

DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND EUROPEAN UNION DEMOCRACY

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

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PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY: PROBLEMS OF AGGREGATION

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

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADDS MULTI-NATIONAL AGGREGATION

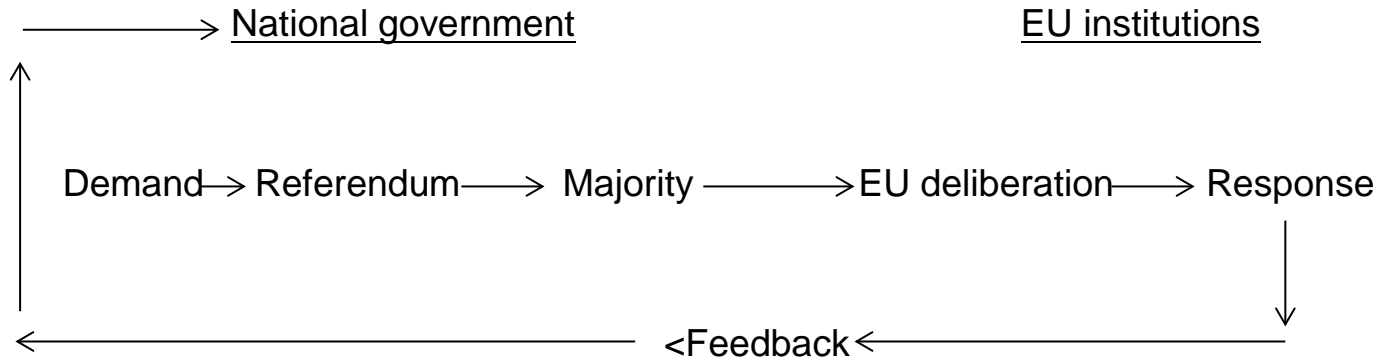
- * Median national party has 2 MEPS out of 751 MEPs. Most MEPS spend most of their week working on collective action problems in a foreign country and working in foreign language with foreigners
- * Party Groups aggregate up to 40 national parties from 28 countries
- * Party Groups vary greatly in the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

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

NATIONAL REFERENDUM OFFERS CLARITY OF CHOICE

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

EU REFERENDUMS: INPUTS TO MULTI-NATIONAL PROCESS



Votes count, resources decide. Stein Rokkan

DIRECT DEMOCRACY vs. LEGAL-RATIONAL LEGITIMACY

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

(Longer papers with more data available on request)