Parliamentary groups and political traditions in the debates on EU institutional reform (1979-1999)

This is the author's manuscript

Original Citation:

Availability:
This version is available http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1636934 since 2018-03-29T13:10:35Z

Publisher:
Routledge

Terms of use:
Open Access
Anyone can freely access the full text of works made available as "Open Access". Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license. Use of all other works requires consent of the right holder (author or publisher) if not exempted from copyright protection by the applicable law.

(Article begins on next page)
Discourses and Counter-discourses on Europe
From the Enlightenment to the EU

Edited by
Manuela Ceretta and
Barbara Curli
on Europe

Discourses and Counter-discourses
From the Enlightenment to the EU

Counter-discourses and Discourses on Europe

Edited by Barbara Curti, Manuela Ceretta and Virginia Rella

1. Mapping European Empire
2. Reviving the European Union as an Empire
3. Building Imperial Europe
4. European Identity Revised
5. Discourses and Counter-Discourses on Europe

Edited by Virginia Rella, Manuela Ceretta and Barbara Curti

London and New York
Routledge

The Royal Institute of International Affairs
Contents
Figures
Paulo Carini is Assistant Professor of History of European Integration and Democratic and Representational Theory at the University of Ljubljana. His main research interests include the University of Ljubljana, with a focus on the role of research and teaching in the history of European integration and democratic representation.
early Eighties. This was also favoured by the entrance, first, of the Socialists from the Spanish PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) and from Portugal, and later of those from the former Italian Communist Party, that became the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS, Partito Democratico della Sinistra).

It should be remembered that at the European elections of 1979 the Socialist parties had not managed to agree on a shared programme, but only on an ‘Appeal to the voters’, the outcome of which, incidentally, did not reveal a cohesive orientation. The SPD had judged it too lopsided to the left; some of the Dutch socialists, regarding the Community as an instrument of international corporations, had even called for abstention; and Labour had presented a manifesto of its own in which they were anticipating a British withdrawal from the EEC.²

In contrast, the EPP Group, whose original nucleus was made up of parties with a Christian-democratic background, tends to blur the original European federalism, as well as the reference to a social market economy and, for the Catholic MEPs, to the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, all elements still detectable, for example, in the EPP programme for the elections in June 1979, but also those in 1989, which speaks of the ‘United States of Europe’⁴ objective. This takes place with the establishment, between the end of the Eighties and the early Nineties, of the strategy of opening up the parliamentary group to the conservative parties, in order to avoid the Socialists becoming the dominant group in the EP, contrasted by the Italian Democrazia Cristiana (DC) and the Christian Democrat parties in Benelux and France. This strategy was supported by the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union) and by the Bavarian CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union) and was consolidated with the entry, at first, of the Spanish Partido Popular and, then, of the British and the Danish Conservatives. In the following years other parties, such as the Austrian ÖVP (Österreichische Volkspartei), the Swedish and Finnish conservative parties, the Portuguese Partido social democrata, Forza Italia and the French neo-Gaulists,⁵ entered the group.

‘The cart before the horse’? The Colombo–Genscher Declaration and the Spinelli Plan

In the first European elections of 1979, the citizens of the nine Member States elected 410 members of parliament; the result of the vote was the dominance of the two major political groups, the Socialist and EPP, with 113 and 107 seats respectively.⁶

The differences between the positions more oriented to supranational integration of the EPP and the more tepid ones on the Socialist side are evident in the first elected legislature. Re-reading the minutes of the parliamentary sessions, the dichotomy appears already in the discussions following the inauguration of the new EP, even during the debate between the two presidents of the Socialist Group, the Belgian Ernest Glinne, and the EPP Group, the leader of the CDU Egon A. Klepsch,⁷ on the election and the role of the President of the EP.⁸

The French liberal Simone Veil was appointed president. In her inaugural speech she called for cohesion of the different political forces in order to enhance the role of the EP and to avoid ‘the error of turning the […] Assembly into a forum for rivalry and dissent’. For Veil, all Member States were faced with three great challenges: peace, freedom and prosperity; in her view ‘they can only be met through the European dimension’.

The vision and the integration model described by Veil did not vary much from those imagined by the EPP Group. The EP had the moral and political task of completing the project of the founding fathers by promoting ‘an ever-closer union between the peoples of Europe’. The Belgian Christian Democrat Leo Tindemans insisted on this point, calling for an evolution of the Community into a Union. He referred to the prospects of deeper integration that had been hypothetically put forward already at the Paris Summit of 1974: hypotheses which were then reinforced by the political outcome of the elections of 1979. On that occasion, the then President of the EPP and drafter of the eponymous Report reminded the EP of the three proposals implemented during the meeting between the European Heads of State and Government in the French capital. The first was addressed ‘To transform the Summit Conference into a European Council; the second was to draft a report on European Union; and the third was to hold elections by direct universal suffrage to the European Parliament’. Tindemans concluded: ‘It is my hope that the second proposal, involving progress towards a European Union, will not fall by the wayside and that suggestions for action in this area will be made in future’.

