and charts a path towards increasing the accountability and legitimacy of the EU. The idea of politicization serving as an 'empowering dissensus' is therefore a powerful one; for this reason alone, it is worth exploring in further study.

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Framing TTIP in the European Public Spheres: Towards an Empowering Dissensus for EU Integration

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