In this sense, the EP elected by universal suffrage had ‘a special responsibility’. Tindemans’s words, connected perhaps to a strategy of political legitimacy of the EP after its election by direct universal suffrage, clearly demonstrate the EPP’s European inclination. During the first Parliamentary term, the Christian Democrats tapped into the ongoing project of the founding fathers – reference to whom is frequent in MEPs’ discourse and rhetoric in this political area – and leveraged the new role of the EP that should have acted ‘as a more effective motive force in European integration’.

Even the president of the European Commission, British Labour Roy Jenkins, acknowledged the success of the first universal suffrage elections to the EP in his speech and he enthusiastically greeted the prospects that this event was opening for the future of Europe.¹¹ He called for the cooperation between institutions, as a means to search for the common interest: ‘we – whether Parliament, Council or Commission – shall need all our combined strength and inherent unity’;¹² and he indicated the supranational way as the route to take ‘to sustain the impetus of the European ideal, to withstand the deep-seated problems which now confront us’.¹³ Finally, addressing the debating chamber, and rebuking the attitude of his own country, he recalled that the Parliament’s concern and opportunity ‘are to ensure that Community issues, not the narrow lines of national policies, [must] dominate the discussion’.¹⁴ That said, Jenkins acknowledged the difficult economic situation and reiterated the responsibility and the role that the Community would have had in the economic policies to counter recession, inflation and unemployment:
towards a greater European unity?'

...
European Act

The mouse born of the righteous mother: The Single

[Text continues...]

European Act

The mouse born of the righteous mother: The Single

[Text continues...]

European Act

The mouse born of the righteous mother: The Single

[Text continues...]
The Eurogroup's decision to impose strict austerity measures in Greece has sparked controversy and criticism. The move is seen as a violation of the country's democratic rights and a violation of the principles of the European Union.

The Eurogroup, composed of the finance ministers of the Eurozone countries, took the decision to enforce the austerity measures in an attempt to reduce Greece's debt and stabilize the eurozone. However, this decision has been met with widespread opposition, with many commentators criticizing the Eurogroup's actions as undemocratic and unfair.

Many believe that the austerity measures are punishing the Greek people and will only make the country's economic situation worse. The measures have already led to widespread protests and strikes in Greece, with many people calling for a referendum on the issue.

The Greek government, which was forced to accept the austerity measures, has also faced criticism for its handling of the economic crisis. Many believe that the government has failed to implement effective policies to address the country's economic problems.

In conclusion, the Eurogroup's decision to impose strict austerity measures in Greece has sparked significant controversy and criticism. The decision is seen as undemocratic and unfair, and many believe that it will only exacerbate Greece's economic problems.

---

Additional notes:

- The Eurogroup is the body of the Eurozone's finance ministers that meets to discuss monetary and economic issues.
- The Greek government is facing a major economic crisis due to high levels of debt and austerity measures imposed by the Eurogroup.
- Many believe that the austerity measures are punishing the Greek people and will only make the country's economic situation worse.
Europe: a highlight for Europe for the economy or we building the eurozone. The Council of Europe's Economic and Monetary Union, which would have to define the economic, monetary and financial policies of the zone, is planned for 2015. The European Central Bank (ECB) is expected to play a key role in implementing the Union's policies.

The European Union is trying to create a more integrated Europe, with a common currency, a single market, and a common foreign policy. This is intended to strengthen the economic and political power of the Union, and to enhance its ability to act on the world stage. The Union is also seeking to improve the living standards of its citizens, and to promote peace and security in the region.

The European Union is one of the most significant and influential organizations in the world, and its impact on international relations and global affairs is growing. It is a powerful force for economic and political stability, and its success in these areas will have a profound impact on the future of Europe and the world.
We want a European Community and not just a common market...
Conclusions

A critical relationship between conversation and change is evident in the relationship between the EPP and the EP. The position of the EP is strengthened when the EPP is strong, and vice versa. This dynamic highlights the importance of understanding the role of the EP in the decision-making process of the EU. The EP's role is not just to pass legislation but also to influence policy and shape the direction of future legislation. The EPP, as the leading party in the EP, is in a unique position to influence the EP's stance on issues and thereby shape the overall direction of EU policies.
Introduction

Giovanni Finizio and Umberto Morelli

The discourse framing of the European Parliament in the face of Yugoslavia's dissolution and the political groups of the European Union (EC/EL)